

# Diversifying Marine-Based Employment Opportunities in Peripheral Communities

## End of Project Report

**RMIS 5948**

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### Summary

This project was a development project connected to an INTERREG sub-programme called the Northern Periphery Programme (NPP). More specifically, this project was funded as an NPP Preparatory Project. The aim of such NPP Preparatory Projects is to facilitate the development of a transnational consortium that may produce an application to the NPP for a main project. Such a main project application will not directly ensue from this Preparatory Project, although it may do so in the future. Nevertheless, there are tangible immediate returns to Teagasc from this Preparatory Project that include 1) the opportunity, if considered appropriate, for Teagasc to join an existing NPP main project in 2011 that promotes a new mechanism to support rural enterprise such as food and tourism in the form of the Economusuem<sup>®</sup> concept and 2) the establishment of new international and national academic and agency contacts working in the area of local development.

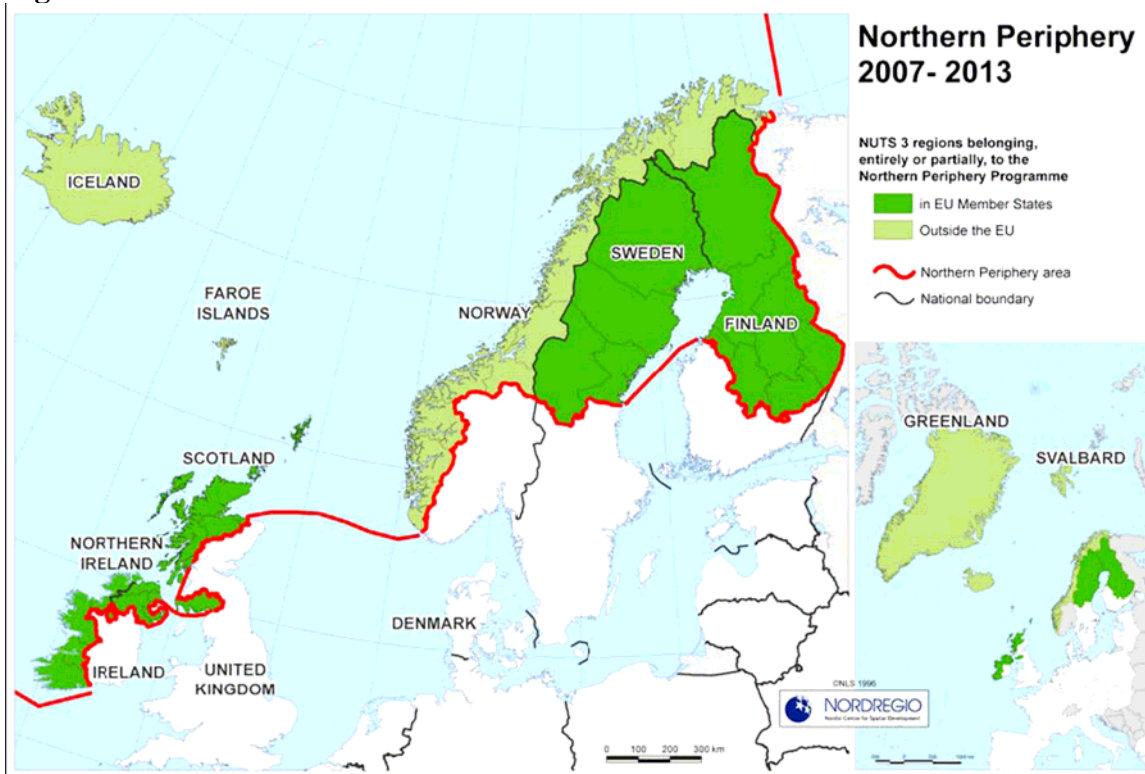
### 1.0 Introduction

The Northern Periphery Programme (NPP), which is part of the European Commission's Territorial Cooperation Objective, is one of thirteen INTERREG programmes aimed at encouraging and supporting transnational co-operation between the regions of Europe (for more details on the NPP see <http://www.northernperiphery.net/>). The NPP 2007-2013 aims to help peripheral and remote communities on the northern margins of Europe to develop their economic, social and environmental potential. The programme seeks to build joint projects creating innovative products and services for the benefit of the programme partner countries and Europe as a whole.

The diverse regions of the NPP area share common features such as harsh climatic conditions, low population density and remoteness. From the NPP perspective, transnational cooperation provides excellent opportunities for finding new ways to address these shared challenges and explore new opportunities.

As outlined in Figure 1.1, geographically the NPP covers a large area comprising parts of several EU member states including Finland, Ireland and Northern Ireland, Great Britain and Sweden and all the territory of certain non-EU members such as the Faeroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland and Norway. Ireland only became an eligible member of the NPP in the structural funds period 2007-2013.

**Figure 1.1: NPP Area**



Source: Northern Periphery Programme 2007 – 2013: Operational Programme, p. 4

As can be seen from Figure 1, not all areas within the Northern Periphery are deemed eligible to participate in the NPP; only those localities deemed the most peripheral regions are included. The specific areas of each country are described more fully in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1: NPP Eligible area – EU and non-EU**

Country	Designation	Region
Finland	NUTS II	Itä-Suomi
		Pohjois-Suomi
	NUTS III	Keski-Suomi
Ireland	NUTS IV	Clare, Cork, Donegal, Galway, Kerry, Leitrim, Limerick, Mayo, Sligo
Northern Ireland	NUTS III	Northern Ireland (with the exception of the NUTS III regions of Belfast and Outer Belfast)
Sweden	NUTS II	Mellersta Norrland, Övre Norrland
Scotland	NUTS II	Highlands & Islands
	NUTS IV	North East Moray
	NUTS III	Dumfries & Galloway
Faroe Islands		Entire territory
Iceland		Entire territory
Greenland		Entire territory
Norway		Finnmark, Troms, Nordland, Nord-Trøndelag, Sør-Trøndelag, Møre og Romsdal, Sogn og Fjordane, Hordaland, Rogaland, Svalbard

Source: NPP Programme Manual - Part 1: How to Apply, p. 5

The NPP funds two types of projects – Preparatory Projects and Main Projects. The aim of a Preparatory Project, which is of six months duration, is to help develop a main project application. The Preparatory Project mechanism recognises that project development is a challenging task. If, in the course of the Preparatory Project, it becomes apparent that a full application is not possible for any number of reasons, this is an acceptable outcome. A main project usually comprises three or more partners from at least three different programme partner countries. Main projects are typically of three years duration with a maximum budget of €1.5million.

Both Preparatory and Main Projects must address one of two key NPP priority areas. These are: 1) Promoting innovation and competitiveness in remote and peripheral areas or 2) Sustainable development of natural and community resources. The core concepts underpinning the NPP are *transnationality* and *added value*. These concepts have specific meaning for the NPP. *Transnationality* means that activities are not carried out in isolation in one partner country. *Added value* means that each project should develop a tangible product or service. As a consequence of the focus on added value, pure research objectives are not considered to be in line with the objectives of the NPP. In other words, activities furthering research knowledge are not considered to be sufficient as a project outcome – the main focus should be on the development of innovative products or services. Fundamental research should be in place at the application stage, although some research activities can be allowed in 1) the testing or adjustment of products/services or 2) as expert input, as long as it does not form a major part of the project<sup>1</sup>.

## **2.0 What was this project about?**

RMIS 5948 was an NPP Preparatory Project that addressed priority one of the NPP, i.e. promoting innovation and competitiveness in remote and peripheral areas. The project, which was lead by RERC Teagasc and had partners from the University of Iceland and Finnmark University College, Norway ran from October 15<sup>th</sup> 2008 to March 15<sup>th</sup> 2009. The Preparatory Project focused on exploring a main project idea that would help diversify marine-based employment opportunities in peripheral coastal communities. The need for such a project was based on the recognition that policy, regulatory and structural changes in fishing and agriculture together with the emergence of a cohort of post-modern tourists, provide challenges and opportunities to income generation from the fishing, agriculture and tourism sectors as currently constituted in many peripheral rural areas, and instead direct attention towards promoting income generating activities from various types of marine-based tourism.

Therefore, the principal idea behind the Preparatory Project was to develop a main project that would facilitate and promote the development of aspects of the marine tourism sector such as fisheries tourism and seafood based experiences. These are essentially new industries for many peripheral communities. Such industries are innovative in that they aim to fuse together local marine-based knowledge, culture, heritage and products with tourism and business related skills and knowledge. The main project would focus on diversifying income-generating opportunities that are specifically based on local

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<sup>1</sup> Research carried out during the Preparatory Project is outlined in Appendix 2

indigenous knowledge of fishing practices, fish movements and local maritime knowledge. Therefore, the main project would seek to help to create a dynamic sub sector within remote communities and bring knowledge to areas that have not been included in NPP projects before. The project idea built mainly on knowledge exchange and knowledge transfer between potential partners in order to identify and develop models of innovative and value-added marine based activities that will provide optimal returns to the identified peripheral North Atlantic Communities.

As depicted in Figure 2.1 below, the Irish target area identified for a main project included 1) the offshore islands of Counties Galway, Mayo, Donegal, Sligo, Cork and 2) the mainland Connemara region of County Galway. All these target areas contain both Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking) and non-Gaeltacht areas. In Iceland, the target area is the Western Fjords, a region of persistent emigration. In Norway, the target area is the North Cape area in Finnmark with participants from Repvåg and Honningsvåg. All three main target areas contain some of the most peripheral communities in the NPP area. Each of the three partners in the Preparatory Project formed a local stakeholder network.

In Ireland, the stakeholder network included<sup>2</sup>:

- 1) **Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs** (match-funder). The mission of the Department is to promote and support the sustainable and inclusive development of communities, both urban and rural, including Gaeltacht and island communities.
- 2) **Comhdháil Oileáin na hÉireann** (Irish Islands Federation) is the representative body for the inhabited offshore islands of Ireland.
- 3) **Údarás na Gaeltachta** is the regional authority responsible for the economic, social and cultural development of the Gaeltacht (Irish speaking areas within Ireland).
- 4) **Cumas Teo** based in Rosmuc, County Galway is an area-based partnership company that implements the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) of the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in the Connemara Gaeltacht.
- 5) **FORUM CONNEMARA**, based in Letterfrack, County Galway, is a rural development partnership that will administer the new LEADER Programme 2007-2013 in the non-Irish speaking part of Connemara.

In Iceland, the stakeholder network consisted of:

- 1) **Sumarbyggð hf.** is a tourism firm set up in 1998. It is based in the village of Súðavík and cooperates with tourism entrepreneurs in several other villages in the West Fjords.
- 2) **Kjarnabúð ehf.** is a private company in the town of Bolungarvík
- 3) **Sundhani** is a marine tourism operator based in the village of Drangsnæs.
- 4) **Eyjasigling** is another small tourism operator based at Reykhólar.
- 5) **Atvinnuþróunarfélag Vestfjarða** (West Fjords Regional Development Agency) is a leading actor in economic and social development in the West Fjords.

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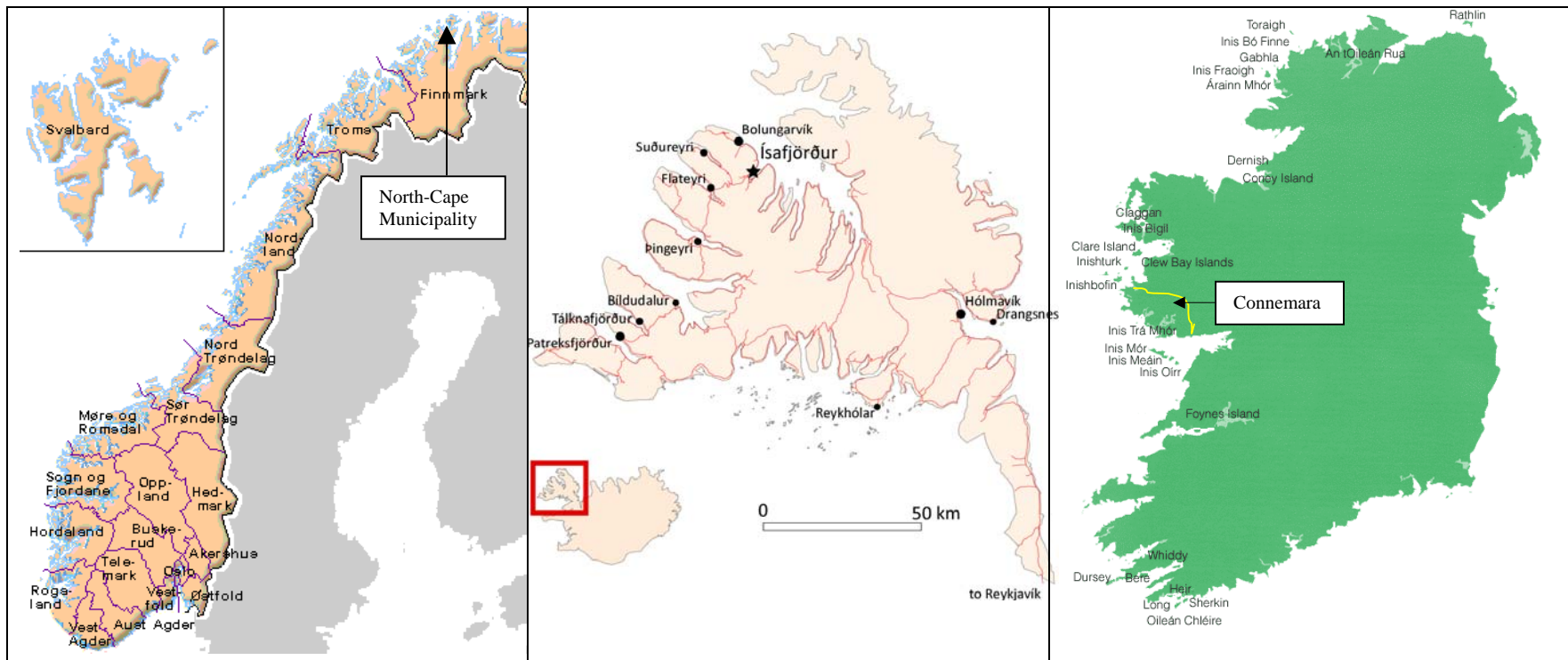
<sup>2</sup> More detail on the Irish, Norwegian and Icelandic stakeholder organisations is outlined in Appendix 1.

- 6) **Háskóla­setur Vestfjarða** (University Centre of the West Fjords) was set up in 2005. Its mission is to build up academic studies, research and knowledge-related activities in the West Fjords.

In Norway, the stakeholder network was made up of:

- 1) **Nordkapp-spesialisten** operate sustainable marine fishing activities for tourists combined with participation in traditional arctic seafood experiences.
- 2) **Repvåg Fjordhotell og Rorbuser** is an hotel which was previously a fish processing plant and is now a centre for fishermen's accommodation, seafood and marine tourist fishing.
- 3) **Destinasjon 71 grader nord** combines experiences at sea and in marine environments with fishing and capture of giant King Crab.
- 4) **Nordkapp Næringshage** (North Cape Industrial park) - a development agency for local marine tourism
- 5) **North Cape Travel** is a professional organisation for tourism enterprises in the area and focuses on growth and development of the tourist industry in the North Cape region.
- 6) **Nordkapp maritime fagskole og videregående skole** offers training courses in entrepreneurship for young people who want to establish businesses in the marine sector.

**Figure 2.1: NPP Preparatory Project target areas: Finnmark (Norway), Ísafjörður (Iceland) and Connemara and the islands (Ireland).**



### 3.0 Project tasks

The genesis for this project arose from a workshop on Marine Tourism Opportunities hosted by Teagasc at the Rural Economy Research Centre, Athenry, Co. Galway, Ireland on December 11<sup>th</sup> 2007. Members of RERC's Rural Development and Innovation Unit, the University of Iceland, University of Bergen and the Marine Institute, Galway attended this workshop. The decision to pursue an NPP Preparatory Project application emerged from this workshop. As a prelude to the Preparatory Project application, a series of meetings were held in all the partner countries to establish the stakeholder networks outlined above. An application was made to the NPP for a Preparatory Project in September 2008. The application was successful and the NPP Preparatory Project ran from October 15<sup>th</sup> 2008 to March 15<sup>th</sup> 2009. The project tasks as set out in the Preparatory Project application are outlined in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Overview of project tasks**

Date	Tasks
October 2008:	Lead partner in conjunction with other main partners to compile outline project scoping document. The scoping document should address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the main practical issues relating to the project and</li> <li>- sketch out the potential scientific approach to the project.</li> </ul>
November 2008:	Transnational workshop to be held in the Western Fjords in Iceland and attended by the all the partners (and potential partners) in the consortium. The aim of this workshop will be to develop in more detail a potential project proposal specifically in relation to practicalities, identification of concrete products or services, scientific approach and concerns of end-users.
December 2008:	Partnership consultation processes facilitated by email, phone calls, document exchange and video conferencing continues with transnational partners.
January 2009:	Meeting of project steering committee to finalise parameters for the project
February 2009:	Development of Full NPP project application
March 2009:	Compilation of final report on Preparatory Project activities and results

In addition to these tasks, more detailed consultations were held with stakeholders and potential partners in each of the partner regions – Ireland, Iceland and Norway. The exact form of these meetings was left at the discretion of the individual consortium partner. An overview of these meeting is outlined in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2: National level meetings/consultations**

Consortium Partner	Date of Meeting	Form of Meeting	No. Attending
RERC, Teagasc	December 3 <sup>rd</sup> 2008	Focus Group	5
University of Iceland	November 10 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup> 2008	Telephone & interviews	12
Finnmark University College	November 19 <sup>th</sup> 2008	Workshop	5

Understandably, myriad different issues emerged in the three partner areas in relation to 1) opportunities and 2) challenges in trying to promote marine-based employment opportunities. At a risk of gross oversimplification, in Ireland the emphasis was placed on promoting seafood based 'experiences' such as festivals and traditional cook and catch activities, whereas in Iceland and Norway, fisheries tourism was a more prominent theme. In all partner areas, however, both of these broad areas of activity were considered

important. In all three partner areas, there was general agreement on the overall concerns in relation to nurturing new marine-based tourism activities. These included:

- 1) Tourism as presently constituted (in terms of product offering, marketing, distribution of returns, seasonality, origin of customers, sustainability etc) offers restricted prospects for development and employment in many peripheral rural areas.
- 2) There is a wealth of local marine-based knowledge and culture that could form the basis for tourism related products. This knowledge could provide attractive products and services for a relatively high-spending cohort of postmodern tourists.
- 3) Tourism providers and existing marine-based activities need help in making their operations more professional, particularly in terms of product & service development, business planning and marketing.
- 4) Enterprises and agencies in peripheral areas recognise the need for networking in order to improve capabilities, scale and knowledge transfer. It is acknowledged that valuable lessons may be learned from transnational networks in addition to more local, regional and national networks.

A general project idea began to emerge from the Preparatory Project. Any potential main project would need to focus on three key aspects – networks, the professionalisation of products/services and marketing. Therefore, the central focus of the main project would be mutual learning and extension activities, but also the development of physical products such as traditional seafood festivals, or the hands-on presentation of coastal cultural heritage to tourists, possibly through the utilisation of the Economuseum<sup>®</sup> model (see next section for more details on the Economuseum<sup>®</sup> idea). Critically, as tourism providers in the three partner areas are not direct competitors they could in fact be a source of knowledge transfer and learning for each other. Key differences in training needs and capability development also emerged between the basket of skills needed by existing tourism providers and those that would be needed by existing fishermen who wished to incorporate a tourism element into their activities.

#### **4.0 Outcomes of the project**

A main project application did not ensue from the NPP Preparatory Project. There are two main reasons for this. First, at the present time, it is considered more appropriate to direct all available Teagasc resources towards the land-based agri-food sector. Second, given the changed economic circumstances in late 2008 and early 2009 and the accompanying fiscal uncertainty for the foreseeable future, it is a difficult environment within which to seek match-funding commitments from Teagasc or any other organisation. A match funding commitment is required for all NPP projects. For the Preparatory Project, the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs provided match funding. Overall, for these two reasons, the decision was taken that Teagasc would not be a lead partner in any forthcoming main project application emanating from the Preparatory Project. During the course of the Preparatory Project, Teagasc identified and agreed with the University Centre of the Western Fjords in Iceland – an organisation that attended the November 2008 meeting in Iceland as a potential partner - that it would take



over the role of lead partner in any main project application that may ensue from this Preparatory Project.

As part of the Preparatory Project, contact was made with another NPP main project entitled Economuseum<sup>®</sup> Northern Europe. This contact may ultimately provide more immediate collaborative possibilities for Teagasc in a core area of activity. An Economuseum<sup>®</sup> is a craft or agri-foods business whose products are based on authentic techniques or know-how<sup>3</sup>. The business, which is self-financed through the sale of their products, showcases artisan and craft trades by offering an area for interpreting its production and by opening its doors to the public. It is argued that Economuseums<sup>®</sup> make an innovative contribution to the cultural tourism sector particularly in the area of artisan food production.

The idea and organisation that promotes the idea (International Economuseum<sup>®</sup> Network Society) originated in Quebec, Canada in 1992. There are 50 handicraft and agri-food trade businesses operating as Economuseums<sup>®</sup> in 13 regions in Quebec and four provinces in Atlantic Canada. These businesses comprise almost 500 artisans and employees who receive over 700,000 visitors per year. The mission of the International Economuseum<sup>®</sup> Network Society (IENS) is to conserve, develop and present traditional trades and know-how by promoting the setting up of a network of Economuseums<sup>®</sup> across Canada and abroad in order to offer a high quality cultural and tourism product to the public.

There are six components to an Economuseum<sup>®</sup> 1) a welcoming area, 2) a workshop, 3) interpretation of traditional activities, 4) interpretation of contemporary works, 5) a reading and documentation area and 6) a gallery-boutique. Each individual Economuseum<sup>®</sup> is assisted with architectural, business, marketing and direct sales support and development through the Economuseum<sup>®</sup> network.

The IENS has established five regional societies in Canada and seeks to introduce the concept in other countries. Currently, there is only one Economuseum<sup>®</sup> project outside Canada - Economuseum<sup>®</sup> Northern Europe - which is a main project funded by the NPP<sup>4</sup>. The aim of the project, which is aided by the IENS, is to create eight Economuseums<sup>®</sup> in the participating partner regions (Norway, Iceland, Faeroe Islands, Ireland and Northern Ireland). In practical terms this means supporting and developing the business skills of the participating enterprises throughout the project and developing a support and marketing network for the Northern Europe Economuseums<sup>®</sup> - one aspect of which will include a joint website for direct sales.

Teagasc has been invited to join in a possible application for an extension to the Economuseum<sup>®</sup> Northern Europe project in 2011, if appropriate. In order to explore this possibility, it is proposed that the RERC Rural Development and Innovation Unit will hold a workshop on the potential application of the Economuseum<sup>®</sup> concept to artisan food producers in Ireland during the second half of 2009. This workshop will be

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the Economuseum<sup>®</sup> concept see <http://www.economusees.com>

<sup>4</sup> For more information see <http://npp.apogee.gr/en/projects/show/&tid=32>

delivered to Teagasc's newly established Rural Development and Innovation Service and is targeted at specialist artisan food and tourism advisors, LEADER groups and artisan food stakeholders.

## Appendix 1: Details on Stakeholder Organisations

Ireland	Iceland	Norway
Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (match-funder). The mission of the Department is to promote and support the sustainable and inclusive development of communities, both urban and rural, including Gaeltacht and island communities, thereby fostering better regional balance and alleviating disadvantage, and to advance the use of the Irish language.	<i>Sumarbyggð hf.</i> is a tourism firm set up in 1998. It is based in the village of Súðavík but cooperates with tourism entrepreneurs in several other villages in the West Fjords. The firm is engaged in marine fishing tourism, and also operates lodging facilities and other tourist services.	<i>Nordkapp-spesialisten</i> operate sustainable marine fishing activities for tourists combined with participation in traditional arctic seafood experiences.
Comhhdháil Oileáin na hÉireann (Irish Islands Federation) is the representative body for the inhabited offshore islands of Ireland. Comhhdháil currently has 33 member islands, with populations ranging from just one person to 800 inhabitants. Comhhdháil administers the National Rural Development Programme (NDRP) for the islands. Comhhdháil is a founder member of the European Small Islands Network (ESIN) set up in 2001.	<i>Kjarnabúð ehf.</i> is a private company in the town of Bolungarvík. The firm has ambitious plans for establishing sea angling in the town, which has a rich history of fishing and coastal culture.	<i>Repvåg Fjordhotell og Rorbusenter</i> is an attractive hotel that was previously a fish processing plant and is now a centre for fishermen's accommodation, seafood and marine tourist fishing.
Údarás na Gaeltachta is the regional authority responsible for the economic, social and cultural development of the Gaeltacht (Irish speaking areas within Ireland). Ninety-eight percent of Irish speaking communities reside in coastal areas of Counties Donegal, Mayo, Galway, Kerry and Cork. The overall objective of Údarás na Gaeltachta is to ensure Irish remains the main language of the region and is passed on to future generations.	<i>Sundhani</i> is a tourism operator based in the village of Drangsnes, offering accommodation as well as sea angling tours and various other marine-related tourist experiences.	<i>Destinasjon 71 grader nord</i> combines experiences at sea and in marine environments with fishing and capture of giant King Crab.
Cumas Teo, based in Rosmuc, County Galway is an area-based partnership company that implements the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) of the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in the Connemara Gaeltacht. The LDSIP, funded by the National Development Plan under the Border, Midland and Western Regional Operational Programme, is a series of measures that are designed to counter disadvantage and to promote equality and social and economic inclusion.	<i>Eyjasigling</i> is a small tourism operator based at Reykhólar. They offer tours to islands in the bay of Breiðafjörður.	<i>Nordkapp Næringsshage</i> (North Cape Industrial park) is a development agency for local marine tourism
FORUM CONNEMARA, a rural development partnership based in North West Connemara, County Galway will administer the new LEADER Programme 2007-2013 in the non-Irish speaking part of Connemara.	<i>Atvinnuþróunarfélag Vestfjarða</i> (West Fjords Regional Development Agency) is a leading actor in economic and social development in the West Fjords. A non-profit company with broad local ownership, it is contracted by the Regional Development Institute of Iceland and the Association of Municipalities in the West Fjords to work to strengthen the conditions for settlement in the region and provide measures against continued outmigration.	<i>North Cape Travel</i> is a professional organisation for tourism firms in the area that focuses on growth and development of the tourist industry in the North Cape region.
	<i>Háskólasetur Vestfjarða</i> (University Centre of the West Fjords) was set up in 2005. It has a mandate to build academic, research and knowledge-related activities in the West Fjords. It supports cooperative research and development projects and provides a platform for linking diverse actors working within innovation and regional development. In 2008, the Centre for the first time, offered a Masters degree in Ocean and Coastal Management.	<i>Nordkapp maritime fagskole og videregående skole</i> offers training courses in entrepreneurship for young people who want to establish businesses in the marine sector.

## **Appendix 2: Research outputs from this project**

Heanue, K., Macken-Walsh, A. & Meredith D., (2009) Unlocking the potential of marine-based opportunities for rural communities: Insights from the capabilities literature, *RERC Working Paper*, Teagasc

Karl Benediktsson, K. & Lund, K., A. (2008) Tourism in the Westfjords of Iceland: A summary of current patterns and trends, *MBEO Preparatory Project Briefing Paper No. 1*

Heanue, K., Macken-Walsh, A. & Meredith D., (2009) Tourism in Connemara and the Islands: A summary of current patterns and trends, *MBEO Preparatory Project Briefing Paper, No. 2*

Roeknes, A., and Olsen, K., (2009) Tourism in Finnmark: A summary of current patterns and trends, *MBEO Preparatory Project Briefing Paper, No.3*