CLARE'S SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION CERTIFCATION

COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

Sustainable Destination Certification goes beyond a simple checklist or one-dimensional assessment. Clare County Council, as the local authority for County Clare, is committed to supporting the county in its pursuit of becoming Ireland's first formally certified Sustainable Destination. To illustrate to communities, DMOs and stakeholders who may be interested in the process, the following infographic demonstrates the full breadth of the process—its timeline, collaborative efforts, budget considerations, long-term commitment, in-depth data collection and continual process of improving on internationally recognised, third-party verified sustainable tourism indicators.

Global Sustainability Commitments

Paris Agreement, COP, Glasgow Declaration, Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), SDGs

EU, National and Local plans & targets



EU Green Deal, EU Nature Restoration, Ireland's Climate Action Plan, County Development Plans

2021



Action 1

Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 Vision

A Vision to become a globally renowned 'Sustainable and Vibrant' Destination



Action 2

Collaborate with a University Partner

The Atlantic Technological University

Action 3



Contract a certifying body

There are currently three certifying bodies available that certify destinations at globally recognised destination criteria GSTC; Green destinations, Vireo Srl and EarthCheck. Clare choose the certifying body, EarthCheck



Indicators & Third Party Verification

Globally recognised measurements, including UNWTO Indicators, European Tourism Indicator System (ETIS) and Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)



Sustainable Destination Management

Destinations need to work towards targets and commitments. **You can't manage what you don't measure.**



EU Green Claims Directive

Sustainable claims made in the EU after implementation, must be backed by **evidence and third party verification.**

Action 4



Establishment of Ireland's First Destination Green Team

Clare County Council's commitment to sustainability catalysts the establishment of the Green Team formed with stakeholders across tourism, climate action, heritage, biodiversity, environment, local community representatives, business owners, university, transport, Fáilte Ireland, UNESCO Geopark, tourism networks and conservation agencies. **Green Team process and functioning is third-party audited by certification body**.

2022

Action 5



Investment & Budgets

Clare County Council commits to annual Certification fees and external audit fees, data collection, training, business sustainability supports, expansion of the Code of Practice, communication and marketing, investment in Ireland's first '**Sustainable Destination Development Officer**'



Action 6

Adoption of an Indicator System

Adoption of **41 internationally recognised sustainable tourism indicators** across environmental, economic, social and culture. Key indicators are measured through visitor, resident and enterprise sustainable tourism surveys, all third-party conducted by University Partner to ensure integrity of results. **All results and methodologies are made publicly available**. Indicator Data is used for evidence informed planning.

Action 9



Clare's Sustainability Enterprise Survey

Enterprise surveys (2024) measuring enterprise's energy, waste, water usage, % of local suppliers ad services, % of renewable energy use

Action 8



Clare's Sustainability Resident Survey

Resident surveys (2022-2023) measuring residents' perceptions of tourism's impact on the local economy, environment, and community, alongside their overall satisfaction and suggestions for sustainable development

Action 7



Clare's Sustainability Visitor Survey

Visitor surveys (2022-2023), measuring visitor satisfaction, economic sustainability metrics, transportation choices and carbon footprint data

2023

2024

Action 10

Baseline benchmark achieved with Certifying body

Baselines established and third-party verified by certification body Earth Check. **Bronze benchmark achieved**.

Action 11



Destination Risk Register

Clare's destination risk register developed that considers the social, economic, cultural and environmental risks that Clare may be currently or may face in the future.



UN Tourism INSTO International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories

UN Tourism INSTO Destination

Clare is a key destination within the UN Tourism International Sustainable Tourism Observatory Network with the Atlantic Coast Observatory, hosted by ATU. Clare has presented twice at the global UN Tourism annual INSTO and sustainable destination conference. All INSTO members must commit to monitoring using indicators against Key Issue Areas.

2025



Action 12

Sustainable Destination Action Plan

Clare's sustainable destination action plan that focuses solely on the sustainable management of Clare as a destination using indicators and evidence, that considers social, economic, cultural and environmental dimensions.

Action 14

Sustainable Destination Certification Awarded

Annual audit & certification to ensure meaningful, evidence based, **continuous process of improvement on sustainability indicators, support wider policy instruments such as biodiversity, heritage and climate action etc.** ensuring the destination improves on its sustainability journey year after year.

Action 13



Annual, Third-Party Audits

5 day extensive audit by external certifying body Earth Check that includes data verification, visiting waste, energy, water facilities and interviews the Destination Green Team

Telling the Story

Authentic, third-party, science based certification providing the ability to inform residents, businesses, visitors and supply chain (e.g. tour operators) about Clare's Sustainable Destination certification. Sustainable Destination Management is a continuous journey - certification does not mean that every aspect is 100 per cent sustainable but it does mean that the destination has embarked on a process of **continuous improvement on sustainable tourism indicators, benchmarks and decreasing our carbon footprint-** working towards the concept of 'a good place to live is a good place to visit'.

Continuous Process of Improvement & Yearly Re-Certification

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For further details, please visit https://visitclare.ie/sustainable/ or contact the Clare County Council Tourism Department with any queries