

Policy Brief No.3 May 2021

Project name: MOSES:
Maritime, Ocean Sector and
Ecosystem Sustainability:
Fostering Blue Growth in
Atlantic Industries.

Authors: Frances Fahy, Desiree
Farrell, Liam Carr, Stephen
Hynes, Rebecca Corless and
Daniel Norton

Further Reading: The full report
is available to download here:
[http://mosesproject.eu/ban/wp-
content/uploads/2021/03/ONIA_To
urism_v1.pdf](http://mosesproject.eu/ban/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/ONIA_Tourism_v1.pdf)

Acknowledgement: This
research was funded by EU
Interreg Atlantic Area
Programme. Priority 4:
Enhancing biodiversity and the
natural and cultural assets.

Read more about the project on
our website
www.mosesproject.eu or follow
us on twitter @atlanticmoses

Pathway for Sustainable Development of Marine and Coastal Tourism Trails

As part of the EU's Blue Growth strategy, marine and coastal tourism is viewed as one of five focus maritime areas with the potential to foster "a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe". However, while marine and coastal tourism are vital economic activities for a wide range of coastal regions across the EU Atlantic Arc, the sector faces increasing sustainability challenges due to increasing demand and the accompanying social consequences for local communities and environmental consequences for local coastal and marine resources. Adopting transition management as a broad analytical framework through which to understand existing marine management regimes and to stimulate thinking about how more sustainable regimes may be realized in the future, this policy brief outlines highlights of research conducted on the Wild Atlantic Way (WAW), a 2500 km coastal touring route along the west coast of Ireland from 2018-2020.

Research Findings

Following on from a review of the marine and coastal tourism management regime in Ireland and the niche and landscape pressures that the sector faces the NUIG MOSES team developed an extensive tourist survey and conducted in-depth collaborative research with a local community situated on the WAW to identify the pressures, preferences and development trends relevant to coastal tourism and sustainable pathways for the growth of the tourism trail sector. Some of the pressures identified include: overburdened infrastructure, alienation of locals, high tourism numbers in certain areas, emphasis on day-trip tour operations and environmental degradation. The results suggest that to support sustainable coastal tourism, close collaboration at the community level is required. Locals at tourist destinations not only drive the tourism product itself, but live with the consequences of tourist activities in the area, and, therefore, have an increased motivation to develop and promote sustainable pathways.

Policy implications

The study presents a community-generated collaborative framework that can overcome barriers and maximise opportunities in sustainable coastal tourism trail development. Specific policy recommendations for the sustainable development of similar tourism trails across Europe include: reducing some pressure by developing policies aimed at extending the tourist season, reducing the emphasis on day-trips (where tourist money is often diverted from locals), keeping jobs local where possible, fostering community engagement by supporting cultural and traditional experiences as visitor experiences and encouraging information and communications technology (ICT) uptake in the area of sustainable tourism trail usage. Overall, this framework could be adopted by regional policymakers across Europe as they are well-placed to undertake this work and benefit from the exchange of experience with the local communities facing these challenges. Finally, collaboration and dialogue are key elements to be considered by other European regions interested in developing their marine and coastal trails in a sustainable way.