

Case Studies – Level 1

The Bantry Bay Charter

Area: Co Cork

Country: Ireland

Date of Completion: 6.1.06

Pen Picture

“Coastal zone management is not rocket science. It’s far harder than that.”

The aim of this project was the development of a consensus based strategy for Integrated Coastal Zone Management for Bantry Bay. The Bantry Bay Life Project team pioneered innovative, ground-breaking techniques in public participation and coastal zone management through the Bantry Bay Charter, published in September 2000. The intended outcome was the establishment of informal contracting between stakeholders to secure agreed strategies that respect sustainable development and integrated use of Bantry Bay.

The Project was funded under the EU Life Programme, which supports innovative environmental projects.

The Charter addressed sustainable tourism as part of a complex mix of user needs and demands of this marine and coastal area.

This case study demonstrates how an exemplary project foundered when the project came to the end of its life, owing to lack of sustained financial and policy commitment from regulatory authorities.

Key Lessons

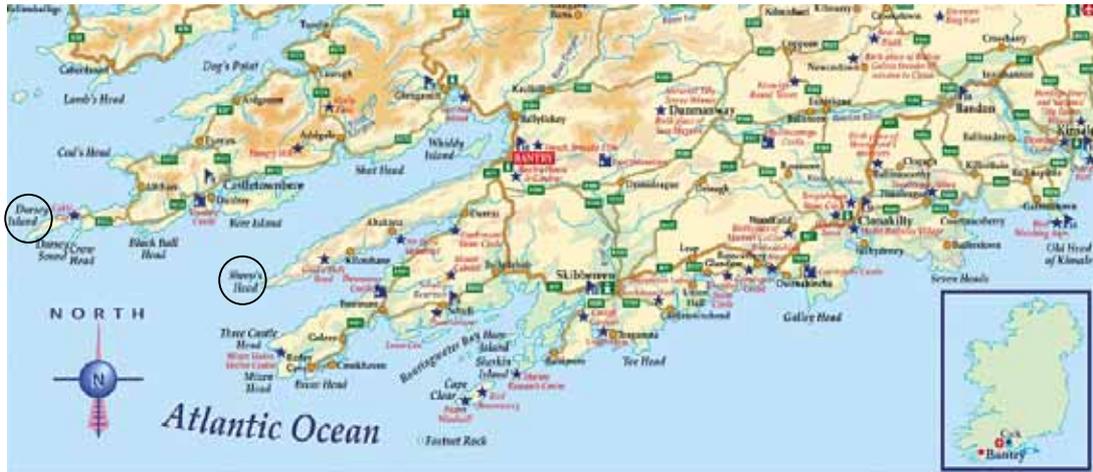
- The importance in ensuring that programmes funded in the short term with project grants are carried forward either through funding support from regulatory bodies or other sources.
- Potential dangers in building public commitment and enthusiasm only to dash those hopes when projects are no longer funded.
- In spite of the unfortunate outcomes, the processes and principles were widely regarded as exemplary and in particular the inclusiveness of involvement and stakeholder consensus arising from a comprehensive, well organised consultation programme.
- Community involvement and support.
- Thorough audit of resources through GIS mapping.

Location

The Charter area is located in County Cork in the extreme south west of Ireland. Specifically, the area stretches from Dursey Island to Sheeps Head, covering over 200 km of coastline (see below). The Bantry Bay area is 48km in length and 19km wide, encompassing a variety of land and seascapes, the largest town in West Cork and three of the largest inhabited islands in Ireland. To the north of the bay is the Beara Peninsula which is 30 miles in length; to the south of the bay is Sheeps Head Peninsula. Both peninsulas are renowned for their scenic beauty and are popular tourist destinations.

There is only one main route to the Bay, the N71. Access to the islands is via two ferry services to Bere Island and a single service from Bantry to Whiddy Island. Dursey Island is connected to the mainland by cable car. The nearest regional

airport is Cork City and the nearest international ferry service sails from Cork harbour.



Overview

Bantry Bay is an area of outstanding scenic landscape and consequently one of the busiest tourist areas in Ireland. It is also one of the most important fishing and aquaculture regions in Ireland and home to Ireland's state oil transshipment terminal at Whiddy Island. Castletownbere is one of Ireland's largest fishing ports, landing some 12,000 tonnes and the Bay also has the highest density of aquaculture units in the state, the most sizeable production being of Blue Mussels. Bantry Bay is home to some 10,000 people, many of whom earn their livings through these activities. However, the single largest source of employment in the area is agriculture, employing 21% of the working population.

Bantry town, at the head of the bay is a busy market town and fishing port.



The project described here was entitled 'The Development of a Consensus Based Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy for Bantry Bay' and aimed to build consensus amongst these various stakeholders through development of a 'Stakeholder Charter'. The Charter and the public participation techniques used in the process would not only benefit the Bantry Bay area but would be invaluable to Cork Council and to the people of Cork in the long term. Wider dissemination throughout Europe of the strategy for conflict resolution in coastal zones was also an intention.

The Charter also involved the development of a community GIS catalogue of resources which was made available to the public at Bantry and Castletownbere libraries.

Status of Conservation Designation

The Bay catchment includes 20 Natural Heritage Areas, Statutory Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna, Wildfowl Sanctuaries, Special Protection Areas and Special Area of Conservation.

Dursey Island is part of Ireland's whale and dolphin sanctuary.

Planning Framework

Sub-Regional

The Department of Marine and Natural Resources (DMNR) has been one of the statutory bodies responsible for the administration of the coastal zone in Ireland since 1997. Of the remaining 12 state departments, two others are directly involved in ICZM: (a) the Department of the Environment and Local Government (DELG) and (b) the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands (DAHGI).

Organisational responsibilities Listed below are those bodies with direct management responsibilities for Bantry Bay. This demonstrates the complexity of the planning and management system in the area, which is typical of coastal / marine environments.

1. The DMNR – with jurisdiction on the seaward side of the mean high water mark. One of the many responsibilities of the DMNR is to 'support the sustainable development of marine tourism and leisure'.
2. DELG – with responsibility for policy formation and legislation relating to the land-ward side of the mean high water mark.
3. DAHGI – responsible for developing national arts/heritage policy
4. Bantry Bay Harbour Commissioners
5. Castletownbere Fisheries Harbour
6. South West Regional Fisheries Board – which as one of its responsibilities promotes sea angling within Bantry Bay
7. Cork County Council - statutorily obliged to prepare County Development Plan addressing physical, economic and social development within its area of jurisdiction, including Bantry Bay.
8. Bantry Town Commissioners – comprising directly elected representatives. Essentially a lobbying group.

Local

Implementing policy on behalf of the Department of the Environment is the responsibility of local authorities (in this case, Cork County Council – see above).

Background/History

Key Milestones (also see Management section below)

1997

- September: Project obtains funding
November: Launch
December: Ministers make pledge on Coastal Zone Management

1998

- January: Review of maritime operations; sectoral meetings take place
March: Alternative Dispute Resolution begins
June: Key issues identified by Stakeholders
November: Ground rules formally adopted by the Roundtable

1999

- January: release of 'Review of ICZM Methodologies'
May- Dec: working group meetings; Charter office established in Bantry with two project staff.

2000

- March: Working group meeting – the Future of Bantry Bay
May: Final meeting of Roundtable. Agreement to proceed with implementation of the Charter.
August: Charter to print
September: Launch at EU wide Seminar

- 2002** Project office closes after two years owing to lack of funding support.

Aims/Objectives

Vision – as agreed by the community:

Here in the Bantry Bay coastal zone we have inherited great natural beauty and significant human achievement. Looking to the future our greatest assets will continue to be the people of the area and this outstanding natural environment.

The Bantry Bay Coastal Zone Charter provides an opportunity to take stock, reflect on the issues and opportunities facing the area, and most importantly map a course for the future (into the 21st century). The Charter sets out a vision as to what sort of place the Bantry Bay coastal zone will be.

This vision sees the Bantry Bay coastal zone in the future as a flourishing place where a high quality of life is enjoyed by all:

- *where the natural environment of the area is protected and improved*
- *where there is opportunity for all residents and future generations to live and work in the area*
- *where respect for the environment and economic success go hand in hand*
- *where there are opportunities for recreation and fulfilment for residents and visitors alike*
- *where people work together for shared benefits and to resolve differences as they build a better future.*

The overall aims of the project are given in the Pen Picture above. However, it is useful here to outline the Charter's stated objectives for Tourism and Recreation and Heritage within the Coastal Zone.

1. Overall Objective: *To create a recreational and tourism destination with an established reputation for providing a unique, enjoyable and high quality experience for visitors and to do this in ways that produce the best economic benefit to the local community and that safeguard or enhance environmental quality.*
2. Tourism and Recreation Amenities: *To fulfil the tourism and recreation potential ... through a range of good quality integrated amenities that protect and enhance the local culture and environment. To involve local communities in consultation about new developments, which will help to support the local population and provide a range of choices in leisure activities for both visitors and local people.*
3. Tourism and Recreation Facilities and Services: *To provide infrastructure that meets the needs of all visitors so that the economic potential of the tourism sector ... can be optimised.*
4. Heritage: *To identify the unique and diverse natural and cultural heritage ... To protect and conserve this heritage, explain its value and promote enjoyment of it by both the local community and visitors.*
5. Access to Land: *To provide acceptable public access to land ... for recreational use by both local residents and visitors to the area through agreement with landowners.*

These objectives would be achieved through the application of the following key principles to the formation and implementation of the Charter:

1. Sustainability
2. Interdependence of Land, Coast and Water Environments
3. Sharing of Information
4. Use of Best Possible Information and Expertise
5. Transparency
6. Partnership
7. Island-friendly
8. Consensus
9. Improvement/ Enhancement of the State of the Environment
10. Environmental Monitoring
11. Polluter Pays
12. Respect for Traditional Livelihoods
13. Social Inclusion

Key Resource Facts

Habitats

There are four blanket bog Natural Heritage Areas in Bantry Bay.

Rocky cliffs provide habitat for nesting sea birds.

Topography

Bantry Bay has a rich and unspoilt environment with islands scattered along its length, the largest of which are Bere, Dursey and Whiddy Islands. The landscape is mountainous with parallel ridges (NE to SW in orientation) running through the peninsulas to the sea. The remaining terrain is occupied by valleys, glens, hills, rivers, woods and forests.

Climate

Mild with moist Atlantic winds bringing a medium to heavy rainfall. The influence of the Gulf Stream has an effect on the climate allowing the growth of semi-tropical vegetation and foliage.

Biodiversity

no information has yet been found from web sources

Culture/Heritage

The Charter identifies cultural resources which require protection and conservation and specifically the following:

- language, folklore, music, oral history
- public records, old maps, prints, photographs, diaries, registers of births, deaths and marriages
- work implements, ornaments
- archaeological remains, road networks, field systems, ancient monuments

Key Tourism Facts

Product Services and Infrastructure

There are two National Way-Marked Ways in the area. They are linked and take in the Sheep's Head and Beara peninsulas. There is also a cycle route throughout the area.

Apart from walking and cycling the following activities and facilities are promoted for visitors to the area:

- many sandy beaches
- several golf courses
- shore fishing
- sailing, boating canoeing, kayaking
- many archaeological and historical sites
- island trips
- main towns of Bantry, Castletownbere and Glengarriff and their associated heritage features
- villages

Marine Infrastructure: a number of piers, quays, slipways throughout the bay – either privately owned or by the Department of Marine and Natural Resources or Cork County Council. There are also 25 tourist moorings.

Volume

Data were not available for Bantry Bay or Co Cork. The lowest level of aggregation readily available at the time of compiling this report was for the South West of Ireland, which in 2004 attracted 20% of the island of Ireland's overseas visitors at some 1.6 million and revenues of £450m (€652m).

Key Issues associated with tourism development/management

- The project was hindered by the lack of an effective regional tier of administration to translate the sectoral programmes into spatial planning objectives.
- Unclear and overlapping jurisdiction over waters between the mainland and Whiddy Island resulted in ineffective management of marine uses and resources.
- Conflict between mariculture interests and other stakeholders around the bay. Irish legislation to regulate aquaculture has not been properly enforced in Bantry Bay owing to jurisdictional uncertainty between central and local government. This points to a need to clarify licensing and planning control jurisdictions between Harbour Authorities, Fishery Harbours, Marine Department and County Councils.
- Fragmented approach to Coastal Management by a range of bodies with sometimes unclear and overlapping responsibilities.
- No clear image of the unique identity of Bantry Bay
- High seasonality in the tourism offer
- Staying visitors are relatively few
- Other commercial activities (e.g. quarrying and mussel growing) have an adverse impact upon tourism.

Management/Organisation/Funding/Finance

The Charter development involved a partnership between:

1. The lead organisation, Cork County Council
2. The Coastal Resources Centre of the National University College Cork
3. The Nautical Enterprise Centre of the Cork Institute of Technology
4. Residents of the Bantry Bay area

Other regulatory bodies, academic and other interests based outside the project area were appointed to an advisors group.

A Management Committee was established at the outset (1997) with a Project Manager, Kevin Lynch, appointed from Cork County Council. This committee comprised the project manager, one representative from each of the partners, a delegate from the stakeholder committee and when necessary, relevant external advisors. The Management Committee met at monthly intervals throughout the project.

The Bantry Bay Coastal Zone Charter Agreement was achieved through the following process:

Stage in Process	Delivery
1. Invitations to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ widespread media campaign, public meetings, newsletter ▪ stakeholder database compiled
2. Issues Identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ confidential meetings with stakeholder groups ▪ list of issues compiled ▪ two day event where issues presented
3. Representative Roundtable Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ all stakeholder groups represented ▪ met regularly over 11 months (50 meetings)

	<p>in all)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ experts invited to input as appropriate ▪ groups developed options in response to issues of concern ▪ six working groups established
4. Proposals Generated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 23 proposals generated by working groups (see below) ▪ these were widely disseminated ▪ public consultation events were held
5. Building Consensus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ negotiation and discussion over proposals in Roundtable for a ▪ agreement on final text
6. The Charter Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 23 distinct proposals are integrally linked under four principle sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Governance ○ Production ○ Protection ○ Infrastructure
7. Continuation of the Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Production of a strategy for implementation of Charter ▪ Implementation of Charter agreements ▪ Ongoing Roundtable revisions and agreement of new proposals ▪ Monitoring of success of the Charter

As mentioned above, six working groups were established at the outset (first Roundtable meeting, November 1998) to examine the main areas of concern for management of the Bay and to prepare option papers which were instrumental in shaping the final charter document under the following main titles. Those papers pertaining specifically to tourism are also listed:

1. Governance in the Coastal Zone
2. Water Quality and Waste Management
3. Marine Food in the Coastal Zone
4. Tourism in the Coastal Zone
 - Tourism and Recreation – General
 - Tourism and Recreational Amenities
 - Tourism and Recreation Facilities and Services
 - Shoreline Access
 - Access to Land
5. Land Based Issues in the Coastal Zone
 - Economic Development
 - Heritage
6. Multi Working Group Option Papers
 - The Vision of the Bantry Bay Charter

The project applied the principles of alternative dispute resolution (ARD) to marine issues in Bantry Bay. Heretofore, these issues had been handled in a more remote way by sectoral agencies. Using a neutral facilitator and extensive public

consultation, the project developed a set of integrated policies based on the real needs of the community.

The project, through community consultations, agreed an approach to integrating the work of the key regulatory bodies involved in planning and managing the Bay area through the coordination of policies and plans and proposals for joint working. The outcome, therefore, was an approach to the management of Bantry Bay which involving the cooperation of over 70 organisations, businesses and regulatory bodies. This was presented in the Bantry Bay Coastal Zone Charter, published in September 2000.

Implementation

Following the end of the EU LIFE project, Cork County Council funded a project officer and assistant for two years from 1999 and a publicly accessible office in Bantry where the Charter and other documents including GIS information could be viewed by the community. However, there was a lack of support by regulatory bodies, and budgetary difficulties within the Council led to closure of the office in 2002. Since this time there has been no progress on implementing Charter proposals leading to general disenchantment amongst stakeholders and residents.

Achievements/Innovation

- The Bantry Bay Project won the prestigious National Planning Achievement Award, 2000 (awarded by the Irish Planning Institute) and a Special Merit Award for its “innovative participatory process” by the European Council of Town Planners in 2002.
- Exemplary dissemination of project objectives and outcomes via media, leaflets, newsletters, exhibitions and educational materials.
- Information gathering via a range of participative research techniques: questionnaire surveys, audits, public meetings, workshops and email.
- Zoning plan for the Bay which gives specified users priority in certain areas.

Contacts

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Bibliography

Coastal Guide ICZM Information System

www.cefas.co.uk

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