

# GREENHEALTH project

## *Sustainable protected areas as a key value for human well-being*

**Report:** 2nd Interregional Learning Workshop &  
Study Visit (3rd Transnational Project Meeting)

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024

Location: Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim, Ireland



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## 1. Introduction

On 22 May 2024 the GREENHEALTH Project team held its 2<sup>nd</sup> GREENHEALTH Interregional Learning Workshop. The event was hosted by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA, PP04) in the Landmark Hotel in Carrick-on-Shannon, Ireland and gathered 30 participants. The Workshop first heard three presentations from the Irish Project Partner (PP) and stakeholders, then the project partners presented their Good Practice examples in small groups in a Marketplace style session. Next, a participatory event was held in the style of a World Café to **explore the benefits of partnerships** in promoting the project aims and finally, a project management meeting was held, which concluded Day 1 of the Workshop.

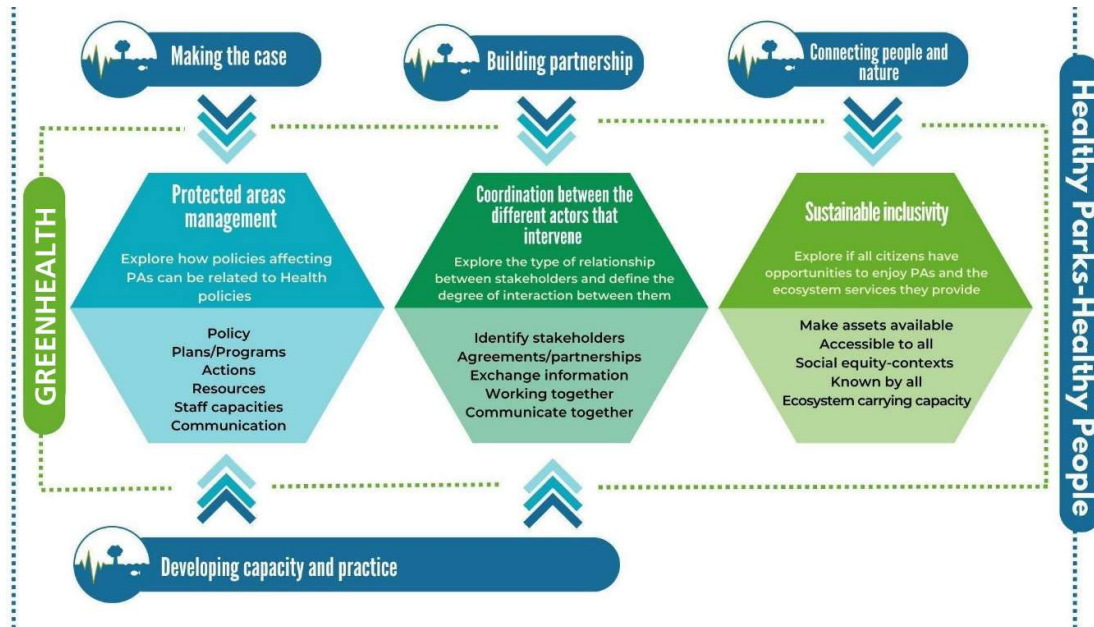
Day 2 of the meeting was a dedicated Study Visit to meet local stakeholders. First, a visit to Kinlough Community Centre was organised. Here, the project partners and stakeholders met with members of the Irish Local Living Lab and heard a presentation from Leitrim's Rural Recreational Officer. This networking opportunity was followed by a visit to local areas of interest, chosen by the local stakeholders, specifically Lough Melvin, Eagles Rock and Glencar Waterfall. After lunch a last stop of the Study Visit allowed the participants to walk along the Acres Lake Board Walk in Drumshanbo, which had been highlighted as part of the Good Practice initiatives presented the day before.

The workshop was a successful event at which the Project Partners discussed their Good Practices and evaluated them from the perspective of increasing coordination and building partnerships to achieve their individual goals of better park management with health benefits. One of the main aspects detected and a common need in all the best practices discussed in the workshop is the importance of implementing Monitoring & Evaluation schemes to capture the success of the initiatives performed. Also, cooperation with the health and social actors should be further enhanced, sharply aligning the initiatives with the project goals.

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## 2. Presentations

The presentations given during this workshop addressed the thematic area two of the project.



This thematic area focuses on: stakeholders’ coordination, including the creation of networks to enable collaboration at strategic and operational levels between health, environment and other stakeholders as well as investments in green infrastructures, including public spaces to promote human well-being.

**PRESENTER: Conall McGettigan- Senior Planner & Assistant Director, Northern and Western Regional Assembly**

**TITLE: Recent Policy Developments in Ireland**

Conall welcomed the partners to Leitrim and provided an introduction into nature, climate and planning policy in Ireland, explaining the NWRAs role in delivering these and how this relates to the GREENHEALTH project.

The overarching policy framework for Ireland is the National Planning Framework which is a multiyear vision for the country and how Ireland is going to grow, setting out priorities for investment. The Irish Climate Action Plan is also becoming increasingly important and influential for regional assemblies and local authorities. There is also a policy that is specific to rural Ireland, outside of towns and cities, impacting areas with

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populations below 5000 called 'Our Rural Future'. This policy is aimed to regenerate and sustain rural regions, which is particularly relevant to the Northern and Western Region as it is the most rural region in the county. In addition to these policies, the National Development Plan of Ireland sets out the priorities for development in the areas of Road, Rail, Public Transport, Active Transport, which runs to 2028/29 and is currently being reviewed to assess where the State will prioritise its spending.

The NWRA has responsibility for the [Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy \(RSES\)](#) which was adopted in 2020 and will be reviewed next year. The local councils of the Northern and Western Region take their lead from what is in the RSES in their County Plan and in their Climate Action Plan, which each local authority publishes individually and implements locally. The NWRA are also the contact point and the oversight body for European funding programmes.

Local elections will be held in June and a general election will be likely be announced by the end of the year. Currently, the Green Party are in Government and they have had a significant influence on travel policy and there has been an increase in investment and emphasis on active travel, trails, green ways, urban cycleways and public transport. This all stems from an agreement put in place four years ago in the Programme for Government that the spending ratio on capital projects would be 2:1. Any new road schemes or bypasses that there would only be 1 Euro put towards these, compared to 2 Euro for public transport.

There is a bypass proposed for Carrick-on-Shannon to circumnavigate the town. Public Schemes are now focused on active travel, how to increase the share of the road space and how to reduce the number of cars on the road. Looking at the Climate Action Plan, the State is hoping to increase onshore and offshore renewables, but the national grid is insufficient to carry the energy that is being generated in certain parts of the country. Therefore, there is a need for investment in capital projects to get the national grid up to speed. Ireland may not meet the target of reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 51% by 2030 while also raising the targeted improvement in energy efficiency in the public sector to 50% by 2030. There is an emphasis on rewilding and rewetting bogs and on less intensive farming, which is all down to the green influence in government. There is a detectable and gradual change in land use which signifies an effort towards nature restoration by our government. Earlier this year (2024), the government announced the creation of a new National Park in West Kerry, which is over land and sea with 70,000 acres overall, which includes the Blasket Islands, Connors Pass which is north of Dingle. The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) has the responsibility of managing the tourist and recreation sites. The NPWS hired more staff and each Natura 2000 site is supposed to have a management plan. At present, not all areas have one or they may not be implemented.

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**Regional Policy Objectives**

Specific to County Leitrim, and specific to the NWRA's role in the project, there is a Regional Policy Objective (RPO) in the RSES. In relation to RPO 5.3, the aim is to work with political and community representatives in the area, who consider that it is worthy of a designation as a protected area or a recognition of some sort that marks this area.

The Irish national parks are scattered around the country, several of them are located in the NW area. The GREENHEALTH group will visit this area on the following day as the Study visit of this meeting will be held there. Currently, NWRA would like to develop a more analytic work on this action and the area, which also has Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) in its vicinity. The Northern & Western region is host to many of the Country's National Parks, and to some significant sites beyond these Parks. In addition, the region supports a large number of sites designated for nature conservation including 215 SAC, 82 SPA, 86 Natural Heritage Areas (NHA), 21 Natural Nature Reserves and 16 Ramsar sites. In addition, there are important stepping stones and ecological corridors, which are of importance to wildlife.

**RPO 5.3**

The Assembly supports the consideration of the zone of:

- (i) North Sligo/North Leitrim (Benbulbin and its hinterland); and
- (ii) The area surrounding and including Lough Arrow/Lough Key.

as potential National Parks/National Recreation Areas. It supports collaboration in this regard with stakeholders including NPWS, Local Authorities, Dept. of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

**PRESENTER: Sinead McDermott, Tourism Officer, Leitrim County Council**

**TITLE: Slow Adventure Tourism in Rural Destinations**

Sinead welcomed everybody to 'Lovely Leitrim,' a very unspoilt and underdeveloped county with a population of 33, 000. Sinead gave a geographical overview of County Leitrim; it has Ireland's shortest coastline, and the River Shannon runs through it. It is popular for water sports and for walking and hiking. The Leitrim County Council have worked on the Slow Adventure in Rural Areas project from 2014 to 2019. Leitrim has always been a county promoting sustainable tourism. Through a previous project, the Green Box, it developed many practices and principles for the county with several properties obtaining the EU Flower. Leitrim also joined an EU project under the NPA Interreg Programme called SAINT (Slow Adventure Tourism in Northern Territories). The Project Partners were based in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Derry in Northern Ireland and Scotland. The aim of the project to research and develop the concept of Slow Adventure Tourism and identify principals and guidelines.

To achieve the project's objectives, they worked with existing trade providers, who were all already in situ and developed pilot experiences with them. They bought them

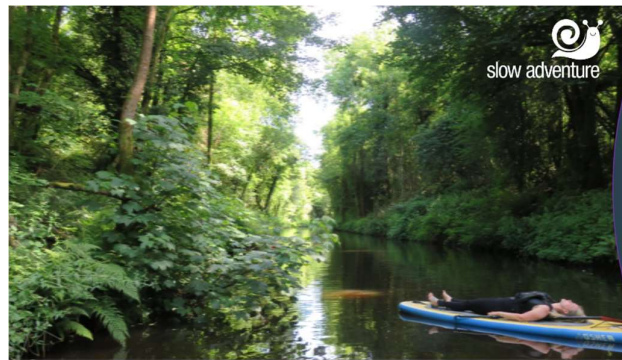


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on best practice trips to Scotland Derry and they participated at partner meetings. This was an invaluable experience because the traders learnt what was expected from the eyes of a tourist and they could network and form important relationships. Traders realised what the potential of Slow Adventure Tourism was.

Slow Adventure is defined as a form of tourism which avoids the quick-fix adrenalin-pumping hits of convenient adventure experiences, in favour of slow, immersive journeys, living in and travelling through wild places and natural spaces – experiencing nature in its timeframe, its seasons, its weathers and its variations. These journeys will typically include elements of the following:

- Wild food
- Wildlife
- Comfort in the outdoors
- Creating and enhancing people's understanding
- Human – or nature – powered travel
- An enhanced engagement with place



This picture embodies what [Slow Adventure](#) is all about. Yoga sessions are practiced on floating boards while doing stand-up paddling sessions. This offers complete relaxation and oneness with nature.

Leitrim was chosen because of its unspoilt Landscapes, low Mass Tourism numbers, an abundance of Outdoor Activities offerings, and access to communities, which is key to engage with locals. Leitrim could offer immersive experiences and sustainable practices and fitted the brief for Slow Adventure Tourism perfectly. Leitrim County Council worked with the tourism trade to develop Slow Adventure Experiences, they received accreditations for all the suppliers and then clustered their products.

A Slow Adventure Experience consists of a minimum of two activities with a Slow Food lunch or picnic using, where possible, human power travel. It offers a seamless transition from one activity to the next and focuses on immersive experiences using local guides and ingredients. Slow adventure experiences can be one day or multi day activities and the accommodation is preferably close to nature. It operates a 'leave no trace' policy and caters to many forms and fitness levels to suit everyone.

An example of an offering might include the following:

- Guided Cycle along the Shannon Blueway
- Enjoy light morning refreshments at Jinny's Bakery & café

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- Explore the waters of the 'Drumshamazon' while stand up paddle boarding with your guide Lee
- Learn about the Flora and Fauna along the waterways
- Continue your journey with a visit to the Shed Distillery
- Enjoy a slow food lunch followed by a visit to the distillery and tasting of their locally distilled Gunpowder gin and Drumshanbo single malt whiskey
- Return cycle to Leitrim Village

The next task was to bring these experiences to market. An International Trademark was established through the project, and it received international status. The Snail logo helps identify the trademark and it comes with standards associated with it. The project has a website - [www.slowadventure.ie](http://www.slowadventure.ie) and are across all social media platforms. Travel media stakeholders were invited to trail the experiences, report and write about them. A Virtual Reality show of a Slow Adventure experience was also produced and can be bought along to trade shows, which helps give people a taste of what it is. A legacy from the project is that the network still exists, and joint campaigns are run with Derry for international trade operators.

The Slow Adventure Tourism initiative in Ireland is closely linked with **Healthy Ireland** initiatives. Many of the Slow Adventure Experiences are designed to promote local activities and encourage locals to engage with the outdoors. Unlike other activities that can be competitive, Slow Adventure is about slowing down, connecting with nature, and getting a sense of place.

A Q&A session followed the presentation where Sinead explained the current success of the project, how accessible it is, the links to the SLOW FOOD sector and who can use the SNAIL logo, i.e. how to get the accreditation.

**PRESENTER: Eiméar Dowd – Regional Development Manager, Northern and Western Regional Assembly**

**TITLE: Healthy Ireland**

Eiméar previously worked as the Tourism Officer and supervised the [Healthy Ireland](#) initiative that runs across Ireland. Eiméar explained how the initiative includes national parks and relates to the project. In 2013 the Government launched a national framework called 'Healthy Ireland'. For the first time it gave all public bodies and all departments responsibility to enhance the health of everybody who lived in Ireland, recognising that the responsibility for health didn't solely lie with the Department of Health. Government Departments agreed that each had their own part to play in enhancing the health of the population. This was a direct response to changes in modern lifestyles with increasing levels of chronic illness, lifestyle behaviours that



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negatively impact health, and persistent health inequalities. The initiative is aimed at all generations and is a measure of preventative health care rather than reactive or prescriptive health care, being a bottom up, rather than a top-down approach.

Healthy Ireland has four central goals for improved health and well-being:

- 1) To increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life (particularly important in an ageing society)
- 2) To reduce health inequalities
- 3) To protect the public from threats to health and well-being
- 4) To create an environment where every individual and sector can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland (a holistic approach aimed at communities)

The initiative is to be delivered by a series of programmes that focus on different topics, through education, working in schools, the home, workplaces and community settings.

The strategic priorities focus on delivering objectives in the following areas: a Healthy Childhood, Tobacco Free, Alcohol, Positive Aging, Well-being and Mental Health, Healthy Eating and Active Living.



The initiative is funded by the 'Healthy Ireland Fund', which was made up of funding streams that focus on the above listed areas. It is disseminated through multiple public bodies and is granted to communities and individuals to deliver projects.

Healthy Ireland is the connector between the Health Service Executive and the Local Authorities, who are being given greater responsibility for community well-being as they have local links and better community presence. Before this was implemented, there was a gap. Although people were accessing health services, hospitals and doctors, they weren't seeing health as a part of their everyday life. This is an important example of 'joined up thinking'. Local Authorities seen as platform for community engagement and play an important role in encouraging joint efforts to improve health and well-being outcomes at local level.

Each Local Authority has a Healthy Ireland Coordinator, who supports the implementation of health and well-being programmes by working with Communities, Sports Partnerships, Rural Recreation Officer, Public Participation Networks, LEADER Groups etc. In the NWRA region there are nine Local Authorities covering a predominantly rural area. The programme of Healthy Ireland at county level is based on the local profile within the Irish Health Survey to tailor the county specific programme. Every county has their own platform which provides a demographic profile

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and specific challenges, which dictates the response by the coordinator. For Roscommon, for example, a 'Fit Farmers' programme was created, as the area has many older, isolated farmers living in rural areas. Other activities were tailored like those focusing on accessibility to activities like swimming, cycling, hiking events, health talks, food learning etc.

Another example of a Healthy Ireland initiative in the region is the [Roscommon Walks & Cycleways booklet](#) project. Roscommon has over 20 trails & cycleways but the information about these was disjointed and disconnected. Information about the trails is however crucial for those wanting to access them and spend time in nature. The initiative funded a project that produced the Roscommon Walks & Cycleways booklet in an accessible format, listing info such as: starting point, car parks, length, trail description, places of interest, accessibility for buggies/wheelchairs. The result of this was a huge uptake of visitors using the walks. It was shared a lot with an extended reach, helping spur on further investment into project like this due to favourable metrics. A local group developed a walk as part of this booklet initiative and were able to upgrade the path, get signage and get additional seating. A marketing campaign was built around the booklet and it now has social media presence too.



During the Q&A session, Eiméar explained the next steps of the project and how local groups are carrying the project forward and improving the trails and enjoyment of these.

### 3. Marketplace event- Good Practice Presentations

For the second part of the workshop Project Partners presented the Good Practice (GP) examples from their regions. In this Semester of the project, partners were asked to focus on the creation of partnerships and collaboration with stakeholders. A Marketplace-style session offered presenters the opportunity to speak to a smaller audience at a time during various rounds. The participants moved from table to table, at which they heard about the GP from a different region. The aim of this style of exchange is to allow for enhanced participation, and more vibrant sharing of ideas and feedback, providing an in-depth and individualised experience due to a different group in each round of presentation.

- 1) **Ana Tutavac from the Public Institution for the Management of Protected Natural Areas of Dubrovnik-Neretva County (PP03)** presented the GP: National Prevention Project „HEALTHY FOR 5!“ This is a project that brings together different stakeholders and pools their resources to implement innovative programmes and actions in the fields of health, environment and nature. It is run by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection and Ministry of Science, Education and Sports together with partners at county level (21 counties). It involves administrative Departments for Environmental and Nature Protection, Police Administrations, Institutes of Public Health, for Education, Culture, Science and Sport and Public Institutions for the Management of Protected Natural Areas.



The project aims to prevent addiction and abuse of cigarettes, alcohol, drugs and gambling and promote preventive and protective actions that help develop the socio-emotional skills in children and young people. It aims to raise awareness of one's own role in preserving the living, school and work environment and increase the self-awareness about responsibility of preserving one's own and others' health and safety. **The project aims to highlight the use of nature as a preventive, therapeutic and rehabilitative agents and increase the use and care of urban and peri-urban green areas to strengthen human health.**

The project is carried out continuously during the school years, and is intended for school children of the eighth grade of elementary school and students of the first and second grades of secondary schools. The project is delivered through interactive education and eco-workshops in schools and consists of two

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components: Addiction prevention (education/interactive workshops in the schools); and Nature Protection and landscaping (eco workshops, public manifestations).

2) **Francisco Soriano Rico from the General Directorate on Natural Environment of Murcia Region (LP01)** presented the GP: Collaboration in the form of a legal agreement between the Regional Ministries on Health and on Education and Culture. Through a legal commitment, both bodies coordinate across their respective competencies in relation to health education (including connection with the environment) in non-university teaching centres.

**This GP focused on the interaction between the federal ministries of health and education for the purpose of implementing effective and efficient common strategies aimed at improving health (nutrition, physical activity, use of technologies, connection with the environment) amongst the educational community.**

The actors involved are the General Directorate on Public Health (within the Regional Ministry of Health, competent in Health Education) and the General Directorate on Vocational Training and Educational Innovation (within the Regional Ministry of Education and Culture).

The Coordination Commission on Health Education in non-university Educational Centres was created allowing the intersectoral coordination and facilitating the implementation and development of the Health Education Plan (HEP) in educational centres.

The GP was initiated in 2005 and since last year (2023), it also includes an annual call for HEP projects to be delivered during the school year. 531 schools have participated so far in the programme, for at least one school year. Funded and implemented projects focused on topics such as:

- Food and nutrition, physical activity and exercise
- Responsible use of ICT: use of social networks, healthy lifestyles in a digital society, good practices and recommendations.
- Other lifestyles: environment, emotional education, affective-sexual education, self-care and accidents,
- Prevention of addictive substances, etc.

**The projects help raise awareness among students of the importance of paying attention to their daily practices and of taking care of the environment to improve their health and well-being.**



- 3) **Dariusz Kozik from the Landscape Parks Complex in Przemyśl (PP02 Stakeholder)** presented a GP in operation in the Podkarpackie region called: Resocialization and social readaptation of inmates.

**This project sees two Landscape Park Complexes (in Przemyśl and Krosno) work together with the prisons in Przemyśl and Łupków (and its branch in Moszczaniec) to organise various forms of activities for prison inmates, such as walking rallies, clean-up-the-world campaigns, cleaning cultural sites (e.g. Orthodox churches) and installing nesting boxes for birds. They also take part in lectures, competitions and do-it-yourself workshops where they make bird houses and feeders.** On average, ten people take part in each of these activities with an overall number of 300 prisoners having taken part since the inception of this initiative.

The project recognises that **physical activity in prison is an educational tool and an important measure in the social rehabilitation process. Outdoor recreation improves resistance to stress and fatigue, reduces anxiety, the risk of depression, and can play a significant role in preventing social pathology.**

The project activities engage inmates and help them develop a sensitivity to the surrounding nature; increasing the level of knowledge about the need to preserve and protect natural resources; promoting physical activity as very important for maintaining health. Joint activities are also aimed at preparing inmates for leaving prison and minimising the risk of returning to crime.



The project has helped expand knowledge about the values of landscape parks and nature, improving interpersonal relationships and motivated participants to adopt pro-ecological behaviours. It also increases the consciousness of the impact of physical activity and biodiversity on human well-being. The partners have already taken action in the area of research (in cooperation with the academic community) and developed a survey that will be addressed to prisons in protected areas. The aim is to learn about the impact of this type of action on both the well-being of prisoners and their awareness of the impact of biodiversity on health.



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4) **Charlotte May from the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (PP04)** presented on the Slow Adventure Tourism: Leitrim (Spotlight on Acres Lake).

This project offers tours in the region that **encourage visitors to stay in nature, enjoy bushcraft and foraging, paddle or canoe on water or cycle or walk by water**. Working with Leitrim County Council and local tourism providers, traders and communities, this boosts Leitrim's natural amenities, offering an alternative tourism.

This benefits the local economy as it sees an increase of visitors enjoying slow-paced, relaxing experiences in nature. A highlighted



feature of this project is the Acres Lake Board Walk amenity. This is a 600-meter floating Board Walk across Acres Lake and it is the first of its kind in Ireland. The Board Walk completes a 14km off-road trail and is a key element of the 200km Shannon Blueway Infrastructure. It was funded by the Department for Rural and Community Development and opened in 2017. The Board Walk was an idea born from an environmental and logistical constraint (water needed to be bridged but environment need to be protected). The project has seen the development of a natural asset in a sustainable way. It is built on key partnerships (Council, local groups, Waterways Ireland) and has become a visitor attraction, thus generating further funding and investment to develop the site.

5) **Soňa Kožárová from the Prešov Self – governing Region, Slovakia (PP05)** presented their project on partnership building in Poloniny to build cycle routes.

As a Regional Self-government, the Prešov Region has identified places or areas on its territory suitable for the development of cycle tourism. This is the territory of the Poloniny National Park. Here the region is building a cycle-circuit - suitable for all age groups - with 20 cycle rest areas along the route and 4 observation towers with activities such as birdwatching. The cycle trail and its associated investments are located in a rural area, in addition to a protected area, which currently has no development plan. The aim is to address both the problem of depopulation of the Snina district, which is also a less developed region in Eastern part of Slovakia



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(low GDP per capita) and **increase the potential for the development of ecotourism, specifically cycle-tourism, which has positive impacts on human health.**

The next steps of the project are to link all stakeholders in the territories, get them on board and communicate the benefits of soft tourism while also addressing the need to protect this precious territory. The data about the territory will also be collected with the needs of visitors (focus on cycle tourists). As a result, the aim is to see an increase in the number of cyclists on cycle routes in the area. Mayors, local communities, the health department of PSGR and the academic sector will all be taken on board.



**6) Daniel Aberg of the Kullaberg Nature Reserve, Sweden (PP06)** and his team presented on Good Practices and good cooperation work in the Kullaberg Nature Reserve.

The work the team is involved in addresses the challenge of finding a balance between the well-being of local people, the visitors and the conservation of biological diversity in the reserve. The aim is to ensure that everyone in the community has the opportunity to benefit from spending time in nature and improve the quality of the natural resource management and accessibility in Kullaberg Nature reserve by addressing the lack of cooperation between the reserve, the municipality and local actors / volunteers.

**The project aims to ensure both a high-quality visitor experience and the well-being of the local population, whilst promoting nature experiences to contribute to improved well-being for individuals of all ages and backgrounds.**

**Accessibility is prioritised and plans and implemented that ensure that individuals with disabilities can also enjoy the benefits of nature.**

**The Kullaberg Nature reserve team actively collaborate with local stakeholders and volunteer groups to expand their reach and enhance the impact of their initiatives.**

**They also collaborate with Höganäs municipality focusing on promoting health and well-being through nature experiences within the park.**

Activities organised that ensure everyone has the opportunity to benefit from spending time in nature include:

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- organized nature walks for elderly people and people with certain functional impairments;
- inclusive nature education sessions for school classes;
- education programs for school classes and
- integration efforts for newcomers.

The cooperation project is successful because it fosters partnerships with local authorities, engaging diverse target groups, and prioritizing accessibility. This approach demonstrates how parks and green spaces can become valuable assets for community health promotion.



After the presentations from the different GREENHEALTH project partners, EUROPARC team gathered the main common points stemming from all the six good practices on the theme of ‘coordination’ with different actors & building partnerships for nature and health.

This thread was summarised through some keywords:



Two exemplary good practices on ‘Building Partnerships’ from the HPHPe Commission were introduced **to highlight successful ways of working in partnerships and prepare the ground for the mutual learning session to consider further areas of application of the own good practices:**

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7) **Carles Castell Puig, Environmental Programmes, Climate Action Area, Provincial Council of Barcelona (AP07 - HPHPe Commission)** presented the GP project called: Table of Health and Nature of Catalunya.

The Table of Health and Nature is a forum of public and private agents (administrations, non-profit entities, research, business sector) focused on implementing a paradigm shift, which sees nature as an essential guarantor of the integral health and well-being of people. The forum was initiated based on the necessity to coordinate and improve existing and new initiatives in the areas of health and nature. The project involves public administration, NGOs, research centres, private companies and individuals who come together to create a common umbrella as a networking / community of practitioners, sharing resources and assets.

The project arose from the need to coordinate, strengthen and spread initiatives addressing health and nature. Several local and specific initiatives had developed in Catalunya but there was a lack of communication, coordination, support and resources. Debates amongst stakeholders led to the “**Declaration of Interdependence between Health & Nature**”. As a result, a ‘**Table of Health & Nature of Catalonia (Steering Committee)**’ was created. The Table works towards:

- **spreading the nature prescription;**
- **integrating health and nature in territorial, urban and infrastructure plans;**
- **conserving and restoring agricultural spaces and natural heritage;**
- **increasing and improving urban and peri-urban green and blue infrastructure**

**The Table also aims to highlight natural assets and run pilot projects, as well as running health impact assessment on development plans and integrates health and nature in urban plans of several municipalities.** It encourages the protection and restoration plans and projects in areas of interest. To achieve its goal, the Table also works on the Catalan strategy of Green Infrastructure, including training and communication activities. The Table requires the involvement of key partners working towards common objectives, achieving a progressive level of actions, adapted and reactive to local issues.

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8) Peter Rawcliff from NatureScot (AP07 - HPHPe Commission) presented on Developing Scotland's Natural Health Service GP.

The Scottish Natural Health Service is a long-term national programme. It aligns and co-ordinates cross-sectoral working with health and other sectors to deliver a common goal of realising the potential of Scotland's outdoors as a valuable resource for health and well-being. Its aim is to make better use of Scotland's outdoors to improve outcomes for people and nature. Using a multi-sector approach the project delivers a stronger alignment, coordination and improved delivery of health and environment policy and practice. Key stakeholders are the national government, public agencies, local government, third sector (national and local NGOs and community groups), as well as universities.

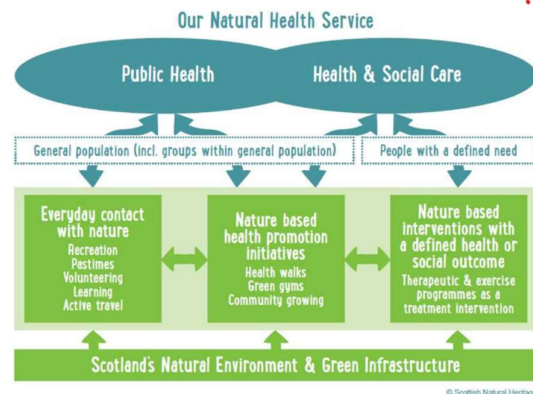
The project aims to improve people's health and well-being through greater use of green environments and nature. Additionally, the project aims to **increase public awareness of the use and benefits of nature** as part of daily life and include the **use of nature-based health solutions in routine health and social care practice**.

The project is implemented via a national programme using research and policy to inform the actions, shared communication materials and campaigns. Additionally, (EU) Investment in green infrastructure supports the project and has seen the piloting of NHS greenspace, biodiversity and *Green Health* demonstration projects, including four local Green Health partnership pilot projects. The project has seen an improved cross sector approach; the initiation of pilot projects and embedding of NHS greenspace, biodiversity and Green Health partnerships within health policy and practice.

Key success factor of the project has been the strong national context – (e.g. the importance of national and local champions either individuals or organisations).

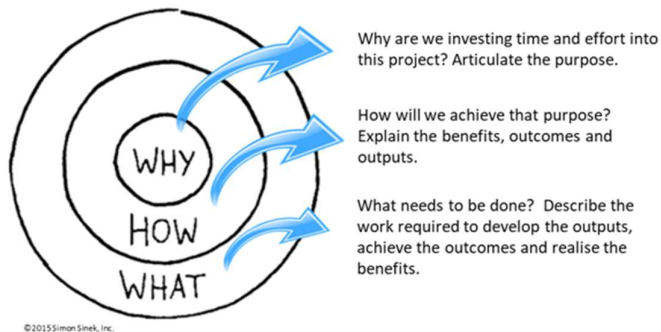
**Improved coordination of shared outcomes leads to collaborative programmes with a clear link to health priorities.**

The project has relied on **local partnerships and on building on existing assets and places to determine activities. Funding is diversified** and drawn from different budgets. A long-term commitment and seed funding based on monitoring and evaluation (process and health outcomes) are essential.



## 4. World Café event- Partnerships (Why, Who, What?)

Next on the agenda was an interactive, participatory session exploring the benefits of building partnerships, in particular between the parks and health sectors. The aim of the workshop was to elaborate and interrogate the opportunities and challenges in this area for the GREENHEALTH partners. A World Café style process was adopted to structure the conversation and share knowledge in small groups. Discussing the topic of partnerships in several small tables, like those in a café enabled everyone to contribute and continue the learning from the Marketplace event held prior.



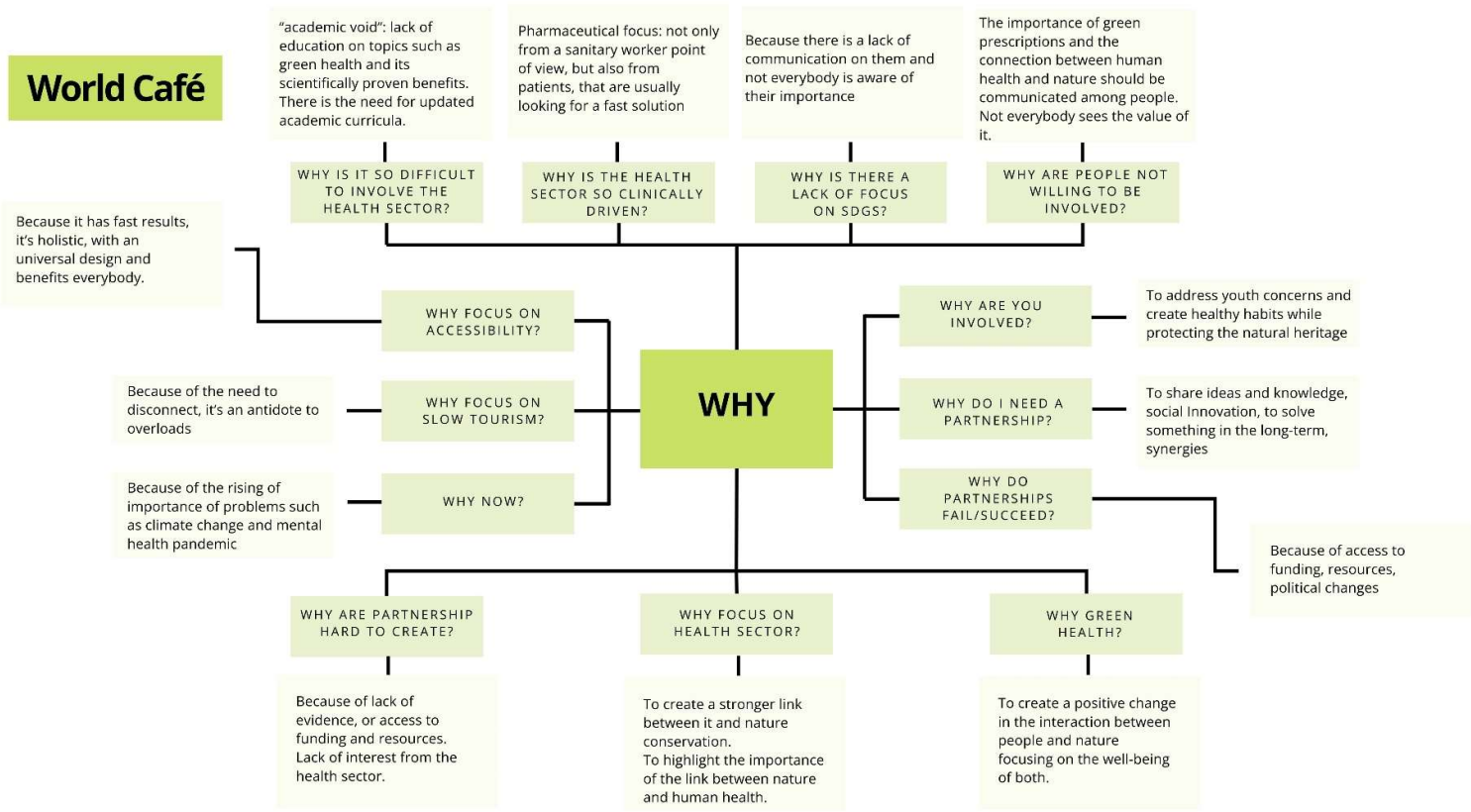
Each table was prompted to address the WHY? HOW? WHAT? questions in relation to partnerships and draw on the Good Practices they had presented earlier considering the Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe toolkit. The intention was to tease out the

aspects that make the building and maintaining of partnerships work.

Three rounds of discussions with an allotted time length were given to discuss the questions. Participants moved between tables to cover all three questions. Each round has a specific structure, first, the participants were asked to identify key questions and collect these on a flip chart, then the participants were asked to focus on common questions and discuss these in more detail and lastly to relate these to their GP to try to focus on what would improve and develop its 'building of partnership'. The following images summarise the harvested information from the tables by the table hosts.

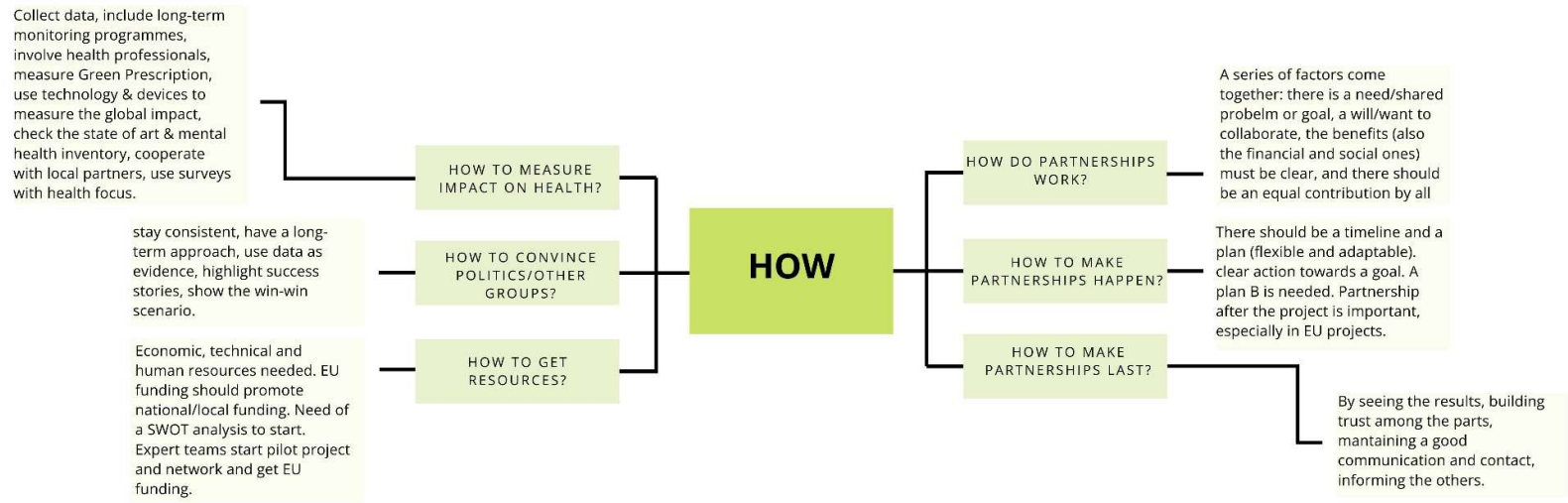
The following pictures are mind maps graphs made up of the discussions had at the workshop tables, the content of which is captured therein:

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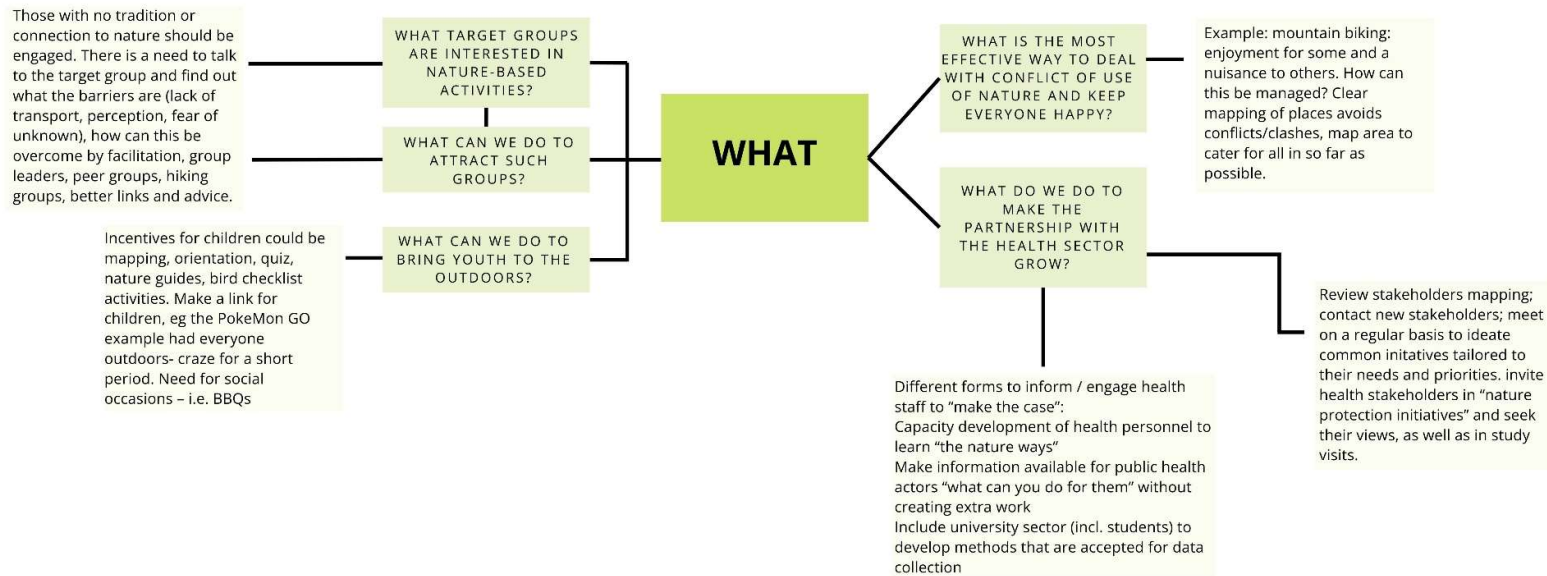




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## 5. Conclusions:

The areas for potential transfer from one good practice to another will be summarised by each individual partner in the GREENHEALTH SWOT analysis template.

Carol Ritchie (EUROPARC Federation) reminds the group of an important aspect generated from the discussions: selecting the right interlocutors for the partnerships and the identification of the Good Practices. Partners are invited to revisit the stakeholder map that was compiled in a joint session in June 2023. It is an ongoing process to consider who is missing and who should continue working with each region.

The main areas to further strengthen the partnerships, a common need in all best practices relates to the 'metrics' and the data availability: the implementation of monitoring and evaluation schemes for the success of the initiatives executed. EUROPARC Federation can support partners on this end. Some tools (e.g. inspiration toolbox) have been shared already and partners are welcome to use these.

In addition to this, a more explicit link with the health sector and stronger cooperation with the health and social actors is necessary to elevate the relevance of the practices towards the project objectives. Following the HPHPe toolkit methodology, the recommendations from the exchange sessions and consulting the inspiration toolbox can help the partners in this. EUROPARC Federation will continue to support in the following semesters with the Healthy Parks Healthy People Commission expertise. Carol also reminds the group that EUROPARC has a European Nature Academy, which could be used for capacity building.

## 7. Study Visit

On Day 2 of the Interregional project meeting and workshop, the group were invited to meet members of the Local Living Lab and network with the local Stakeholders.

First, the group travelled to Kinlough and was hosted in the Kinlough Community Centre by local community members and councillors. **Emma O'Hagan** - the **Rural Recreation Officer for Leitrim County Council** - welcomed the group and spoke about her work on the national **Walks Scheme**.

The latter is managed by the Rural Recreation Officer and is aimed at private landholders to include and involve them in the **development, enhancement and maintenance of developed trails**. Although the walks in the county are usually maintained by landowners, they can also be maintained by mountain Méithál groups (Irish for working in a team), and Rural Social Scheme workers. The trails can also be owned and managed by the County Council.

A large trail in Leitrim is “the Leitrim Way”, which is a 62km trail and plays a **vital role in enhancing Leitrim’s Outdoor recreational offerings**. Other trails in Leitrim include Fowley’s Falls, O Rourke’s Table, Keeldra Lake looped walk, Mullagharve Mass Rock (and more) along with the Blueways and Greenways.

Each trail undergoes an yearly assessment, which normally takes place during April/May. It is especially important to have the trails in good condition for this time of year. Emma also presented an example of how to maintain trails using techniques that date back to the Roman era, using sheep wool to pack the ground.

In 2013, Leitrim formed Ireland’s first Recreation Forum and in 2023, Leitrim Development Company launched the **County Outdoor Recreational Strategy**.

There are three working groups which addresses various aspects of the strategy, which then feeds into Leitrim’s Recreation Forum:

- The Walking/Cycling Working Group;
- The Greenways Working Group;
- The Waterways Working Group.

The Leitrim Recreation Forum aims **to facilitate and pursue accessible, high quality outdoor recreational amenities, engaging best practices for sustainable environmental, tourism and economic development through a partnership with all stakeholders**. Lastly, Emma highlighted an upcoming conference that is being organised in Leitrim: The National Trail Conference (31 August - 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024, Carrick-on-Shannon).

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Next, the group were taken on a tour of local sites of significance and that the community group wanted to highlight. The group stopped at Lough Melvin, Eagles Rock and the Glencar Waterfall before a networking lunch in Drumcliff, Co. Sligo. After lunch the group went to see and experience the Acres Lake Boardwalk in Drumshanbo, a GP that had been highlighted by the Irish partner the day before.

## ANNEX I- AGENDA

**2nd Interregional Learning Workshop  
3rd Transnational Project Meeting and study visit.  
22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024  
Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim, Ireland**

### AGENDA

TUESDAY, 21 May 2024	
Partners' arrival to Carrick-On-Shannon, Co. Leitrim	
<b>20:00h</b> Informal dinner in The Landmark Hotel, Carrick-on-Shannon <a href="https://www.thelandmarkhotel.com/">https://www.thelandmarkhotel.com/</a>	
WEDNESDAY, 22 May 2024	
<b>SECOND INTERREGIONAL LEARNING WORKSHOP</b> (open to partners and their stakeholders)	
<b>Venue:</b> Suite 2, The Landmark Hotel, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co Leitrim <a href="https://www.thelandmarkhotel.com/">https://www.thelandmarkhotel.com/</a>	
<b>09:00h - 09:15h</b>	Official Opening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conall McGettigan, Assistant Director, NWRA (Recent Policy Developments in Ireland)</li> </ul>
<b>09:15h - 10:15h</b>	Guest Speakers (including Q & A) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sinead McDermott, Leitrim Tourism Officer, Leitrim County Council (Slow Adventure Tourism)</li> <li>● Eimear Dowd, Regional Development Manager, NWRA (Healthy Ireland)</li> </ul>
<b>10:15h</b>	Coffee break and Networking
<b>10:45h - 12:45h</b>	Marketplace: Good Practice Presentations from partners
<b>12:45h – 13:30h</b>	Lunch & Networking
<b>13:30h - 15:30h</b>	World Café and interactive training discussion on partnerships. <i>Coordinated by EUROPARC Federation</i> <i>(with refreshments @3pm)</i>



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16:00h - 17:00h	Project Management Meeting (Partners Only)
<b>20:00 Networking dinner in The Oarsman, Carrick on Shannon</b> <a href="https://theoarsman.com/">https://theoarsman.com/</a>	
THURSDAY, 23 May 2024	
<b>STUDY VISIT</b>	
9:00h - Meeting point Landmark Hotel Reception	
9:30h - 10:30h	Travel to Kinlough, County Leitrim
10:30h - 11:00h	Local presentation and networking with Stakeholders and members of Kinlough Community Venu: Kinlough Community Centre (including refreshments)
11:00h - 13:00h	Site visit to Kinlough with Emma O'Hagan, Rural Recreational Officer, Leitrim County Council
13:30h - 15:00h	Lunch in Yates Restaurant, Drumcliffe
15:00h - 16:00h	Travel to Acres Lake, Drumshanbo
16:00h - 16:30h	Visit Acres Lake Boardwalk
17:00h	Return to Carrick-on-Shannon

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# ANNEX III PHOTOS



*Workshop presentations*



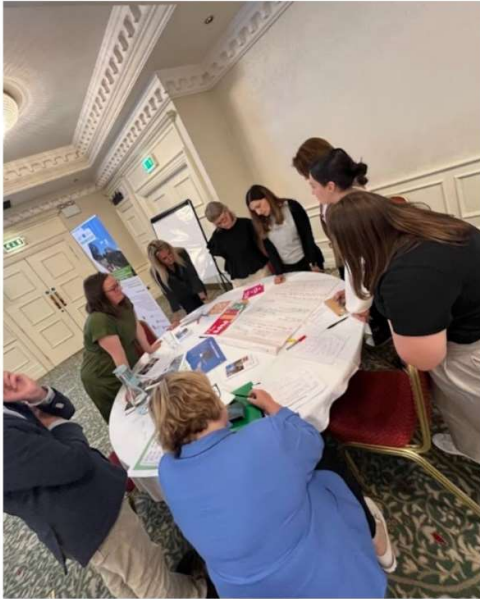
*Project Partners during the Workshop*



*EUROPARC partners at Eagles Rock*



*Rural Recreation Officer Emma*



*Partners at the World Café event*



*Glencar Waterfall*

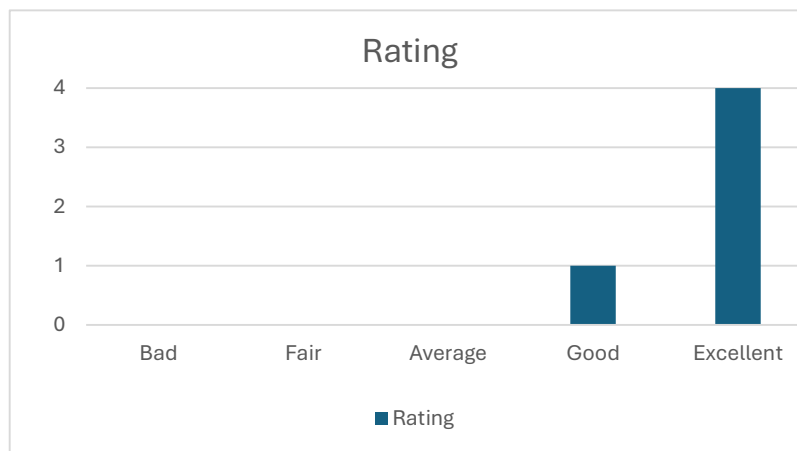
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## ANNEX IV WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Participants were sent a link to an anonymous evaluation survey by email. The link took them to the Survey website (Survey Monkey). 5 responses were collected. Below is an overview of the feedback:



**Q1: Overall facilitation and organisation of the Workshop (please comment or rate from 1 (bad) to 5 (good))**



**Q2: How did the speakers and presentations support the development of your Good Practices:**

- *'It was very useful to get to know other partners GP approaches. Having Europac HPHP experts and Ireland regional stakeholders in the room was very inspiring as well'*
- *'I got new ideas on how to improve our good practice'.*



- *'4'*
- *'the participants supported the development of quality cycling infrastructure for tourism development in the Poloniny National Park with the intention of strengthening the links between biodiversity conservation and human health'*
- *'There were many inspiring moments in presentations, I like the systematic approach and good cooperation of all related institutions and stakeholders which seems you all are on the same boat. We will for sure use some highlights from presentations regarding slow tourism and also from information presented in Kinlough hub'*

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**Q3: Did the Workshop/ Site Visit create opportunities for networking and knowledge sharing? If so please describe these:**

- *'Yes, it was very interesting to get to know the Walk Scheme by Rural Recreation Officer, mainly the management approach and its maintenance'*
- *'Yes. Through the workshop, I gained new knowledge that I will use in my future work'*
- *'2'*
- *'yes, it was an opportunity for networking and future cooperation, especially on the Slovak and Polish side'*
- *'Yes, all workshops were extremely interactive and full of knowledge sharing and exchange of know-how, we do appreciate it very much'*



**Q4: Were the Marketplace discussions/World Cafe a useful method for the purposes of knowledge sharing? Any comments?**

- *'Yes, it was very dynamic. Perhaps having in advance other partners GPs brief description would have been very useful for us'*
- *'Yes'*
- *'4'*
- *'yes, useful'*
- *'Yes we enjoyed it very much'*

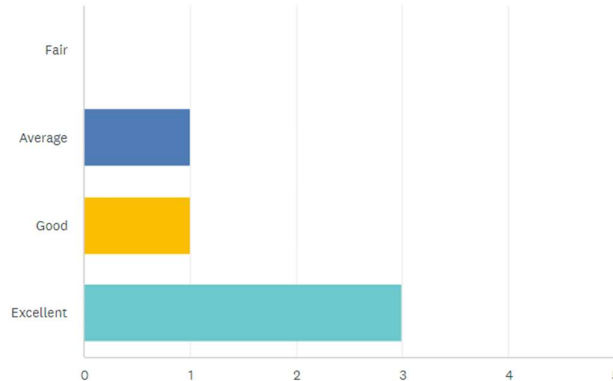
**Q5: Relevance of Workshop discussions to policy makers in my country?**



**Q6: What parts of the Workshop can be used to support the development of the Good Practice in your County?**

- *The matter to be aware what other partners territories are doing in different topics. However, I think we will have to ask for extended information in some cases.*
- *Marketplace discussion.*
- *Networking*
- *field visits to sites*
- *Those interactive exchange of best practices from different countries*

**Q7: Overall organisation and logistics of the Site Visit?**



**Q8: Any feedback on the relevance of the Site Visit to Kinlough and Acres Lake to the Workshop aims?**

- *'Very interesting the speech from the Rural Recreation Officer'*
- *'It would be better to visit few places and dedicate more time to talk to local stakeholders and discuss GP on the field'*
- *'inspiring examples of good practice from abroad to prepare new projects in line with nature conservation'*
- *'For me it was worth to visit those places, they tackled the same problems when we do know, so for our institutions this could be a very good practice and the guide of how to do it'*

**Q9: Other comments on the Workshop/visit or suggestions for improvement:**

- *'Everything was more than fine'*
- *'It's a pity that Study Visit was all in a hurry'*
- *' '*
- *'Big thanks to all great Ireland team, your hospitality and food was endless :).'*