



## 1. Overview

Tralee Bay Wetlands Centre is conceived and planned by Tralee Town Council as an innovative, sustainable and authentic 'must see' visitor attraction, developed to the highest international standards, aimed at attracting new overseas and domestic tourists to Tralee and the wider South-West region. The project, costing €4.5m to develop, is jointly funded by Tralee Town Council and Fáilte Ireland under the National Development Plan (2007-13). It is expected to attract up to 70,000 visitors per annum at peak.

The project is unique in the South of Ireland and interweaves nature and eco tourism, soft adventure and water based activities and all-weather family facilities at a strategic location on the gateway to the Dingle Peninsula. It will greatly enhance the visitor product offering in Tralee and its attractiveness to day visitors and as an overnight destination.

The project utilises the rich natural heritage of the Tralee Bay area - a nature reserve of international importance - and 'exploits' it (without interfering with it in any physical way) to create an experiential visitor attraction that engages the visitor at different levels and includes a number of novel elements. (e.g. a safari-style boat ride).

The eco-friendly Visitor Centre will also act as an interpretation, orientation and resource centre for the natural attractions of North and West Kerry spreading tourism spend to outlying areas. It is also hoped that the centre will be used as a base for voluntary groups and organisations involved in researching, conserving and highlighting the Tralee Bay ecosystem.



## 2. Main Elements

The development, covering approximately 10 hectares, consists of 3 main elements:

(1) **Activity Zone**, which will be free to access, consisting of walks, cycleway, car and coach park, light railway terminus, picnic area, 'learn to fish' pond and 2.5 ha. manmade lake suitable for light watersports (pedal boats, canoes etc which will be available to the public to rent).



(2) Nature Zone (pay area) focusing on the Tralee Bay Nature Reserve consisting of fresh and saltwater wetlands, walks, bird hides, dipping pond, and 20 metre high viewing tower with full disable access. It also includes a safari-style boating experience consisting of four battery powered boats, each accommodating up to 8 people including the operator/guide.



(3) Wetlands Visitor Centre (600 sq. m) which links both activity and nature zones and includes a visitor interpretation / orientation area (pay area) consisting of static and interactive displays and audio-visual presentation which introduces visitors to the Tralee Bay ecosystem. Access to the Nature Zone is via the Visitor Centre.

English speaking visitors will receive guided tours of the nature zone and multilingual audio guides will be provided in the major European languages.

The Visitor Centre has a staff room, utility spaces and manager's office, as well as public toilets, Café (to be leased) and shop area. The lakeside Café opens onto a large veranda which overlooks the lake.



### 3. Operation

The Centre and Park will be operated and managed by the Tralee Bay Wetlands Co Ltd. It will have 3 full-time staff - Centre Manager, Ecologist/Assistant Manager and Administrative Assistant. There will be further vacancies for receptionist /sales assistants, tour guides, boating operators/attendants to be recruited by the company on a part-time and seasonal basis. Volunteers will be sought to assist with the operation, education, outreach and special event programmes. The Centre will work closely with the other Tralee attractions.

The Manager will have overall responsibility for the day-to-day management and operation of the centre, reporting to the management board appointed by the Company.

The Centre will open in late March 2011 and opening hours will typically be from 10am-5pm between April and October (later in July/August). Winter opening hours will be determined by visitor demand.