

## **Collaborative sustainable development in drive tourism on the Wild Atlantic Way: A community perspective.**

**Authors:** *Kelly Maguire & Dr James Hanrahan (IT Sligo).*

The Wild Atlantic Way (WAW) large-scale drive tourism route is unique in Ireland in that it runs for 2500km of coastline from Donegal to West Cork. It incorporates hundreds of coastal communities on the extreme periphery of Europe. The success of drive tourism depends on the level of community collaboration and engagement in tourism developments (ITIC, 2011; WTTC, 2013; Timothy & Boyd, 2015), especially since communities have been identified as vital to a tourist's experience (Carson et al, 2002). However obtaining community support and collaboration in such tourism developments can be difficult to attain. In order to achieve collaborative sustainable development in drive tourism on the WAW, community engagement is required to sustain this product and to further grow its potential. As such this drive tourism product requires a careful collaborative planning and management approach to sustainably develop the route and to ensure its longevity.

The aim of this research was to assess the level of community collaboration and engagement with drive tourism on the WAW. In order to determine the specific levels of community engagement in this drive tourism product, a blended qualitative and quantitative methodology was employed. The questionnaire and qualitative interviews were conducted with a representative sample of community members along the WAW from Kinsale to Malin. This particular approach allowed for a valuable representation of results in relation to community collaboration in drive tourism in Ireland. The collected data was analysed using SPSS and NVIVO to produce findings. Analysis provided a valuable insight into community perspectives on the WAW while revealing a high level of awareness of the WAW and a basic understanding of the overall concept. The research identified at this early stage of the WAW product development lifecycle, a moderate level of community collaboration and engagement with the WAW. A limitation encountered with this study involved non engagement of the community. Finally this paper concludes that while there are moderate levels of community engagement with the drive tourism product, there is a significant level of community support for the development of this drive tourism product in Ireland.

Acknowledgement of funding for this research is given to Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority of Ireland.

**Keywords:** Community Engagement, Community Collaboration, Drive Tourism, Sustainable Development, Wild Atlantic Way.

### **Introduction**

The WAW is Ireland's first long distance drive touring route stretching for 2500km along the Atlantic coast, on the western coastline from Donegal to West Cork. This large-scale drive-touring route has the ability to provide and serve a variety of important social, economic and political purposes (Timothy & Boyd, 2015), which are highly beneficial in sustainably developing a destination. Large-scale drive tourism routes in Ireland are a relatively new concept, which is still in the early stages of the product development lifecycle. However it has been a significant development in modern Irish Tourism (Ring, 2015). The WAW drive tourism route incorporates hundreds of coastal communities along the entire 2500km route, which offers a unique opportunity to experience local culture and

community life. In fact, it has been noted, “There is no better way to get to know a place than through the eyes of its people” (Fáilte Ireland, 2014). As a result, community engagement with the WAW is key to the success of the tourism product and is a vehicle for its development. Therefore, in order to sustain this product and to grow and develop its potential, the local community along the WAW may play a significant role.

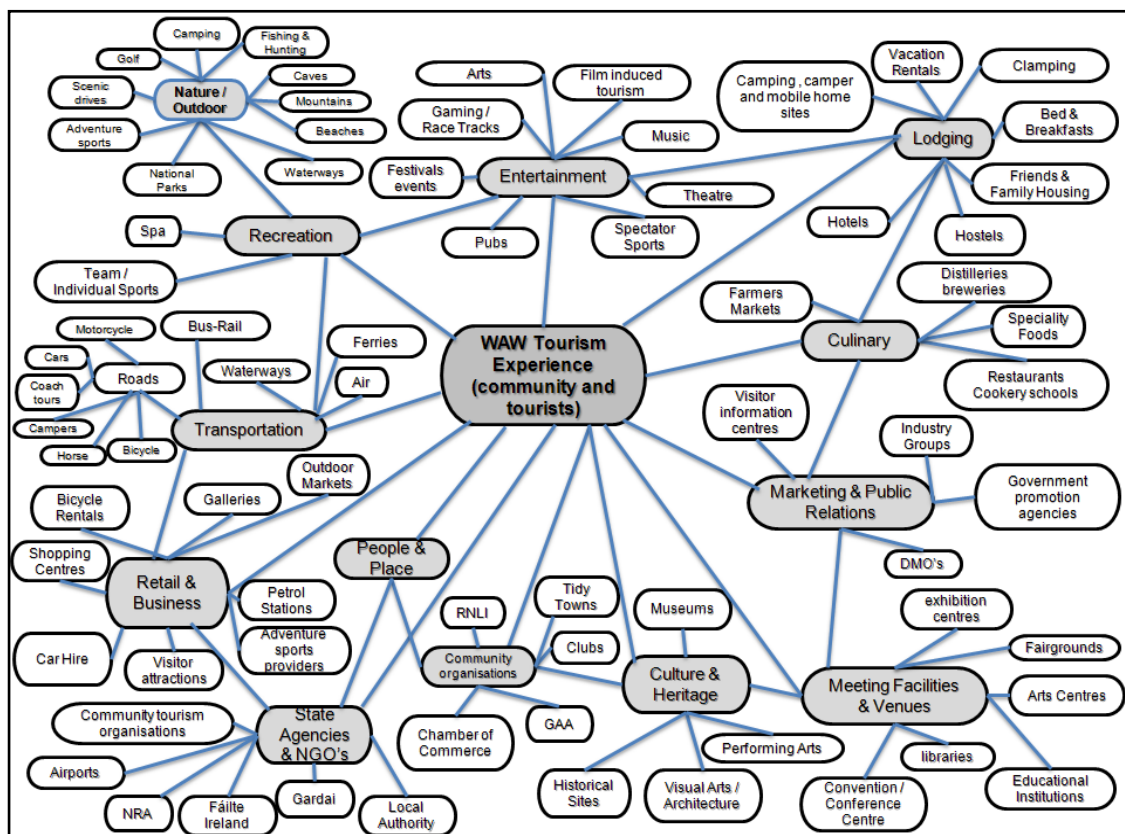
In particular, community collaboration in drive tourism is fundamental to its sustainable development (Bramwell & Lane, 2000; Schmitz, 2010; Timothy & Boyd, 2015). However involving the community to engage in the development and management of drive-touring routes can prove to be a difficult task (Buckley, 2012). Nevertheless involving the local community at great length has been identified as an essential factor in implementing trial and route development (Hugo, 1999; Timothy & Boyd, 2015). Similarly local communities have been noted to form the setting of almost every tourism product and visitor experience (Salter, Luhrs & Hickton, 2015). As a result, their influence in sustainably developing drive tourism routes cannot be ignored. In fact, it is essential to maximize the benefits of tourism to local communities (Bogdan, 2011) while also minimising the negative impacts of tourism (Ashley, Boyd & Goodwin, 2000) and maintaining the quality of the tourism product (Goodwin, 2010). Consequently, for years, communities have been hostile towards tourism development (Kreag, 2001; Beeton, 2006; Bahae, Pisani, & Shavakh, 2014). However, nowadays, with increased benefits to be derived from community participation, communities have begun to realise the positive economic benefits to local residents from community-based tourism initiatives (Bramwell & Lane, 2000; Mehmetoglu, 2001). Coupled with this, drive-touring routes have the ability to create a more positive image and cultivate a sense of community pride (Markwell et al, 2004), thereby enhancing the community quality of life (Yoon, 2002; Greiner, 2010). Yet, to ensure that these benefits occur and are sustainable requires planning that is sensitive to a community’s needs and attitudes towards tourism development (Fredaline & Faulkner, 2000). For this reason, the sustainable development of this route requires a careful planning and management approach, which involves the integration and collaboration of stakeholders such as host communities. This paper therefore provides an insight into the complexity of community collaboration and engagement with the WAW while reviewing the collaborative sustainable development of drive tourism on the WAW.

### **Community Collaboration and engagement with Drive Tourism**

Community collaboration and engagement can influence how tourism is developed in a community (Simpson, 2008; STCRC, 2010; Jamal, Taillon & Dredge, 2011; Stone, 2012; DECLG, 2014). Moreover it can influence how a drive tourism product can be sustainably developed to maintain the longevity of the route (Hardy, 2003; Goodwin & Santilli, 2009) and to increase its economic potential (Kennell & McLeod, 2009; Hall, 2011). Conversely, drive tourism is not just about the economic benefits derived from the tourism product (Dwyer & Spurr, 2011). For a tourism product to be sustained, environmental and societal concerns need to be taken into consideration also (Griffin, 2006). Following this, the success of any drive tourism initiative depends on a significant level of community involvement and cooperation (Carson, Waller & Scott, 2002; Timothy & Boyd, 2015). However a host community is often overlooked as a key stakeholder in the management and sustainability of the destination (Dimmock & Musa, 2015). Nevertheless, it is vital to stress that communities can play a central role in influencing drive holidays as they capture increased numbers of rubber traffic along current pathways (Hardy, 2006). Crucially, communities have the ability to enhance the quality of the visitor experience (Carson et al, 2002; Hayes & MacLeod, 2007) as well as manage and market the destination (Presenza, Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005) and the tourism route. This is supported by Olsen (2002) who suggests that; “travellers are now seeking real experiences and local information as opposed to things on appearance seems “touristy”. This highlights the possible importance of community collaboration and engagement in drive tourism on the WAW.

Drive tourism is an economically important industry evidenced by increased visitor numbers and tourism expenditure to the west coast of Ireland. Overall visitor numbers in Ireland grew by 9% and foreign earnings increased 13% in 2014, with 60% of businesses on the WAW reporting optimistic benefits for businesses within communities (Fáilte Ireland, 2014). However to maintain its economic value, it must be sustainable in protecting its natural landscapes and ecosystems, encouraging community support and safeguarding its overall financial and cultural viability. Furthermore to support its growth and development, collaboration between various community stakeholders is needed (Getz & Jamal, 1994; Timothy & Tosun, 2003). More importantly collaboration with host communities is essential (Liu, 2003; Choi & Sirakaya, 2006). Significantly the WAW is made up of a range of different stakeholders including local residents, business providers, community voluntary groups, state agencies and NGO's. These stakeholders hold the key to dynamic product development along the WAW. To understand community collaboration and engagement on the WAW, it is important to understand the complexity of the WAW community stakeholder relationship. Figure 1 illustrates the complexity of the community stakeholder relationship on the WAW.

**Figure 1 Complexity of WAW community stakeholder relationship**



The collaborative relationship between the various stakeholders on the WAW is quite complex. Likewise, the complexity of these stakeholder relationships is interlinked with tourist experiences and tourist perceptions of a destination. As such, the development of tourism products therefore depends on an equal collaborative relationship between communities, businesses, residents, state agencies and other various stakeholders (Fyall & Garrod, 2005), shown above. In fact, collaboration and engagement are essential aspects of the tourist experience (Jamal & Stronza, 2009), which can affect the way tourism is developed in communities along the WAW. More significantly, the relationship between local residents and the wider community are affected indefinitely by tourism development (Jurowski et al, 2013; Kim, Uysal & Sirgy, 2013). Therefore incorporating the views and

concerns of multiple stakeholders makes it easier to achieve the collaborative sustainable development outcomes of tourism.

Additionally, the WAW tourist experience offers interactions with communities and tourists alike. This contact and communication demonstrates that communities are key to a tourist experience in a destination. Hence, the need for effective long lasting community collaboration and engagement is required for tourism planning and development. According to Liu & Wall (2006) tourism planning should take tourists and host communities into account on an equal basis. As a result resident attitudes and perceptions towards tourism are an essential point of departure for tourism planning, aimed at providing an enjoyable tourism product for both tourists and residents (Choi, 2004). Moreover the perceived benefits of tourism as well as neighborhood conditions and trust in tourism institutions can essentially affect the overall community satisfaction and support for tourism developments (Nunkoo & Ramkisson, 2011). For this reason, collaboration and engagement processes require management, in some cases by Local Authorities or state agencies (DECLG, 2014). Thus, it is of significant importance that the complex relationships between stakeholders and the collaboration and engagement of host communities is managed to maintain high quality product development.

### **Collaborative Sustainable Development of Drive Tourism on the WAW**

The sustainable development of drive tourism on the WAW is essential for each stakeholder based along the entire 2500km route. This is due to the fact that the aim of such a drive tourism product is to attract additional visitors to rural destinations and enhance economic growth within communities and the local economy. More specifically the sustainable development of drive tourism can contribute to the longevity of the route and encourage civic pride and community support. From a tourist perspective it can provide visitors with a high quality experience and greater environmental awareness (Lepp, 2007; Shrestha, Stein & Clarke, 2007; Lee, 2011). However it is important that an understanding of drive tourism and its impacts, both positive and negative upon local communities is needed to facilitate sustainable decision-making and policy development (Hardy, 2006). As such an understanding of drive tourism is important in improving its development in a sustainable manner (Carson & Waller, 2002). Consequently the sustainable development of drive tourism is difficult without the assistance, support and participation of community residents (Fallon & Kriwoken, 2003; Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Nichola, Thapa & Ko, 2009; Hung Lee, 2013). Further, without community assistance there is greater potential to cause friction between local communities and travellers, which have been noted, would jeopardise the achievement of sustainable tourism development (Hardy, Beeton & Pearson, 2002). Therefore, community collaboration is vital in achieving sustainability in drive tourism development. As a result, the importance of a holistic and integrated stakeholder approach to the sustainable development of drive tourism cannot be underestimated and is essentially required. This can effectively facilitate the implementation of iconic drive touring routes in Ireland.

Collaborative stakeholder involvement is critical throughout the entire planning process of sustainably developing drive tourism (McNamara & Prideaux, 2011). It has been suggested that collaboration and cooperation are important principles in any tourism endeavor. In fact collaboration is not considered a luxury but a necessity for destinations to survive in the face of considerable competition and environmental challenges (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert & Wanhill, 2008). The recognition of the importance of tourism to deliver positive social, economic and environmental outcomes is required to achieve sustainability in tourism development (Dredge & Jenkins, 2007). In particular the sustainable development of drive tourism requires effective

transport systems, which are fundamental to destination development (Currie & Falconer, 2014), as it plays an important role in tourism activity (Prideaux, 2000). Furthermore, transport is considered a key factor in the success of sustainable tourism development (Gossling et al, 2009; Page & Connell, 2009), being seen as an enabler of tourism (Faulkner & Poole, 1989). However the sustainable development of drive tourism incorporates more than the physical infrastructure of roads and signs but encompasses the development of an entire drive tourism product made up of attractions, accommodation, services, infrastructure and people. Importantly developing drive tourism incorporates multiple stakeholders and communities who are impacted by the drive tourism product over the entire 2500 Kilometers of coast. For this reason, Tuson & Timothy (2003) believe community engagement in the implementation of tourism plans and strategies is vital in achieving sustainable tourism development. Thus in order to deliver this large scale tourism product, meaningful community participation and public sector support can result in positive collaboration opportunities for the sustainable development of the tourism route.

Subsequent to developing drive tourism in a sustainable manner, there are a number of factors to consider in achieving success in drive tourism products in Ireland. Firstly in order to achieve sustainable development in community-based tourism, a balance between tourism developments with the protection of the environment is required (Hunter, 2009). This is followed by the inclusion of a number of factors such as meeting community and consumer needs, a commitment to road quality, safety and maintenance, signage, roadside infrastructure, accommodation and facilities, biodiversity, visitor infrastructure and marketing and promotion (Queensland Government, 2014). In addition to this, numerous factors have been identified by Fáilte Ireland (2010) as reasons for choosing Ireland as a destination. This includes the range of natural attractions, unspoilt environment, friendly people and beautiful scenery. Lastly and importantly the inclusion of a knowledgeable friendly host community is a key characteristic for successful touring routes (Carson, Waller & Scott, 2002; Fáilte Ireland, 2010). Crucially, a collaborative community approach offers a better opportunity of assuring a greater degree of sustainable outcomes (Sellina & Kauffman, 2001; Chhabra, 2010; Erkus-Ozturk & Eraydin, 2010; Beritelli, 2011). The consideration of this key characteristic is essential in sustainably developing community based tourism products. Moreover these significant factors are necessary and highly regarded in the continual process of developing and sustaining drive tourism routes in Ireland for the reasons that drive tourists should feel safe and comfortable while exploring the country (Queensland Government, 2013). Nevertheless, in order to develop and sustain drive tourism on the WAW, stakeholder support, commitment and cooperation is required. Consequently in order to maintain tourism sustainability a collective policy making process between Local Authorities, businesses and host communities is needed to plan and regulate tourism development (Vernon, Essex, Pinder & Curry, 2005; Muhanna, 2006; DECLG, 2012). Therefore such stakeholder partnership agreements can help formalise and deliver the sustainable development of this large-scale drive tourism product in Ireland.

## **Methodological Approach**

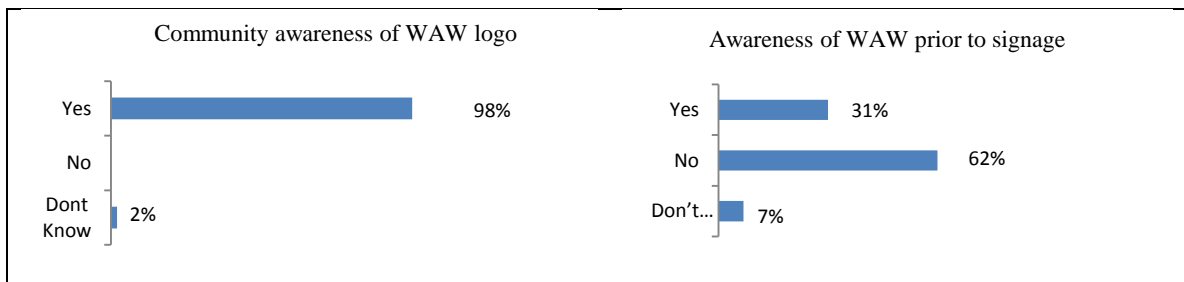
This paper presents findings on the level of community collaboration and engagement with drive tourism on the WAW. It makes a contribution to knowledge by providing a clearer insight into community collaboration and engagement with Ireland's first long distance drive tourism product. This up to date assessment involved extensive primary and secondary data collection and investigation into community collaboration with the WAW, from a community perspective. The primary data within this paper is derived from a non-probability purposive sample of 517 community members situated and interviewed along the entire WAW touring route. Each community member was interviewed face to face and asked a specific set of questions in relation to collaborating with the WAW. The findings were analysed using SPSS for the quantitative questions and NVIVO for the qualitative analysis of the in-depth interviews with local community members. Furthermore analysis is discussed in the context of current theory.

This particular approach allowed for a balanced viewpoint from all community members and therefore respondents were interviewed in towns, villages and in remote rural areas along the Wild Atlantic Way from Kinsale (Co. Cork) to Greencastle (Co. Donegal). Analysis has revealed a slight prominence of female community members (52%) who participated in the research while 48% of males participated. The age demographic of respondents varied with 13% aged between 18-29, 32% aged 30-49, 40% aged between 50-64 and 15% aged 65 and over. In addition to this, respondents were interviewed in various counties on the WAW. In the South West of the Country, 15% were interviewed in County Cork and 16% in County Kerry. In the Mid-West region, 1% of respondents were interviewed in County Limerick while 15% were interviewed in County Clare. On the West of the WAW, 15% of community respondents were interviewed in County Galway and 13% in County Mayo. Further to this, in the North West of the Country, 11% were interviewed in County Sligo while 2% were interviewed in County Leitrim and 12% in County Donegal. Furthermore respondents were probed on their work status. This revealed that 33% of community respondents were employed in the tourism related sector, 29% were unemployed or retired while 38% were employed outside the tourism industry. Of the overall community members interviewed, 67% were purposely selected because they didn't work within the tourism or tourism related sector, this included unemployed and retired community members. The intention of this study is to use the findings from assessing community collaboration in the WAW to identify community member's perceptions and views of the WAW drive tourism product.

## **Results and Discussion**

The research allowed a significant level of data to be gathered in order to provide a greater perspective on the level of community collaboration with the WAW. Results illustrate community perceptions and perspectives of the WAW drive tourism concept. Firstly, the level of community awareness and support for the WAW drive tourism product was assessed. The level of community awareness with the WAW concept in relation to the sample is illustrated in table 1 below. Research identified that almost all respondents (98%) indicated they recognised the WAW logo used to brand the touring route throughout the west coast of Ireland. However, when probed on their awareness of the WAW prior to signage being erected, 62% were not aware of the WAW drive tourism concept. Therefore clearly the installation of over 4000 WAW signs with an estimated cost of €2.75m had an internal promotional impact within communities living along the WAW. Evidently this had a large input on the level of awareness and familiarity of the new tourism product.

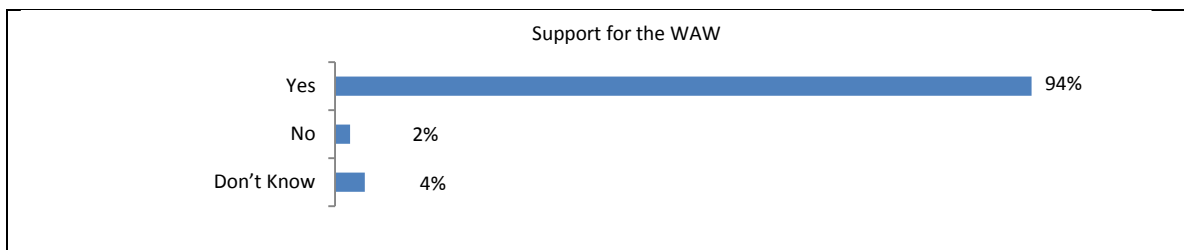
**Table 1 Community Awareness of the WAW Concept**



Significantly, community awareness is essential in realizing the benefits of tourism to local communities (Muhanna, 2006). However a lack of awareness may hinder the progression and success of development projects (Stylidis, Biran, Sit & Sivas, 2014). It has been noted that citizens tend to only participate in tourism when they are strongly motivated to do so and most of the time they are not motivated (Tuson, 2001). Another reason for participation is the perceived benefits of tourism to local communities (Tuson, 1999; Daldeniz & Hampton, 2011; Nunkoo & Ramkisson, 2011; Muganda, 2013; Van Breagel, 2013). Therefore increasing host community awareness of the benefits of tourism involves a strategic focus on the inclusion of local communities for tourism planning and development. Thus host community awareness is necessary in facilitating the collaborative sustainable development of drive tourism on the WAW.

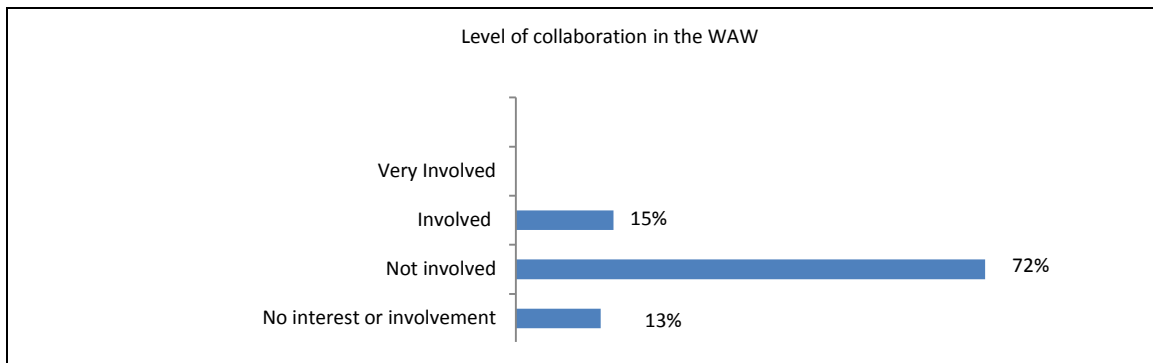
Furthermore the research assessed community support and collaboration for drive tourism on the WAW. The level of community support is considered by most to be a key factor in the roll out and success of the tourism product (Aref, 2010; Lucchetti & Font, 2013). More specifically the development of sustainable tourism products is difficult without the support and involvement of community members (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Nicholas, Thapa & Ko, 2009). Table 2 outlines the community member's level of support for the WAW.

**Table 2 Community support for the WAW**



Significantly, 94% of respondents support the development of the WAW. This is a positive result for the future development of drive tourism on the WAW. However when further probed on the level of community collaboration with the WAW, respondents revealed that they are not involved or collaborating in the WAW (72%) while just 15% of community members had some level of collaboration with the WAW.

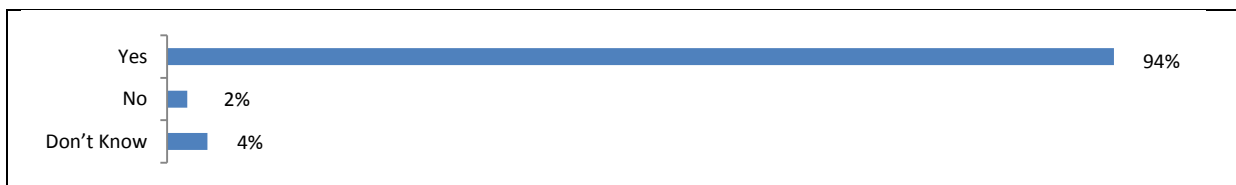
**Table 3 Level of Collaboration in the WAW**



This high level of support and low level of collaboration would seem to suggest that community residents are not aware of the benefits of becoming involved in tourism initiatives or may not know where to begin when it comes to participation in tourism developments (Joppe, 1996). As a result, the need for a community collaborative approach to tourism development is needed (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Dredge, 2011). This approach can play an intricate role in facilitating the collaborative sustainable development of drive tourism on the WAW and maintain community support while gaining community collaboration and involvement.

On a positive note, nearly all respondents (94%) believed the WAW to be a positive tourism initiative capable of attracting new and existing tourists to the west of Ireland.

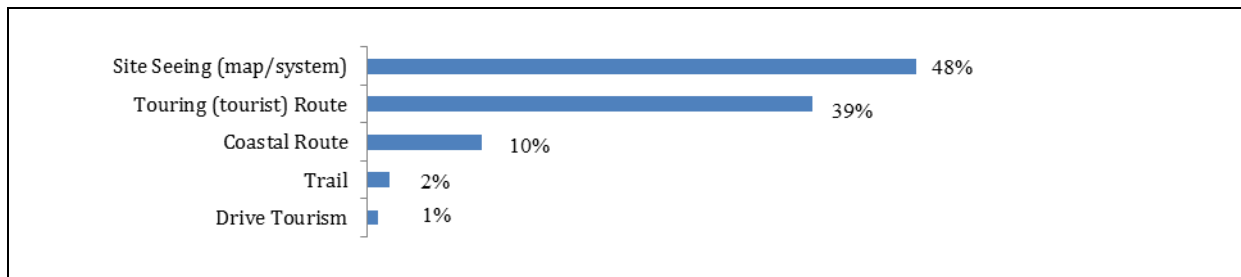
**Table 4 Is the WAW a positive tourism initiative?**



This positivity has the ability to encourage the collaboration of community members along the WAW, which has the potential to effectively facilitate the sustainable development of iconic touring routes on the WAW. Upon clarifying community resident's awareness, support and level of collaboration with the WAW, they were then asked to clarify what they understood the WAW to be. Results revealed a common theme "Site seeing tourist route" with a slight variety of different answers shown below in table 5.



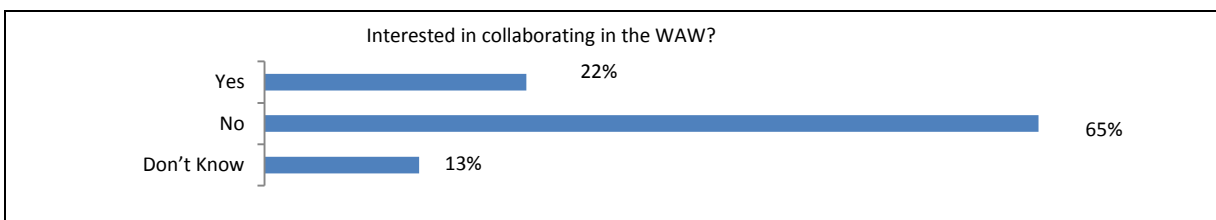
**Table 5 Understanding of the WAW**



The west coast of Ireland is known for its beautiful scenery and hidden gems therefore 48% of respondents were of the view that the WAW was a system/map for tourists to go “sightseeing” along the Irish coast. Furthermore 39% identified the WAW as a touring route while 10% understood the WAW to be some form of a coastal route. Essentially, an understanding of tourism is needed by communities to achieve sustainable tourism (Matarrita-Cascante, Brennan & Luloff, 2010). More significantly, a deeper understanding of tourism products and the benefits they generate can increase community support and awareness for the development of tourism (Diedrich, 2007; Borges, 2011). It can be seen from the results above that in general the communities have a broad understanding of the WAW. However it was very apparent that most community members have developed their own understanding based on the familiarity with their local area and the tourism product.

Additionally, the focus of this research allowed for data to be gathered and analysed determining the levels of collaboration among the sampled local community situated along the WAW touring route. Analysis here was concerned with identifying whether or not the community members are at all interested in being involved in the WAW having already identified that 72% are not collaborating or involved in the WAW.

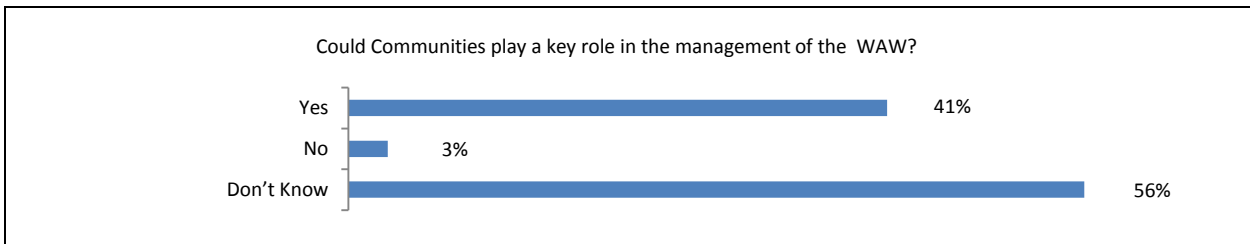
**Table 6 Community interest in collaborating in the WAW**



It was identified that over half of community members (65%) expressed no interest in collaborating in the WAW with just 22% interested in being involved or collaborating to some degree. This is disappointing considering community collaboration and engagement is critical in the development of community-based tourism (Simpson, 2008; Jamal & Stronza, 2009; Johnson, 2010). Further to this, respondents revealed some incentives that would encourage increased levels of collaboration. These included jobs or employment at 38%, grant aid at 22%, money for the area at 21% and better facilities at 19%. Overall community collaboration in community based tourism; in particular drive tourism on the WAW should be a planning priority within communities on the west coast of Ireland. However it may need to be administered through government at local level.

The sampled community members then highlighted their opinions on communities playing a role in the WAW. They were asked whether they thought communities could play a key role in the management of the WAW. This was of significant importance considering the collaboration of key stakeholders offers strong opportunities to manage tourism (Jamal & Getz, 1995). Therefore community collaboration is essential in the management of tourism initiatives. The results are as follows:

**Table 7 Communities role in managing the WAW**



The majority of interview candidates did not know if communities could play a key role in the management of the WAW. A further 3% stated “no”, communities could not play a key role in the management of the WAW while 41% stated “yes”. Importantly it has been noted that an imperative element to manage routes sustainably involves community members (Timothy & Boyd, 2015). Again respondents were probed further on how they could play a role in managing the WAW. Responses included, working on the WAW, providing services, welcoming visitors, protecting the environment and keeping locations on the WAW clean and tidy could contribute to the management of the WAW. Again, the more benefits perceived by communities can have a direct impact on community’s perceptions of becoming involved in the WAW.

Subsequent to clarifying community member’s perceptions of collaborating with the WAW, respondents were asked whether they thought communities were proud of the WAW. Community pride in tourism has the ability to enhance and add value to a visitor experience (Presenza, Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005). In fact tourism has revealed that it contributes to enhancing community life in terms of community belonging and a sense of pride (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf & Voght, 2005). The table below highlights community pride for the WAW drive tourism product.

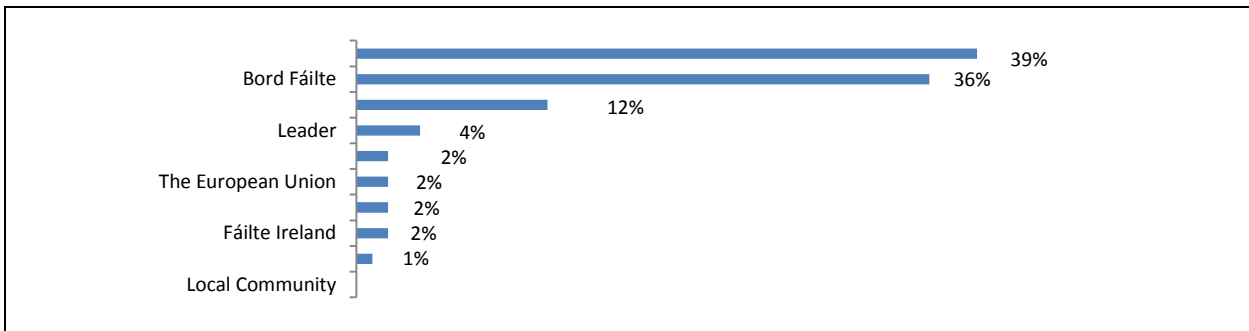
**Table 8 Are the Community proud of the WAW**



Importantly, a majority (82%) of respondents stated they were proud of the WAW while the minority (17%) didn’t know if they were proud of the tourism initiative. Overall it seems that most community members are proud of the WAW and see it as a positive tourism development. However it also seems that the majority of the sampled members of the community are not involved with the WAW and have no major interest in being involved with the Wild Atlantic Way.

Finally, research sought to gather information on whom the community members felt were responsible for the development of the WAW. The state government was the most prominent response from community members at (39%) followed by 36% of respondents stating Bord Fáilte was responsible for its development. There has been a common misconception in relation to Fáilte Ireland (the National Tourism Development Authority) being mistaken for Bord Fáilte, which was replaced by Fáilte Ireland in 2003.

**Table 9 Who are responsible for the development of the WAW?**



It seems that there is some confusion among the community members with regards to whom they felt were responsible for the development of the WAW. Further to this, just 2% mentioned Fáilte Ireland as a key stakeholder responsible for the development of the WAW while 14% were of the impression that County Councils were responsible for its development. Significantly the local community was not identified as a stakeholder in the development of the WAW. As such, overall community familiarity with the WAW is high. However the level of collaboration is increasingly low while there is some confusion as to who is responsible for the development of the WAW. Therefore a community collaboration approach administered through Local Authorities could facilitate increased collaboration in tourism development such as developing drive tourism on the WAW.

## Conclusion

This research has provided a valuable insight into community collaboration with the WAW. It has reviewed literature on collaboration and engagement with drive tourism and the collaborative sustainable development of drive tourism. Also it has illustrated the complexity of stakeholder relationships along the WAW. Much of the research focused on the importance and significance of community collaboration and engagement in tourism developments. Literature has revealed that community collaboration is essential in providing valuable tourist experiences. It has highlighted the diverse range of community groups situated along the WAW. In general the communities along the route have a high level of awareness and familiarity of the WAW, with a basic understanding of the overall concept. It was found that this awareness was initially catalysed by the installation of 4000 WAW signs. Likewise, it found that the community was not entirely sure who was responsible for the development of the WAW with a wide range of authorities being suggested. However overall only moderate levels of community collaboration were identified with just 15% of community members involved with the drive tourism project and 22% interested in being involved. In addition, 72% of the community members stated they were not involved with the WAW while 65% stated they had no interest in collaborating with the WAW. Yet on a very encouraging note 94% of the sampled community felt that the WAW was a positive tourism initiative. Furthermore 94% of the community members support the development of the WAW. As such community engagement is critical for the success of drive tourism on the WAW in Ireland. Conversely, the WAW is still in the early stages of the product development lifecycle. This could explain the moderate levels of engagement with the

WAW. Nevertheless to sustain this product and grow its potential, it is necessary that communities be involved. In conclusion, even though there are only moderate levels of engagement with the WAW, there is a significant level of community support for the development of this drive tourism product in Ireland.

## References

- Aas, C., Ladkin, A. and Fletcher, J. (2005) Stakeholder collaborations and heritage management. *Annals of tourism research*, 32(1), pp. 28-48.
- Andereck, K.L., Valentine, K.M. Knopf, R.C. and Voght, C.A. (2005) Resident's perceptions of community tourism impacts. *Annals of tourism research*. 32(4) pp. 1056-1076.
- Aref, F., Redzuan, M., Gill, S., & Aref, A. (2010) assessing the level of community capacity building in tourism development in local communities. *Journal of sustainable development*. Vol 3(1) pp.81-90.
- Ashley, C., Boyd, C., & Goodwin, M. (2000). Pro poor tourism: putting poverty in the heart of tourism agenda. ODI Overseas Development Institute.
- Aung, H. (2013). Government of the republic of the union of Myanmar ministry of hotels and tourism. Policy on community involvement in tourism (CIT). Ministry of Hotels and Tourism. Retrieved from: <http://www.myanmar-tourism.org/journals/Community%20Involvement%20Tourism%20in%20Myanmar.pdf> Accessed 20/2/2015
- Bahee, M., Pisani, M.J., & Shavakh, F. (2014). Resident's attitudes toward international tourism: A case of Iran. *Journal of Tourism and Recreation*. Vol 1 Issue 2 pp1-14.
- Beeton, S. (2006) Community Development through Tourism. CSIRO Publications. Australia.
- Bentelli, P. (2011) Tourism destination governance through local elites: looking beyond the stakeholder level. University St Gallen.
- Bogden, C. (2011). The Impact of Tourism on Mountain community development. *Cactus Tourism Journal*. Vol 2 (1) pp 26-30.
- Borges, MA, Carbone, G., Bushell, R., & Jaegar, T. (2011) Sustainable tourism and natural world heritage: priorities for action. International union for conservation of nature. Available from: [cmsdata.iucn.org](http://cmsdata.iucn.org) accessed 4/3/2015
- Bramwell, B, & Lane, B. (2000). Tourism Collaboration and Partnerships: Politics, Practice and sustainability. Channel View Publications. Great Britain.
- Buckley, A. (2012). Best Practice community engagement for infrastructure projects: Building community ties that dig deep. Public Infrastructure Bulletin, Vol 7 (8) Article 3. Available from: <http://epublications.bond.edu.au/pib/vol7/iss8/3> accessed 18/2/2015
- Carson, D. Waller, I. and Scott, N. (2002) Drive Tourism up the wall and around the bend. Australia.
- Chhabra, D. (2010) branding authenticity tourism analysis. 15(6) pp.735-740.
- Choi, H.C. Sirakaya, E. (2006) Sustainability indicators for managing community tourism. *Tourism Management* Vol 27(6) pp. 1274-1289.
- Chen, S.C., & Raab, C. (2009) measuring resident reactions to community tourism development: a pilot study of a new conceptual framework. Available from: [www.scholarworks.umass.edu](http://www.scholarworks.umass.edu) accessed 2/3/2015.
- Cooper, C., Fletcher, J., Fyall, A., Gilbert, D., & Wanhill, S. (2008) tourism: principles and practice, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Financial times press.

- Currie, C., & Falconer, P. (2014). Maintaining sustainable island destinations in Scotland: the role of the transport-tourism relationship. *Journal of destination marketing and management*, 3, pp. 162-172.
- Daldeniz, B., & Hampton, M. (2011) drive tourism and local communities: active participants or passive impacts? Case studies from Malaysia. Kent business school.
- DeKadt, E. (1979) *Tourism: Passport to Development*. Oxford: *Oxford University Press*.
- Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (2012) Supporting economic recovery and jobs locally. Available from: [www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie) accessed 14 November 2014.
- Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG). (2014) Working group report on citizen engagement with local government. Available from: [www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie) accessed 23/2/2015.
- Diedrich, A. (2007) The impact of tourism on Coral Reef conservation awareness and support in coastal communities in Belize. *Coral Reefs*.
- Dimmock, K., & Musa, G. (2015) scuba diving tourism system: a framework for collaborative management and sustainability, available from: [epubs.scu.edu.au](http://epubs.scu.edu.au) accessed 2/3/2015.
- Dredge, D., & Jenkins, J. (2007) *Tourism Planning and Policy*. Brisbane: John Wiley and Sons.
- DTTAS (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport). (2013) Public Consultation: Tourism Policy. Available from <http://www.dttas.ie> (Accessed 17 October 14).
- Dwyer, L., & Spurr, R. (2011) tourism economic summary. STCRC centre for economic and policy. Available from: [www.crctourism.com.au](http://www.crctourism.com.au) accessed 15/2/2015.
- Erkus-Ozturk, H.T., & Eraydin, A. (2010) environmental governance for sustainable tourism development: collaboration networks and organisation building in the Antalya tourism region. *Tourism Management* 31(1) pp.113-124.
- Fáilte Ireland, (2010). Visitor attitude survey 2010 Executive Summary. Millward Brown Lansdowne. Retrieved from: <http://www.failteireland.ie> Accessed 26/3/14
- Fáilte Ireland. (2014). The Wild Atlantic Way: Route Maps and Guides. Available from: [Wildatlanticway.com/route](http://Wildatlanticway.com/route) accessed 16/02/2015
- Fáilte Ireland (2014) Irelands ten best tourism towns announced. Available from [www.failteireland.ie](http://www.failteireland.ie) (Accessed 11 November 2014).
- Fáilte Ireland (2014) Fáilte Ireland targets sustained growth in tourism revenue, jobs and visitors for 2015 season. Available from: [www.failteireland.ie](http://www.failteireland.ie) accessed 16/12/2014.
- Fallon, L.D. and Kriwoken, L.K. (2003) Community involvement in tourism infrastructure: the case of the Strahan visitor centre, Tasmania. *Tourism Management* 24, pp. 289-308.
- Faulkner, B., and Poole, M. (1989) Impacts of Tourism of the disruption to domestic airline services, Canberra. Bureau of Tourism Research.
- Fredaline, L., & Faulkner, B. (2000). Host community reactions: a cluster analysis. *Annals of Tourism Research* 27(3). Pp. 763-784.
- Fyall, F., & Garrod, B. (2005) *Tourism Marketing: A collaborative Approach*. Channel view publications.
- Getz, D., & Jamal, B. (1994) collaboration theory and community tourism planning. *Annals of tourism research* vol 22(1) pp/186-204
- Goodwin, H. (2010). Responsible Tourism in Destinations.[www.haroldgoodwin.info](http://www.haroldgoodwin.info) accessed 28/2/2015

- Goodwin, H., & Santilli, R. (2009) Community based tourism: a success? Available from: [www.haroldgoodwin.info](http://www.haroldgoodwin.info) accessed 26/2/2015.
- Gossling, S., Hall, C.M., & Weaver, D.B. (2009) sustainable tourism futures: perspectives on systems, restructuring and innovations. Oxon. Routledge.
- Griffin, K., & Carty, J. (2006) Economic, Environmental and Social performance of the Irish tourism sector. Towards sustainability. Tourism research centre DIT.
- Gursoy, D. and Rutherford, D.G. (2004) Host community attitudes towards tourism – an improved structured model. *Annals of tourism research* 31(3) pp. 495-516.
- Hall, C.M. (2011) policy learning and policy failure in sustainable tourism governance: from first to second to third in order change? *Journal of sustainable tourism*. 19 pp.649-671.
- Hardy, A.L., Beeton, R.J.S and Pearson, L. (2002) Sustainable tourism: An overview of the concept and its position in relation to conceptualizations of tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 10(6), pp. 475-496.
- Hardy, A. (2003) An investigation into the key factors necessary for the development of iconic touring routes. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 9 (4), pp. 314–330
- Hardy, A. (2006) 'Drive Tourism: A Methodological Discussion with a View to Further Understanding the Drive Tourism Market in British Columbia, Canada'. A University of Northern British Columbia Community Development Institute Publication.
- Hayes, D., & MacLeod, N. (2007) packaging places: design heritage trails using an experience economy perspective to maximize visitor engagement. *Journal of vacation marketing* 13(1) pp.45-58.
- Hung Lee, T. (2013) influence analysis of community resident support for sustainable tourism development. *Journal of tourism management* vol 34, pp. 37-46.
- Hunter, C.J. (2009) On the need to reconceptualise sustainable tourism development. *Journal of sustainable tourism* vol 3(3) pp. 155-165.
- Isaac, R. and Van der Sterran, J. (2004) Local driven (community based) tourism development: A tool for poverty alleviation. Available from: [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu) accessed 15 November 2014.
- (Irish Tourism Industry confederation) (2011) Tourism opportunities – Driving economic renewal. Available from: [www.itic.ie](http://www.itic.ie) (accessed 25 November 2014).
- Jamal, T. B. and Getz, D. (1995) Collaboration theory and community tourism planning. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 22 (1), pp 186-204.
- Jamal, T., & Stronza, A. (2009) collaboration theory and tourism practice in protected areas: stakeholders, structuring and sustainability. *Journal of sustainable tourism* 17(2) pp.169-189
- Jamal, T., Taillon, J., & Dredge, D. (2011) sustainable tourism pedagogy academic community collaborations: a progressive service learning approach. Available from: [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu) accessed 27/2/2015.
- Johnston, K.A., 2010. Community engagement: exploring a relational approach to consultation and collaborative practice in Australia. *Journal of Promotion Management* 16, 217–234.
- Joppe, M. (1996) Sustainable Community Tourism Development Revisited, *Tourism Management*, Volume 17, Issue (7): pp. 475-479.
- Jurowski, C., Uysal, M. and Sirgy, M. (2013) A theoretical analysis of Host Community Resident Reactions to Tourism. *Journal of Travel Research*, 36(2), pp. 3-11.
- Kennell, J., & MacLeod, N. (2009) A grey literature review of the cultural Olympics. *Cultural trends* 18(1) pp.83-88.

Kim, K. Uysal, M. and Sirgy, M. (2013) How does tourism in a community impact the quality of life of community residents? *Journal of Tourism Management*, 36, pp. 527-540

Kreag, G. (2001). The impacts of tourism: Minnesota seas grant. Available from: [www.seagrant.umn.edu](http://www.seagrant.umn.edu) accessed 26/02/2015

Lepp, A. (2007) Resident attitudes towards tourism in Bigodi village, Uganda. *Tourism Management*, 28, pp. 876-885.

Liu, Z. (2003) Sustainable Tourism Development: A critique. *Journal of sustainable tourism*. Vol 11(6) pp.459-475.

Liu, A. and Wall, G. (2006) planning tourism employment: a developing country perspective. *Tourism Management*, 27 (1), pp. 159-170.

Lucchetti, VG and Font, X. (2013) Community based tourism: Critical success factors. The international centre for responsible tourism.

Markwell

Matarrita-Cascante, C., Brennan, MA, & Luloff, A.E. (2010) Community agency and sustainable tourism development: the case of La Fortuna Costa Rica. *Journal of sustainable tourism*. Vol 18(6) pp.735-756.

McNamara, K.E., & Prideaux, B. (2011) Planning nature based hiking trails in a tropical rainforest setting. *Asia pacific journal of tourism research* 16(3) pp.289-305.

Mehmetoglu, M. (2001). Economic Scale of community run festivals: A case Study. *Event Management* 7(2) pp 93-102

Muganda, M., Sirima, A., & Marwa Ezra, P. (2013) the role of local communities in tourism development: grassroots perspective from Tanzania. *J Hum Ecol* 4(1) pp.53-66.

Muhanna, E. (2006) Sustainable tourism development and environmental management for developing countries. *Problems and perspectives management*. Vol 4(2), pp. 14-30.

Nicholas, L., Thapa, B. and Ko, Y. (2009) Resident's perspectives of a world heritage site -the pitons management area, St. Lucia. *Annals of tourism research* 36(3), pp. 390-412.

Olsen, M. (2002) Keeping Track of the self drive market. In Carson, Waller & Scott, Drive tourism: up the wall and around the bend. Centre for regional tourism research.

Page, S.J., & Connell, J, (2009) Tourism: A modern synthesis. Hampshire: cengage learning. EMEA.

Prezenta, A, Del Chiappa, G. and Sheehan, L. (2013) Residents engagement and local tourism governance in maturing beach destinations. Evidence from an Italian case study. *Journal of destination marketing and management*. Vol 2, pp. 22-30.

Prideaux, B. (2000). The role of the transport system in destination development. *Journal of tourism management*, 21(1), pp.53-63.

Queensland Government (2013) New Plan for Drive tourism in Queensland. Available from <http://statements.qld.gov.au/Statement/2013/1/24/new-plan-for-drive-tourism-in-queensland> (accessed 3 April 2013).

Queensland Government (2014) Queensland drive tourism strategy. Available from: [www.dtesb.qld.gov.au](http://www.dtesb.qld.gov.au) (Accessed 16 November 2014).

Ring, M. (2015) Minister Ring meets local industry with focus firmly on the Wild Atlantic Way. Available from: [www.failteireland.ie](http://www.failteireland.ie) accessed 16/02/2015

Salter, R, Luhrs, F., & Hickton, G. (2015). New Zealand Tourism Strategy 2015: [www.tianz.org.nz](http://www.tianz.org.nz) accessed 21/2/2015

Schmitz, C.L., Stinson, C., & James, C. (2010). Community and environmental sustainability: Collaboration and Interdisciplinary Education. Available from: [www1.unwindsor.ca](http://www1.unwindsor.ca) accessed 12/2/2015

Shresta, R.K., Stein, T.V., & Clarke, J. (2007) valuing nature based recreation in public natural areas of the Apalachicola river region. *Journal of event management* 85(4) pp 977-985.

Simpson, M.C. (2008) Community benefits tourism initiative – a conceptual oxymoron. *Tourism Management*. Vol 29(1) pp. 1-18.

STCRC The sustainable tourism cooperative research centre. (2010) sustainable Tourism: Destination and Community. Sustainable tourism online.

Stone, C. (2012) Community engagement in sustainable development for local products. Palermo Business Press.

Stylidis, D., Brian, A. Sit, J and Szirus, E.M. (2014) Resident's support for tourism development: the role of residents place image and perceived tourism impacts. *Tourism Management*. Vol 45 pp. 260-274.

Thakadu, O.T. (1998) Experiences from community based natural resources management. The concept of community ownership and mobilization. Department of wildlife and natural parks. Botswana.

Timothy, D.J., & Boyd, S.W. (2015) *Tourism Trails: Cultural, Ecological and Management Issues*. Channel View Publications. Great Britain.

Tosun, C. (2001) limits to community participation in the tourism development process in developing countries. *Journal of tourism management* 21 pp. 613-633.

Tosun, C., and Timothy, D. J. (2003) Arguments for community participation in the tourism development process. *Journal of Tourism Studies*, 14(2), pp. 2–14.

Van Breagel, L. (2013) Community based tourism: local participation and perceived benefits: a comparative study between 2 communities in Thailand. A masters submitted to Radbound University Nijmegen.

Vernon, J., Essex, S. Pinder, D. and Curry, K. (2005) Collaborative policy makers: local sustainable projects. *Annals of tourism research* 32(2) pp. 325-345.

WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council) (2013) *Tourism for tomorrow: The WTTC perspective*. Available from: [www.wttc.org](http://www.wttc.org) (accessed 26 November 2014).



