

State: Ireland

Name of the area: Burren region

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas:
2018, (renewal of the EDPA adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 4 July 2018)

Central authority concerned:

Name: The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Dept of Culture, Heritage and the
Gaeltacht (DCHG)

Address: 7 Ely Place, Dublin 2, IRELAND

Tel: 076 1002603 (Dr Andy Bleasdale)

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e-mail: andy.bleasdale@chg.gov.ie

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Authority responsible for its management:

Name: High Nature Value Services Ltd/ The Burren Programme

Address: Old School House, Carron, Co. Clare, IRELAND

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1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. secure a budget from 2022 onwards for the development of a successor programme to the current Burren Programme; share with the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas the details of the successor programme to the current Burren Programme prior to its entry into force;

The Burren Programme (BP) is funded under Ireland's Rural Development Programme (2014-2020) with 5-year contracts awarded to participating farmers, some of which will run until 31/12/2022. Negotiations for the new CAP are currently underway, and it is anticipated that each Member State will have to develop their own CAP Strategic Plan in due course. While negotiations on the post 2022 scenario are premature, every effort is being made to ensure that the BP remains high on the Agenda. For example, the DG Agri Commissioner, The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), the Secretary General of the DAFM have all visited the BP, which is considered to be a flagship programme by the DAFM and by the European Commission. Details of the successor programme will be shared with EDPA group of specialists, but probably not until 2022 at the earliest.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. prepare an overarching management framework document for the Burren Region diploma-holding area, outlining the various management initiatives and their inter-relationships;

An "Entity relationship diagram" for the Burren Programme (managed by HNVS Ltd) is attached.

2. aim both to increase the quality of the natural heritage and to prevent damage to the cultural heritage in those areas of the Burren Region not included within the three Special Areas of Conservation;

Approximately 5% of the BP area is non-designated, Annex I habitat. The remainder of the non-designated Annex I habitat is protected under Local Authority plans.

3. work with other stakeholders, especially those involved in tourism predicated on the farm holdings, as well as the natural and cultural heritage, to support communities living and working in the Burren Region;

In November 2018 Failte Ireland published a Draft Visitor Experience Development Plan (VEDP) for consultation. This contains 12 'Catalyst Projects' including one to 'support farmers keen to diversify their business to include tourism'. This plan, once agreed, will be the key tourism management strategy for the region. Further information on this VEDP will be provided in future reports.

4. consider the development of further walking trails throughout the Burren Region.

There are no current plans to extend trails but Rural Recreation Officer (Eoin Hogan) has been consulted.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

The most noteworthy development with regard to site management has been the continued expansion of the number of farmers, and area under management, in the Burren Programme.

Currently 331 farmers, managing 23,122ha of designated and additional Annex 1 habitat, are in the BP. Conservation works are taking place on many of these farms and condition scoring of the grasslands continues on an annual basis, indicating a gradual improvement in site condition year-on-year.

The BP staff complement remains stable, with 4 full-time and 4 part-time staff.

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark Project concluded in 2017 but the Local Authority has employed a full-time Burren Geopark Geologist

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There have been no changes to the boundary of the European Diploma area since the adoption of the resolution.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

A number of significant events highlighting the sustainable use of the EDPA site were organised in 2018:

The Learning Landscape Symposium (Burrenbeo Trust, March 2018)

Burren in Bloom (Burrenbeo Trust, May 2018)

The Burren Winterage Festival (Burrenbeo Trust and the Burren Programme), October 2018

In addition, Burrenbeo Trust carried out 10-week heritage-education courses in local schools (8 primary, 2 secondary) and organised monthly heritage walks and talks.

Burren Programme staff hosted a number of international study groups – including a number of farming groups wishing to avail of European Innovation Partnership funding to establish their own sustainable farming programmes. The work of the BBT and BP featured on National TV, Radio, Newspapers and social media.
