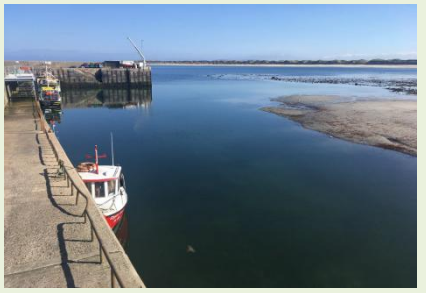
Project Ireland 2040
Building Ireland's Future

An Roinn Cultúir, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta
Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

PRELIMINARY APPRAISAL TEMPLATE DOCUMENT

Document Section	Information requirements
Introduction	This preliminary appraisal aims to address the infrastructural needs required to reduce the tidal effects on access to Magheraroarty Pier, and so improve the passenger ferry service to Tory Island. From a socio-economic perspective, the availability of a regular service improves the quality of life for islanders, reducing relative remoteness and allowing island populations remain together and to sustain the community identity. The availability of a reliable service also fosters a vibrant tourism industry which contributes to local economic well-being, and to an enhanced awareness and positive appreciation of local traditions, way of life and cultural heritage. Tory Island measures 4.0km by 1.0km and is situated 13.5 kilometres off the North West coast of Donegal. It is the most remote inhabited island in Ireland with a population of 119 and an economy highly dependent on tourism. Facilities on the island include a hotel, shop, post office, primary and secondary school, health centre, social club, church, and a small number of bed & breakfast guesthouses. Annual tourist numbers of circa 5,700 with the majority of these likely to be day-trippers.  Magheroarty is a Gaeltacht village and townland on the north-west coast of County Donegal, Ireland. It is in the parish of Cloughaneely and its main access road is the R257. The village has a port suited for fishing vessels. It is the main ferry port for Tory Island. It attracts many tourists during the summer and water-sports enthusiasts visit the area to windsurf/surf/kitesurf and to go kayaking in the bay. A natural reef exists to the left of the pier which provides excellent surf throughout the year. Amenities include bar/pub, cafe, water-sport recreation and an Irish-speaking primary school.

Setting the scene / Defining the problem	**Existing situation** <u>Tory Island Harbour</u> The infrastructure at Tory Island is satisfactory and provides good access and shelter in challenging weather conditions. This is the result of a €9m upgrade to the Tory Pier completed in 2000 and should be capable of accommodating any future ferry service. The pier crane was replaced in 2018, through Roinn na Gaeltacht funding, for offloading cargo. In general the quality of passenger ferry services has improved in recent years and continues to do so with an increase in the number of operators providing a service. <u>Magheraroarty Pier</u> Magheraroarty is the nearest point to Tory on the mainland and is the current point of departure for the ferry service to Tory, with a return journey time 1 hour 40 mins. There exists a historic affiliation between Magheroarty and Tory Island with many islanders visiting friends and family in the locality. The long standing association between the two communities is a factor to be considered in the development of the service between the island and mainland. The pier is also home to two commercial vivier crabbers as well as some seasonal shellfish vessels and leisure craft. While the infrastructure at Magheroarty is currently not suitable for permanent berthing, it is in itself adequate for the ferry services. However, access to the pier is restricted during periods of low tide and in particular when there are heavy seas due to the natural offshore breakwater (rocky outcrop). This can result in significant interruption to the ferry service to the extent that the service is unavailable for a number of days during periods of spring tides. Magheraroarty harbour is located within a Natura 2000 designated site, Ballyness Bay SAC (001090), and close to the Falcarragh to Meenlaragh SPA (004149) Natura 2000 site. The Magheraroarty Pier is constructed on the periphery of the Ballyness Bay SAC and within the dune system, and the impact of any development in this area would have to be carefully considered. The inner basin at Magheraroarty pier requires annual dredging due to sand accretion to maintain navigable depths along the pier. This is deemed an acceptable maintenance requirement at this location. 

	Curransport Pier Curransport Pier currently provides the existing RO RO service to Tory Island and while there is no infrastructure at present to facilitate the operation of a passenger ferry service, its layout, adequate depth of water and geographic position would make it a viable option for infrastructural investment to enable the provision of a passenger ferry service between the mainland and Tory island. A service from Curransport could be delivered within similar time frames as the Magheroarty service. Bunbeg Pier There are excellent facilities at Bunbeg Pier that can accommodate a ferry service and provide permanent berthing in a sheltered harbour, however depth restrictions and the distance to Tory Island makes it unsuitable as a mainland base for the service to Tory as the return journey time is 4 hours. Existing Magheroraorty – Tory Island Passenger Service A current subsidised passenger ferry service operates between Magheraroarty and Tory Island on a daily basis. The service provides for 2 return sailings originating in Tory Island during the winter months with 3 return sailings during the summer months. The travel time in each direction is 50 minutes. In addition there is a monthly RO RO freight service operating between Curransport and Tory. A helicopter operates on a fortnightly basis during the winter months. The permanent berth of the ferry vessel is a matter for the appointed Ferry Operator. The current ferry is a 90 passenger vessel and is currently moored at 3 different locations dependant on weather conditions : 1. At Magheraroarty Pier during summer months in good weather 2. Anchored off shore at Inishbofin Island for all other times (during the winter and in poor weather conditions during the summer) 3. At Bunbeg Harbour during storm conditions

The ferry operating times are vary throughout the week and there is an additional return sailing in the summer months (with variation in 2nd sailing from Magheraroarty depending on time of year/conditions)

Departure	Tory	Tory	Tory	Magheraroarty	Magheraroarty	Magheraroarty
Mon	9.30am	1.30pm		12.15pm	2.30pm – 4pm	
Tue	11.15am	1.30pm		12.15pm	2.30pm – 4pm	
Wed	9.30am	1.30pm		12.15pm	2.30pm – 4pm	
Thur	11.15am	1.30pm		12.15pm	2.30pm – 4pm	
Fri	11.15am	1.30pm		12.15pm	2.30pm – 4pm	
Sat	9.30am	1.30pm		12.15pm	2.30pm – 4pm	
Sun	11.15am	1.30pm		12.15pm	2.30pm – 4pm	
July/August	11.15am	1.30pm	3.30pm	12.15pm	2.30pm – 4pm	4.30pm

Because the Service is currently based at Magheraraorty, there is an additional early morning sailing from there with a later evening sailing returning from Tory. The scheduled service provides a life line service but does not support quality opportunities for Islanders to send significant time on the mainland to undertake any personal business/ work/education/etc.

The nature of the vessel/timetable currently in operation prohibits sailings/landings in low tide situations and poor weather conditions. These restrictions impact the service for at least 40% of the operational period.

The policy context for the proposed project

National Policy

A consultation process has recently begun to develop a new National Policy for the Future Development and Sustainability of Communities on the Offshore Islands of Ireland. A central objective of the Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht is to ensure that sustainable vibrant communities continue to live on the islands and this requires a regular, reliable access service to be made available to all island communities and to improve the quality of life of these communties.

	National Marine Planning Framework (Consultation Draft 2019) Section 14 – Ports, Harbours and Shipping - It is an objective of this draft planning framework to safeguard the operation of ports as key actors in the economic wellbeing of the state through the provision of safe and sustainable maritime transport. Donegal County Development Plan The strategic transportation framework and economic strategy of the Donegal County Development Plan "acknowledge the important role of quality infrastructure such as road, rail, air and sea in attracting new investment, business and enterprise." It outlines the important role that "seaports and ferry services play … in promoting the social and economic vitality of the County." - **T-P-22:** It is a policy of the Council to promote and facilitate services at Magheroarty and Burtonport and to strengthen and further develop the strategically important ports of Greencastle and Killybegs. **The demand for the project** The existing services to Tory Island are restricted during periods of spring tides and this can affect the service for up to 10 days in any month particularly between September and April when this is also likely to coincide with heavy seas. This restriction constitutes an unreliable service and is caused by the restricted access to Magheraroarty pier. It is proposed to examine the restriction at Magheraroarty pier, to determine if it can be removed to reduce the tidal effects on the sea access to Magheraroarty Pier and to improve the ferry service. **Capacity or physical constraints e.g. building condition, compliance with regulations etc.** Technical deficiency : the current ferry vessel is not capable of permanent berthing at Tory Island and can not navigate the shallow waters (in low tides) approaching Magheraroarty Pier. Environmental Constraints : SPA/SAC Dune System, surrounding Magheraroarty Pier, rocky outcrop of sea bedrock causing limited depth on approach to pier in low tide. Rational for intervention : is to reduce the tidal effects on sea access to Magheraroarty Pier and improve the Tory Island ferry service.

Establishing the objective(s)	• Provide a safe and effective sea access to Magheraroaty Pier. • Reduce the tidal effects on the access to Magheraroarty Pier. • Provide an improved ferry service from Tory Island to Mainland Donegal. • That any infrastructural development conforms to the national standards and requirements. • Promote social inclusion in County Donegal. • Project objectives will be achieved using methods, designs and technology that represent the best value for money.
Define the scope of the project	**Duration of Project : 6 year project** • Preliminary Appraisal • Procurement of Consultant • Assessment of viability and environmental considerations of the options (non intrusive/computer modelling) • Detailed Appraisal • Preliminary Design of preferred option • Environmental Assessment and Statutory Approvals • Detailed Design • Procurement of Contractor • Construction • Project Close out **Bodies involved :** • Donegal County Council • Roinn na Gaeltachta • DHPLG • NPWS • Public / Island Community • Department of Transport – Marine Survey Office • Public Representatives

	• An Bord Pleanála **Administrative Structure :** • Donegal County Council • Roinn na Gaeltachta • DHPLG • NPWS • Department of Transport – Marine Survey Office • Appointed Consultant • An Bord Pleanála **Beneficiaries :** • Tory Island Community • Visitors to Tory Island • Service providers • Health Service • Donegal County Council • Irish Water
Identification of options	**Do nothing Option** - Rely on existing service frequency without intervention to improve access situation • Restrictions to passenger ferry service will continue. This can result in disruptions to service over 10 days per month when low spring tides coincide with a high Atlantic swell. During this period of restriction some sailings may be available, however, these will mainly be in the evening when tides are high. • This results in an unreliable and unpredictable service that has a socio economic impact on the island. It impacts supply of goods and services to the island including medical services. It affects tourism and therefore limits income generation. • The current arrangement acts as a life line service. To this end it is effective.

- There would no additional impact on the environment and no statutory approvals required
- Indicative Cost : €0 (no investment)
- Funding Source : no associated costs so no funding required

Option 1 - Provision of alternative Service – All weather fast service (20 person) – based at Tory Island

- The ferry operation is a private sector service which is tendered every 5 years by An Roinn. The purchase of a ferry boat is not within the remit of the department.
- The service provider would have to provide a new vessel which would be smaller in size (accommodating 40 passengers), berthing permanently at Tory Island. This would provide opportunity to improve the ferry service operation but will not reduce the impact of the tidal restriction on accessing Magheraroarty Pier
- Indicative cost : €3m
- Funding Source : Roinn na Gaeltachta (100%)
- **This option, on its own merit, fails to meet a number of the project objectives and so will not be progressed for further consideration.**

Option 2 - Remove the restriction at Magheraroarty Pier

- The removal of the existing restriction at Magheraroarty pier would enable the existing provider to operate a more frequent and reliable service.
- This proposal requires significant design, surveys, and analysis to fulfil planning and statutory requirements (€500k). It would require an EIS as this is an environmentally sensitive area (SPA/SAC).
- The proposed works constitute the blasting of the sea bed and removal of the natural rock outcrop. There are no other works associated with this option.
- Indicative cost : €2m
- Funding Source : Roinn na Gaeltachta (100%)

	Option 3 - Remove the restriction at Magheraroarty Pier and replace with man-made breakwater • The removal of the existing restriction at Magheraroarty pier would enable the existing provider to operate a more frequent and reliable service. • This is an extension of option 3 and will be considered subject to the outcome of the environmental assessment and modelling of impacts of the removal of the natural breakwater • The proposed works constitute the blasting of the sea bed and removal of the natural rock outcrop and provision of a man-made structure to address any associated environmental impacts as determined. • Indicative cost : €10m • Funding Source : Roinn na Gaeltachta (100%)
Feasibility analysis	See attached the Feasibility Analysis Table (appendix 1) which assesses each option for their feasibility given financial, legal, regulatory, environmental, administrative or other constraints. Other than the 'do nothing' option, those options which fail this assessment should be excluded from the detailed appraisal stage.
Recommendation on continuing to detailed appraisal	Donegal County Council recommends that a high level environmental assessment (non intrusive) with modelling to determine the % probability of successfully removing the natural breakwater be undertaken **prior** to the project continuing to detailed appraisal stage. The assessment works required will include : • Preliminary engineering design to determine the extent of dredging required to create the minimum navigable depth €15,000 • Wave Modelling to assess the existing wave climate and the effect of removing the rock. €15,000 • Further bathymetry to inform the above wave modelling €5,000 • Sediment transport modelling of Dooey strand €10,000 • Drogues studies to determine the direction of currents etc to inform, the sediment transport modelling € 2,000 • Breakwater Options Study €15,000 • Wave Modelling to assess the wave climate and of the proposed breakwater options €15,000 • Sediment transport modelling of the proposed breakwater options €15,000