

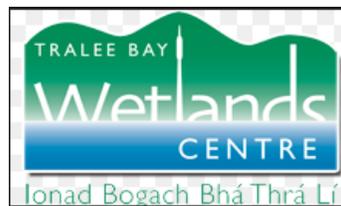


Expressions of Interest

Tralee Bay Wetlands Centre

Briefing Document

March 2018



Briefing Note

1. Introduction

Kerry County Council, on behalf of the Tralee Bay Wetlands Company Ltd., is calling for expressions of interest from anyone interested in entering into a short-term rental agreement to operate a Café/Restaurant and gift shop at the Tralee Bay Wetlands Centre.

This offers a unique opportunity to rent a modern open plan Café space and gift shop in a well-run thriving visitor centre with ample free parking within walking distance of Tralee Town Centre and just off the N86 Dingle touring route on the gateway to the Dingle Peninsula and on the Wild Atlantic Way.

Respondents must reply to this Request for Expression of Interest before the deadline set out below. This Expression of Interest exercise may also involve the Board of the Wetlands Company seeking information through other means, such as a request for feedback, a briefing session or a presentation.

Kerry County Council can facilitate site visits. Please contact the Community Department, on (066) 7183552 to arrange a site visit.

All costs and expenses incurred by respondents relating to their participation in this market sounding exercise including, but not being limited to, site visits, field trials, demonstrations and/or presentations shall be borne by and are a matter for discharge by the respondents exclusively.

Kerry County Council reserves the right not to follow up on this notice in any way and/or to change its requirements in any way.

2. Background

Tralee Bay Wetlands Centre opened to the public in 2012. The centre and its facilities are unique to the South of Ireland and are leading the way in the vastly expanding eco-tourism market. Located on the gateway to the Dingle Peninsula and on the Wild Atlantic Way, Tralee Bay Wetlands Centre is a ‘must see’ attraction for County Kerry. The centre is both a visitor attraction offering guided nature boat tours and a popular activity centre, with a light water sports activity lake (pedelo boats, water zorbs). An outdoor rock climbing and bouldering area was launched in 2015. A 20 metre

viewing & observation tower offers a 360degree bird's eye view of the surrounding area and spectacular views of Tralee Bay and approx 60kms of views of the WAW (Wild Atlantic Way)

The centre is open daily and all year (*there are Christmas and New Years Closures*). Tralee Bay Wetlands centre is open daily 10am – 5pm with extended hours for both July and August 10am – 7pm. The centre attracts both domestic and overseas visitors annually, and has a strong repeat business. Tralee Bay Wetlands Centre is now very well established on the school tours and children's birthday party markets. The centre is also a popular Santa Experience destination in December.

The Café is an open floor space incorporating the following facilities:

- Fully fitted out kitchen, including all utensils, service area & furnishings.
- Indoor and Outdoor (al Fresco) seating overlooking main lake & activity area.
- Ample free customer parking available with a designated customer coach & car park.
- Toddler Playground space adjacent to Café and Visitor center. (Free to customers).
- Café Capacity: Indoor Seating 60-80pax. Outdoor (alfresco) 20pax.

The gift shop forms part of the Café floor open plan area. Merchandise currently on sale in the shop includes items for both the adult and children visitor markets. The merchandise targeted at the children's market is intended to support the school tours and children's birthday parties hosted at the Centre. The gift shop is regarded as ancillary to the main activities of the Centre, i.e. Café; Activity Lake; Wetlands, etc.

The Café area has recently been refurbished and overlooks the main lake which has additional features including fountains and underwater lighting. This same area (admission free) also offers just over half a kilometer of walkways to customers and visitors, and is popular with visitors and locals alike all year. Grounds, and greens are maintained to a high standard.

Tralee Bay Wetlands centre and its surroundings have been developed to an exceptional standard. The Café and food service and gift shop offering must therefore both complement and contribute to the overall customer experience and where possible enhance the visitor's enjoyment and memory of their time spent within the attraction.

3. Tralee Town

Tralee is the capital town and administrative centre of County Kerry, a region of spectacular beauty and one of Ireland's premier visitor destinations. The town is located on the northern side of the

neck of the Dingle Peninsula, and is the largest town in County Kerry. The town's population including suburbs was 23,691 as of the 2016 census making it the 8th largest town, and 14th largest urban settlement in Ireland.

4. Tralee Bay Wetlands Site Location

Tralee Bay Wetlands is located in Ballyard, Tralee, Co Kerry just off the roundabout for the Dingle Road.

Latitude: 52.261965, **Longitude:** -9.711602



5. Tralee Bay Wetlands Site Description

Tralee Bay Wetlands Centre provides a window on the diverse and spectacular Tralee Bay Nature Reserve.

The Centre is a nature and activity attraction. It adjoins the Tralee Bay Nature Reserve which encompasses over 8,000 acres extending from Tralee town to the Maharee Islands and is a designated Natura 2000 site. The activity area is free to access. This includes the activity lake. There are lakeside walks and a picnic area.

Access to the nature zone is via the eco-friendly visitor centre. Here, the diversity of the Tralee Bay ecosystem is explained using static and interactive displays, audio visual and hands-on activities.

There is an entrance fee, but this includes a guided tour, 10 minute safari boat trip through the freshwater wetlands and access to the 20 metre high viewing tower (stairs and lift) which affords panoramic views of Tralee Bay.

The Centre is also an orientation centre for the wider north and west Kerry areas. The Lakeside café which overlooks the water-sports lake is designed to provide a welcome respite whether you are visiting the park or just taking a break en route to another destination.

The Centre's contemporary design showcases timber frame construction from renewable sources while embracing the landscape it sits in. The large area of glass to the front of the centre captures the magnificent views over the activity lake in addition to maximizing passive solar gain making the building highly energy efficient.

Environmental sustainability and energy efficiency is continued throughout the design with the use of solar water heating panels.

6. Tralee Bay Wetlands Centre Layout and Floor Plan

The Layout and Floor Plan of the Centre is as represented in Drawing No. H/17/046 set out at Appendix 1.

7. Photographs of the Tralee Bay Wetlands Centre

Photographs of the Centre feature extensively on the Centre's website:
<http://www.traleebaywetlands.org/to-do/visitor-centre>

8. Guidelines for Respondents

There is no mandatory format for responses to this Expression of Interest Exercise.

9. Consideration of Proposals

Incoming submissions to Kerry County Council will be considered on the following basis: -

- Previous experience and capabilities of the respondent entity including previous management experience of operating a similar business.
- The suitability of the proposal in line with the current operations at the Tralee Bay Wetlands Centre.
- The suitability of any proposal in relation to planning, procurement and environmental rules and guidelines.
- The commercial viability and sustainability of any proposal.

10. Closing Date for receipt of proposals and delivery address

Closing date for receipt of Expression of Interests is 3pm on Monday 16th April, 2018.

Proposals may be submitted by email to the above address or delivered in hardcopy to the following address:

SEO Community Department, Room 45, Aras an Chontae, Rathass, Tralee, Co. Kerry.

Proposals delivered by hand or by post must be delivered in sealed packages. The Package must be marked with the Title, **Expressions of Interest – Tralee Bay Wetlands** and the word **“Confidential”**.