

Our wild Atlantic: What lies beneath? - A unique exhibition for public engagement in Ireland

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SeaFest is the new, national maritime festival of Ireland which was established in 2015 under the Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth: An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland (HOOW) strategy.

As a key stakeholder, the Marine Institute commissioned Blue Inspiration to develop a public exhibition which communicated the basic principles of marine science, utilising a variety of media and assets, to engage as wide an audience of general public as possible with their marine environment. The exhibition was designed as an experimental project to help determine baseline levels of public knowledge and engagement with the marine environment, while building a foundation for future exhibitions, should it prove successful.

To ensure maximum value was obtained from the project, the exhibition was created in alignment with the long-term view of installation of key exhibits, post event, into the Galway City Museum as a temporary exhibition, which would facilitate further outreach and engagement by museum visitors (175,000+ per year).

This presentation will outline the considerations and steps taken in the creative and development processes utilised to bring this public engagement initiative to fruition, which resulted in over 17,000 visitors specifically engage with the exhibition over a 2-day period.