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**Best practice on monitoring, adaptation
and advocacy for cultural landscapes -
pilot actions in the DACCHE project**

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Pilot Actions

Evidence from DACCHE workshops in Ireland and Sweden

As part of the DACCHE project's work on **Green Transition: A Comprehensive Approach**, the project carried out pilot advocacy actions designed to support community voice, stakeholder dialogue, and awareness of how climate change and green transition affect cultural landscapes. These pilot actions informed the development of the DACCHE toolkit and advocacy pack for communities, regions, and our shared futures.

The purpose of the pilot actions was not to create formal consultation processes, but to test practical ways of helping communities and stakeholders identify what is at stake, gather stories and evidence, share different perspectives, and discuss future choices before landscapes and heritage values are permanently changed. Two pilot workshops were developed in different contexts: one with a community group in County Donegal, Ireland, and one at Gaaltije South Sámi Museum in Östersund, Sweden.

Together, the workshops demonstrated that advocacy does not begin only with objection. It can begin with memory, storytelling, mapping, dialogue, and the recognition that local people hold knowledge that matters. The workshops also showed that community engagement can create wider awareness, build confidence, and support more meaningful participation in discussions about climate change, cultural heritage, and green transition.

Pilot Action 1: McSwyne's Castle, Dunkineely, County Donegal, Ireland

The first pilot action took place with a community group connected to McSwyne's Castle, near Dunkineely in County Donegal. The castle has been heavily affected by coastal erosion and is now beyond saving as a physical structure. However, it remains significant as a place of local memory, history, identity, and community attachment. There have also been efforts to preserve its memory through 3D digital reconstruction.

This workshop focused on how communities can identify, capture, and communicate stories connected to a changing heritage site. Rather than treating the castle only as a physical ruin, the workshop explored the wider cultural value of the place: the living memories, family stories, local histories, landscape relationships, and climate-related changes that surround it.

A key feature of the pilot action was a train-the-trainer session held before the main community workshop. A small number of community group members were introduced to facilitation methods for supporting small group conversations. This helped local participants take an active role in guiding discussion, encouraging others to share memories, and identifying stories that might otherwise remain informal, fragmented, or unrecorded.

The main workshop then invited participants to reflect on questions such as:

- What stories are connected to McSwyne's Castle?
- What memories of the site still live within the community?
- How has the landscape around the castle changed?
- How has coastal erosion affected the way people understand the site?

- What should be preserved when the physical structure can no longer be saved?
- How might digital tools, such as 3D reconstruction, help sustain memory and public awareness?

The pilot action showed that when physical heritage is damaged or lost, advocacy can still focus on preserving meaning. A site that is beyond saving materially may still be culturally alive. Community-led storytelling can therefore become a way of documenting loss, strengthening local identity, and ensuring that climate impacts are understood through lived experience rather than only through technical description.

This workshop also demonstrated the value of building local facilitation capacity. By preparing community members to guide conversations, the project supported a model that could continue beyond the workshop itself. This is important for advocacy because communities are more likely to sustain engagement when they have confidence, ownership, and practical tools for gathering their own stories and evidence.



Pilot Action 2: Gaaltije South Sámi Museum, Östersund, Sweden

The second pilot action took place at Gaaltije South Sámi Museum in Östersund, Sweden, during the soft launch period of the DACCHE exhibition *Gaskelaante – the land in between*. This workshop used the exhibition as a starting point for dialogue about the tension between green transition, cultural landscapes, Sámi heritage, climate change, and future responsibility.

The workshop began with an exhibition walk, allowing participants to encounter the themes, stories, images, digital experiences, and youth perspectives presented through *Gaskelaante*. This created a shared reference point before the discussion began. Participants could first experience the cultural landscape story through exhibition material, then reflect together on the wider questions it raised.

The workshop then moved into a structured programme focused on perspectives from heritage, youth, science, and industry on the tension between green transition and cultural landscapes. The original intention was to include representatives from the energy sector. However, despite efforts to involve them, energy sector participation could not be secured within the project timeline. This became an important learning point in itself: engagement with industry and energy actors needs to be planned early, as availability may be limited and response times may be slow.

The participant group therefore consisted mainly of students from Norway and Sweden, academics, and heritage organisation staff from Gaaltije, Stiklestad, and Donegal County Museum. Although the absence of energy sector representatives meant that one intended perspective was missing, the workshop still created meaningful dialogue between youth, heritage, academic, and community-oriented participants.

Following the introductory perspectives, participants took part in dialogue roundtables. These discussions invited participants to consider how green transition can affect cultural landscapes, whose voices are heard in infrastructure decisions, and what kinds of knowledge are needed before landscape change takes place. The workshop then moved into future scenarios and visions, where participants explored possible futures and reflected on what fairer, more inclusive approaches to green transition might look like.

The workshop concluded with a plenary session in which group outputs were shared. This allowed participants to hear from other tables, compare perspectives, and identify recurring concerns and opportunities. Themes included the need for earlier stakeholder involvement, stronger recognition of cultural landscapes, better inclusion of youth perspectives, and greater attention to the difference between consultation and meaningful listening.

The Gaaltije workshop demonstrated how an exhibition can become more than a display. It can act as a platform for advocacy, dialogue, and stakeholder learning. By bringing together cultural heritage, youth perspectives, scientific understanding, and discussion of green transition, the workshop helped participants reflect on how landscape decisions shape shared futures.

Cross-cutting learning from the pilot actions

The two pilot actions took place in different contexts, but they produced several shared insights that informed the DACCHE green transition advocacy pack.

First, both workshops showed that communities and stakeholders need ways to make landscape value visible. At McSwyne's Castle, this meant gathering living memories and local stories connected to a site being lost through coastal erosion. At Gaaltije, it meant using exhibition material and dialogue to explore how cultural landscapes can be affected by green transition and climate-related change.

Second, both workshops demonstrated that stories and evidence work together. Stories help people understand why a place matters. Evidence helps make that meaning visible, credible, and communicable. Living memories, photographs, digital reconstructions, workshop outputs, exhibition material, and group reflections can all become part of an advocacy evidence base.

Third, the workshops showed that facilitation matters. People often need structured opportunities to share knowledge, compare perspectives, and move from concern to collective understanding. The train-the-trainer session in Ireland supported local facilitation capacity, while the dialogue roundtables in Sweden created space for multi-stakeholder reflection.

Fourth, the pilot actions highlighted the importance of early engagement. The difficulty of securing energy sector participation in the Swedish workshop showed that key stakeholders may not be available unless they are contacted well in advance. This reinforced one of the central messages of the advocacy pack: communities and project teams should begin engagement early, document attempts to involve stakeholders, and avoid relying on last-minute participation from actors whose availability may be limited.

Finally, the workshops showed that advocacy can be constructive. It is not only about resisting development or responding to harm. It is also about creating awareness, gathering knowledge, building confidence, strengthening community voice, and imagining fairer futures.

Relationship to the Green Transition toolkit and advocacy pack

The pilot actions directly informed the development of **Green Transition: A Comprehensive Approach – A toolkit and advocacy pack for communities, regions, and our shared futures**.

The workshops tested and demonstrated several of the pack's core principles:

- landscapes should be understood as lived, cultural, ecological, and meaningful places;
- community voice becomes stronger when supported by stories and evidence;
- dialogue should involve listening, not only consultation;
- different stakeholder perspectives need to be included early;
- local knowledge, youth perspectives, heritage expertise, and community memory are important forms of evidence;
- engagement can create confidence, awareness, and momentum;
- green transition decisions should be shaped before landscape change becomes irreversible.

The pilot actions therefore provide evidence that the DACCHE advocacy approach is practical, transferable, and grounded in real community and stakeholder engagement. They show that communities do not need to wait until heritage is lost or infrastructure is already built before making their voices heard. Through storytelling, facilitation, evidence gathering, dialogue, and

shared reflection, communities and stakeholders can become more organised, more visible, and better prepared to participate in decisions that shape their landscapes and futures.

