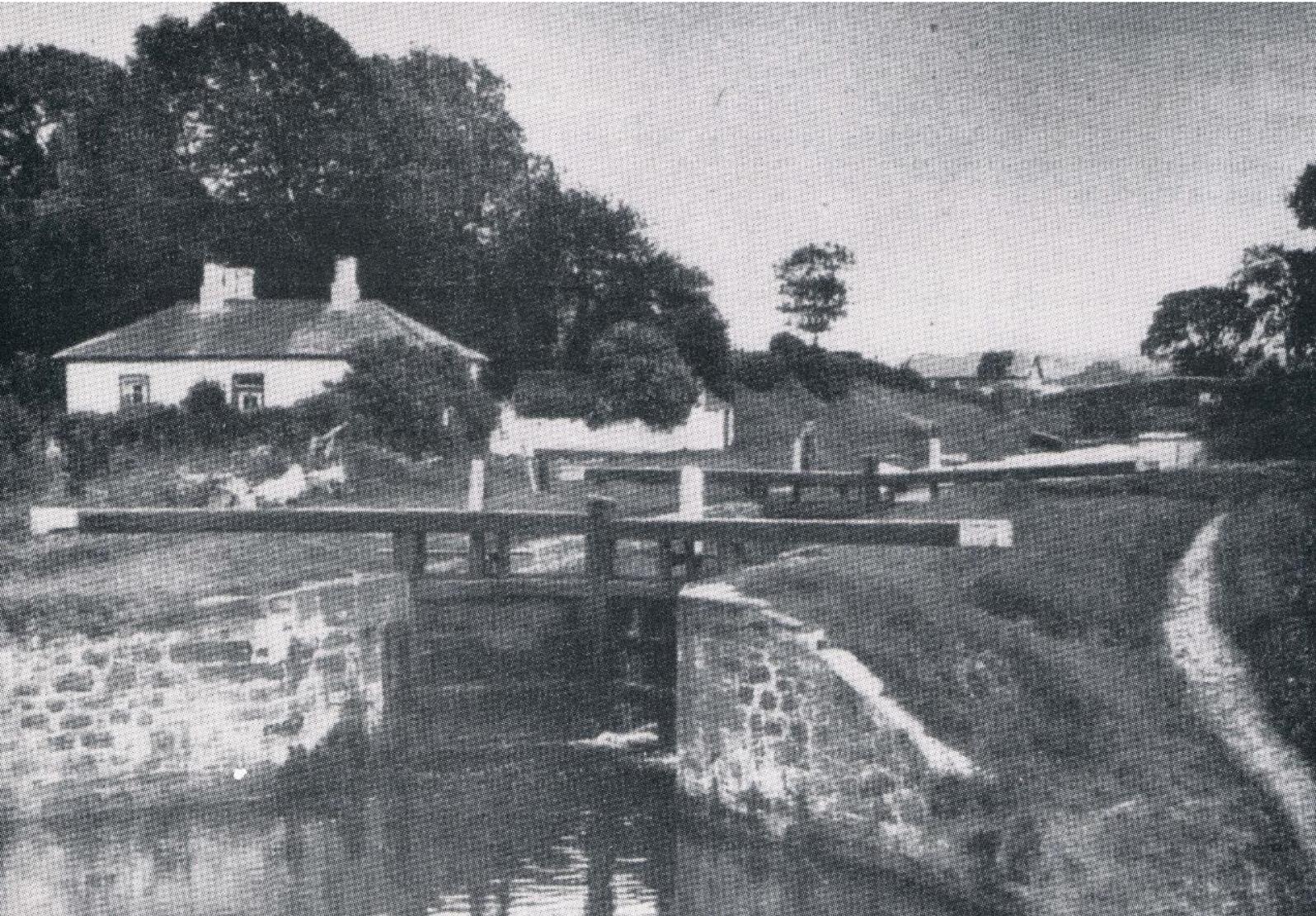


# THE LAGAN NAVIGATION



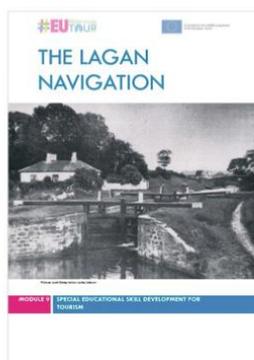
Picture: Lock Gates Union Locks Lisburn

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### Module 9

TOURISM AND  
MUSEUM  
DEVELOPMENT



<b>Title:</b>	The Lagan Navigation
<b>Topic:</b>	This module is about the touristic transformation of the Lagan Navigation, a historic transportation canal route.
<b>Educational Objective:</b>	Knowledge building in the area of touristic development
<b>Key Words:</b>	Sustainability – communication – ability to adapt – harnessing research – inclusion – sense of enjoyment – collaboration
<b>Duration:</b>	Approx. 30 min. study + 15 min. questions

# THE LAGAN NAVIGATION

## CREATION OF A TOURISM OFFER

### AREA OF GOOD PRACTICE: TOURISM AND MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The history of the Lagan Navigation links in Northern Ireland go back over 250 years and were one of the main transport modes for many decades. The plans to reopen the Lagan canal and river are well underway and extensive research has been carried out to determine the best way forward.



Picture: Navigation House, Union Locks, Lisburn

The Lagan Navigation has direct connection with the industrial and heritage history of the area, in particular the Linen industry as it was used to transport the linen and flax. The area around the canal and river are also of great interest in relation to nature and the natural environment. It was with this in mind that one element of the research looked at the teaching and learning opportunities in the area.

There are 141 schools in the operational area which equates to circa 35,000 pupils. The plans have taken full advantage of the numerous opportunities to engage with these educational facilities to ensure that a wide range of

programmes of teaching and learning opportunities are developed. The management of Union Locks are working closely with the Curriculum Advisory and Support Services to ensure that all their proposed educational programmes fit with the curriculum and will enhance the students learning.

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## 2 BACKGROUND

The Lagan Navigation was one of the most successful commercial navigations in Ireland and boasts the only flight of four locks (Union Locks, Lisburn) in the Irish waterway network. The remains of the Lagan Navigations canalised sections is one of the region's best assets as it passes through the cities of Belfast and Lisburn, traverses through rolling countryside and picturesque villages entering Lough Neagh, the largest freshwater lake in the British Isles.

From Belfast to Lough Neagh the Lagan Navigation travels East to West, 27 miles with 27 locks, 20 road bridges, 12 footbridges and 1 Railway Bridge. It passes through three Local Government areas – Belfast City Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council and three Counties – Antrim, Down and Armagh. There are some 6,000 acres of public parks and open spaces, including The Lagan Valley Regional Park within the Trusts Operational Area shown below.

The Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995 (HMAO 1995) gives the Department of the Environment a duty to compile and maintain a schedule of historic monuments. Historic monuments are scheduled for their protection from alteration or destruction through the aforementioned order. The Lagan Navigation has been valued as a feature of industrial heritage worthy of statutory protection and as such is scheduled as per Article 3 of the HMAO 1995. The scheduled area includes the following features:

- The canalised sections of the River Lagan
- The towpath
- All locks and gates
- The abutments of bridges crossing the Navigation, but excludes the bridges themselves
- Wharves, basins and passing points

The canalised sections of the River Lagan and the Navigation itself are afforded protection as an archaeological monument of Regional Importance.

The plans include maximising the biodiversity enhancement within the corridor in accordance with national and local biodiversity strategies, habitat and action plans and species action plans. It is anticipated that this will be done by recruiting a post graduate student to work on ecological audits, habitat enhancement projects, landscape restoration and towpath facilities design guide.

Plans also include forging linkages with the industrial heritage along the waterway and the educational programmes will include collaborating with the Irish Linen Centre and Museum, the Lock Keeper's Cottage and Barge and the Titanic Experience. An education barge afloat on the canal is also part of the plans and it will provide a portable learning facility for a wide range of participants.

One of the objectives of the Lagan Canal Trust is to “provide a living and working heritage with sustainability in mind to ensure that this outstanding national asset is well kept for future generations to enjoy”. This heritage can only be sustained if the local population are involved and interested in it. The continuous learning opportunities that will be provided will ensure that interest in the waterway is maintained and therefore protected for future generations.

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### 3 GOOD PRACTICE

The Union Locks is sited on a stretch of the Lagan Navigation system and so is linked to many stakeholders the full length of the 27 mile long system. What happens on one area of the system has an impact on the other areas, it is therefore imperative that all planning is done in connection with all stakeholders.

In order to centralise all efforts to plan for the future of this waterway The Lagan Canal Trust was formed in 2009. It is funded by the three local councils along the 27 mile route; Belfast, Lisburn and Craigavon, the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure and NI Environment Agency. The Trust and its partners are the custodians of the 300 year old waterway and the main stakeholders. Other stakeholders include:

- Discover Waterways Lisburn
- Lagan Gateway Project
- Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
- Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council
- Educational Facilities
- NI Environmental Agency
- Local businesses
- Other attractions in the area and along the waterway
- Community groups

The research for the development of the waterway was undertaken in collaboration with all stakeholders. This has resulted in a robust plan going forward that will involve a series of learning opportunities for a wide range of the population.

The Waterways College have some programmes already on offer, these include formal and social learning opportunities for the following targeted participants:

- 16 – 24 year olds
- 25+ apprenticeships
- Long term unemployed
- 50+
- Re-skilling and up-skilling
- Volunteers
- Pre 16 schools, colleges, universities, youth organisations, clubs
- Community groups and families
- Sporting clubs and organisations

These programmes will be further developed and enhanced to suit future requirements.

#### **The Lagan Canal Trust and its 67 Square Mile Operational Area**

The primary objective of the Lagan Canal Trust is to reopen the Lagan Navigation from Belfast Harbour to Lough Neagh. The main programme of proposed works is circa £100M to be delivered over 15/20 years. The Trust and its partners are the focus of guardianship of a 300-year-old

living and working heritage and we do all of this with sustainability in mind to ensure that our outstanding national asset is well kept for future generations to enjoy.

The rationale in developing an operational area, shown on the plan below, is the opportunity it presents for bringing together public and private sector interests and those of the communities (some 300,000 people) along the 67 square miles into a focussed, dedicated zone where social well-being is supported by a vibrant economy sustained by a healthy environment. There are 141 schools with the Operational Area with 35K+ pupil population and seven railway stations, which provide ready access to green spaces, rural and urban pursuits. This combines the potential for community planning, economic, physical and environmental regeneration and conservation.

The Operational Area highlights the role the re-opening of the Lagan Navigation will have in linking, through Lough Neagh, the inland waterway system on the island of Ireland North and South to maximise the tourism and economic potential of over 600 miles of waterways – connecting the Eastern seaboard in Belfast to the Western seaboard in Limerick. The plan below shows the route of the Navigation and Operational Area.



Picture: Plan showing the Trust Operational Area in green with the line of the Navigation in red

### The Trust Objectives

- Ensure that all our work is informed by and fits with the Programme for Government and the NI Strategic Investment Plan 2011 – 2021, the re-opening is highlighted in this document, and addresses the objectives of our Departmental, current and potential partners and stakeholders

- Contribute to addressing poverty, social exclusion and climate change
- Develop an important historic and cultural asset which is recognised locally, regionally and nationally as having the potential to make a significant contribution to Northern Ireland's economy
- Ensure that the Trust is resourced to deliver a complex programme of work

**This will be achieved through:**

- Conserving, managing and interpreting the natural, built, cultural and industrial heritage of the Navigation
- Develop a multimedia digital history platform of the Lagan Navigation – ‘Just Add Water’
- Restoring the historic structures of existing locks whilst enabling their use through providing new lock gates and safety structures (under consent)
- Reinstate towpaths and create of new paths along the whole length of the Navigation between Belfast and Lough Neagh
- Connect and extend the National Cycle Route Number 9 through the Operational Area giving wider connectivity throughout Northern Ireland
- Facilitating linkages between the Navigation, communities and public transport; and between existing facilities and additional ones e.g. links to villages in rural areas
- Re-watering the canalised sections along the Lagan through reinstating or repairing the weirs associated with each lock and lateral canal built in the 18th century to enable navigation
- Providing a new cascade weir and new lock at Stranmillis to replace the existing pen weir structure and enable navigation from the tidal Lagan to the Navigation
- Providing a new section of river and canalised navigation between Sprucefield and Moira to replace the section of the Navigation overlaid by the M1 Motorway. This will include a canalised linkage to the Maze Long Kesh Site
- A programme of silt removal and dredging to reinstate a channel for boat passage;
- Contribute to community health and well-being opportunities through greater access to leisure, sporting and recreational pursuits
- Provide a range of additional facilities for visitors, walkers and cyclists and mooring points along the Navigation to enable boat usage and other water bases activities, features and attractions
- Clearly defining the potential for positive social impact in local communities through Community Planning partnerships
- Fully examining the potential of the re-opening in terms of the potential of climate change adaptation in the Lagan Valley working with a European initiative which seeks to design natural water retention measures in flood plains
- Conduct a 2 year, 2014 – 2016, proof of concept pilot for The Waterways College (TWC) to drive formal, volunteering, educational and community outreach programmes which address the heritage and environmental skills deficit in Northern Ireland

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### **The Waterways College**

The Waterways College (TWC), in its two year pilot project phase which began in October 2014, will deliver waterways based traditional and new heritage and environmental learning opportunities. Unemployed people of all ages, volunteers, and educational and community outreach participants will have the opportunity to work on the Trusts projects along the Navigation. The stakeholder engagement programme will inform development of TWC.

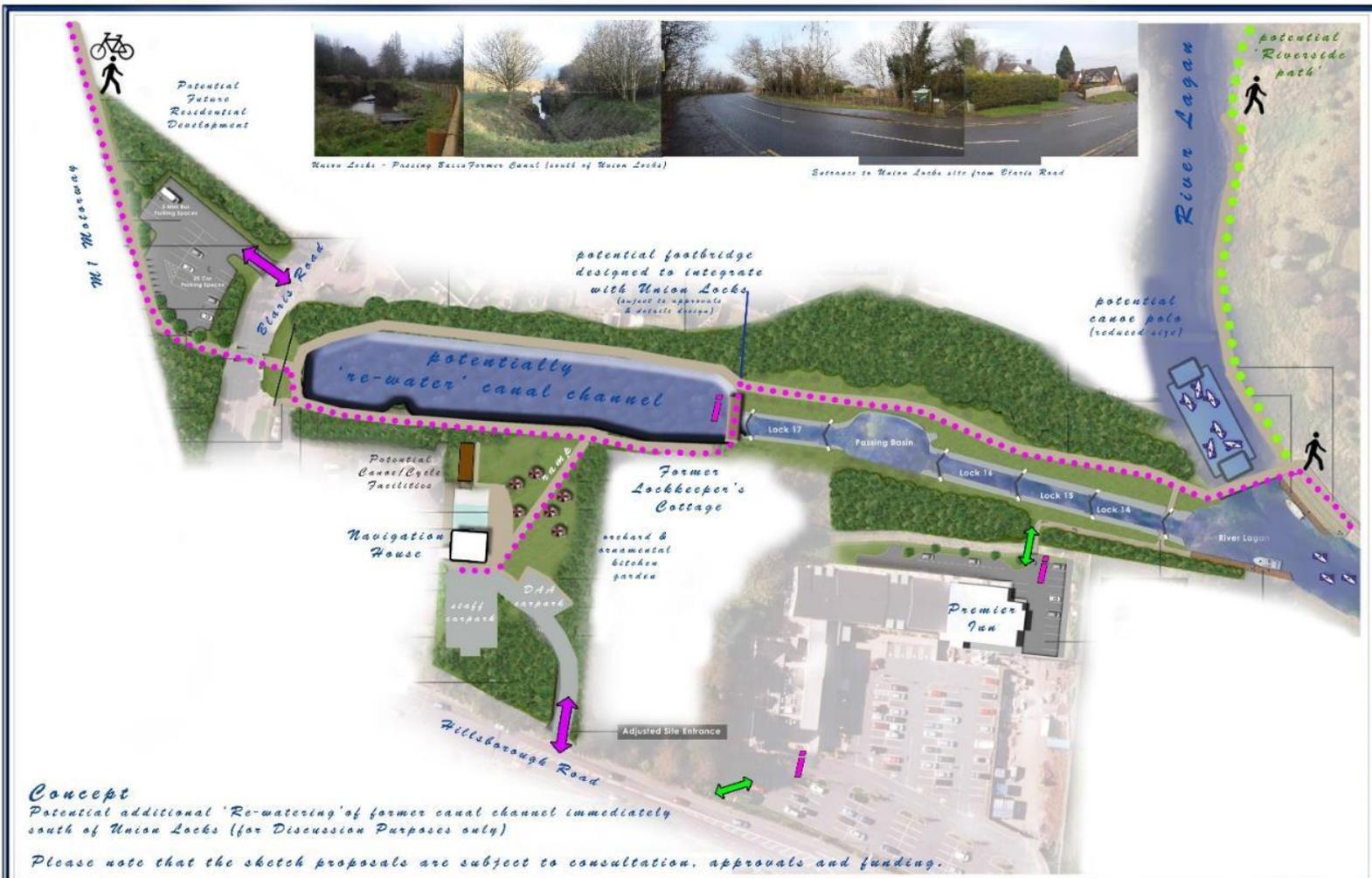
The two-year pilot with Social Enterprise partner, Springvale Employment and Learning, will deliver some 150 formal learning and some 200 volunteering opportunities in the Lisburn/ Belfast City Council Area. The programme and projects will be delivered in two distinct strands:

**Strand 1** formal learning targeted participants of TWC are:

- 16 – 24 year olds
- 25+ apprenticeships
- Long term unemployed
- 50+
- Re-skilling and up-skilling

**Strand 2** social learning targeted participants are:

- Volunteers
- Pre 16 schools, colleges, universities, youth organisations, clubs
- Community groups and families
- Sporting clubs and organisations



**DWL - Navigation House & Union Locks** **Sketch 03**  
Sketch for Discussion Only 16-02-15

Picture: Map of the Union Locks

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## 4 EFFECTIVENESS AND SUCCESS FACTORS

- Open communication with all stakeholders
- Developed relationship with the Curriculum Advisory & Support Services
- Connection with local educational facilities
- The forming of the Waterways College
- The forming of the Lagan Canal Trust
- Relationships with local related heritage sites
- Relationship with NI Environment Agency

### **Just Add Water Project**

- Development of a digital history platform bringing together the story of the Lagan Navigation through its 300+ year history through
- Developing a digital resource which promotes intellectual access to data
- Meta tagging data for use by the teaching profession
- Developing themes which will generate interest and are relevant to perceived audience
- Audience development across the 67 square mile Operational Area of the Trust
- Defining the roles which will support the reconnection of people with the Navigation
- outreach workers
- volunteers – research – web site management
- local ambassadors to incorporate historical and cultural trails into the re-opening capital works
- Articulating the legacy of skills in the community with a view to examining the coaching and mentoring potential of volunteers
- Animation of the project through events and pop up museums

The Trust is working closely with Lisburn & Castlereagh City and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council. The project will capture and handle information on multimedia format with the objective of developing a social and educational resource aligned with community participation the National Curriculum.

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## 5 RESULTS AND IMPACT

Good practice has resulted in the successful collaboration of a number of organisations to provide an interesting and relevant education programme about and around the Lagan Canal/ Waterways. Whilst the programme is in the early stages first indications show a high rate of interest in the programmes. These will be continuously developed as time goes on and will be adapted to suit new markets, curriculums and demand.

Using best practice from other similar projects has provided good guidelines and direction for the good practice being used with this project.

The anticipated impacts and results of the good practice implemented will be that of job opportunities, interest in the heritage and biodiversity of the area that will lead to its sustainability for future generations.

The Trust has been successful in gaining research and project grant funding of c£400K in the last three years, levered through matched funding by partners. A number of smaller projects, which contribute to the main re opening project, have been delivered serving to underline the value of a partnership approach and the Trusts ability to meet its objectives. It will continue to seek European, National and local public and private sector funding for its project work. In its Business Case to Government, it seeks support from the Northern Ireland Assembly through the Comprehensive Spending Review process.

Our targeted funding focus in 2015/ 16 is:

- Submission of an EU funding bid to the LIFE programme to conduct a demonstration project to address climate change adaptation in the Lagan Valley project value c£1.8M
- A diverse matrix of funding bids for the Discover Waterways Lisburn - project preliminary value c£6M
- Potential for Transactional Capital Funding for delivery of this major infrastructure project
- Heritage Lottery Fund. The 'Just Add Water' digital history project – project value Development Phase £75K
- Funding for the acquisition of the Lock Keepers Cottage at Union Locks
- The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Rural Development Fund in three areas
  - A co-operation project with Scottish Canals and Waterways Ireland partners
  - Rural Tourism
  - Rural Business Development
- Interregional Funding for development of a Lagan Valley Blueway cycling route with local and cross border partners
- To further support the delivery of The Waterways College over the two year pilot
  - European Social Fund
  - Welcome Foundation
  - Sponsorship opportunities
  - Partners matched funding

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## 6 ADDITIONAL LEARNING MATERIALS

### 6.1 Links to websites

<http://www.lagancanaltrust.org/>

<http://www.visitlisburncastlereagh.com/>

<http://www.laganvalley.co.uk/places-to-visit/lagan-canal.html>

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## 7 QUESTIONS

This is the professional self-learning section to reflect on the topic, improve your skills and sharpen your creativity. Please use it as a starting point for the development of your own ideas and thoughts. Please select at least one of the questions below and note your answer in max. 1000 characters. You can also use the additional online material or consult other online sources to refine your arguments. Please send your answers to the following contact: [info@eumillennials-tour.eu](mailto:info@eumillennials-tour.eu)

1. The reopening and touristic use of the Lagan Navigation system is a huge infrastructure project. What are the weaknesses in the plan? What actions do you propose to solve the weaknesses?
2. In October 2016 the pilot phase of the Waterways College expires. Set up new modules and think of aspects that can be added to the curriculum for the next phase of the Waterways College after this date.
3. Invent an educational trip to the re-opened Lagan Navigation involving duration, target group and explanation of the educational benefit.

**Please send your answer(s) to the following contact: [info@eumillennials-tour.eu](mailto:info@eumillennials-tour.eu)**

Please add the number of this module and the number of the question to your answer (e.g.: module 1, question 1.).

We will not give grades. Individual feedback will only be given by the online assessment contact.

## 8 ONLINE ASSESSMENT

For those that are interested in deepening their knowledge about the module, a personalized online assessment is offered. For all questions on the topic and further information about this module, please contact your expert for your online assessment:

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## 9 GENERAL CONTACT INFORMATION

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## 10 RESPONSIBLE ACCORDING TO THE PRESS LAW

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