**ABSTRACT SUBMISSION**

**Topic No.: 11 Heritage – Lighthouse Tourism**

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ABSTRACT / RESUME:

**Great Lighthouses of Ireland**

Great Lighthouses of Ireland (GLI) is a flagship initiative led by the Commissioners of Irish Lights working in cooperation with local partners around the coast to bring together 12 of Irish Lights’ most spectacular working lighthouses under a new tourism brand. GLI offer visitors from home and abroad the chance to visit or stay in a lighthouse, discover their history, appreciate the spectacular natural world around them and see the technology at work in a lighthouse today. Additionally visitors can meet the people who are passionate about these unique places that can tell the stories of the role of lighthouses, past, present and future, in the maritime and seafaring story of the island of Ireland.

In 2012 Irish Lights took a more strategic and proactive approach to the alternative use of some of its lighthouse properties in the development of an all island Lighthouse Tourism Project. In 2013 Irish Lights secured €2.5 million funding though the INTERREG IVA programme to develop and refurbish five lighthouse site and to link the investment in these sites with its existing lighthouse tourism sites. This investment has achieved; the co-ordinated delivery of a coastal touring brand Great Lighthouses of Ireland which offers 21 distinct visitor attractions including: 5 exhibitions, 6 guided tours of lighthouse towers, 4 event venues, 4 food and drink outlets, 2 centres with guided walking and 1 boat tour and the development of a dedicated website www.greatlighthouses.com. Lighthouse tourism in Ireland now attracts around 200,000 visitors per annum with further potential to grow and develop existing offerings and develop value added partnerships at local level.

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