

## Third International Conference on Health and Biodiversity

Galway City, Ireland  
14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> September 2026

### Information note for participants

v1.1. 17th March 2026

#### 1 About the Venue

##### Galway

[Galway](#) is the capital city of the West of Ireland, in the province of Connacht. A vibrant, friendly and colourful city, recognised worldwide for its welcoming atmosphere, historic streetscapes, beautiful coastal views and thriving arts and cultural scene. It is also a rather small city, and it is possible to walk from one side of the city area in the east to the other in the west in little more than an hour. The charming and lively character of Galway's streets, shopping and nightlife make it one of Ireland's most popular destinations for families and lovers of nature and culture. The City is home to the [University of Galway](#), part of the National University of Ireland and one of Europe's leading universities studying the social, cultural, and economic dimensions of biodiversity.



*A Galway Hooker, a traditional wood, canvas and tar fishing vessel, sails past the Long Walk in Galway City*

Galway Bay forms part of several designated nature conservation areas, protected under international agreements (including the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands), European Union directives and national legislation. The rich complex of habitats within and around Galway Bay have supported communities and livelihoods for millennia and are an intrinsic part of the regions' rich maritime heritage. To the north of Galway City, the River Corrib and Lough Corrib and their associated canals and tributaries support ecologically important fisheries, whilst to the west and north west [Connemara National Park](#) supports a mosaic of montane, grassland,



wetland, woodland, limestone pavement and aquatic habitats, and thousands of sites of archaeological importance which bear witness to the intimate relationships between people and landscape in this region dating back to the Neolithic period.

Galway also sits within Ireland's [Wild Atlantic Way](#), one of the longest defined coastal scenic routes in the world, running more than 2,500km along Ireland's west coast, making Galway a perfect base for exploring the culture, nature and history of Ireland's Atlantic coast.

### Conference Venue

Cohab3 will be held at the [Galmont Hotel and Spa](#) to the east of Galway City centre. It is a 4-star luxury hotel on the shore of Lough Atalia, part of the Galway Bay Complex Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site. The conference venue has excellent meeting facilities and our working and refreshment areas will have excellent views over the Lough.

The venue has a large underground car park, and is a few minutes' walk from the main bus station, private coach station and train station. It is also an excellent location for exploring the entire city, its wonderful restaurants, shops and pubs on foot.

## 2 Accommodation (rates reserved for the Cohab3 conference)

Participants are responsible for making their own reservations. The Cohab team has selected a number of hotels with which we have a working relationship, listed in the table below, along with discount codes. All are within a comfortable walking distance of the main venue. All information regarding arrival, departure, cancellations, or any other changes should be communicated directly to the chosen accommodation.

**Please note that the discount codes will not work online.** To avail of the discount codes, bookings should be made via email or by telephone.

(Prices are indicative only; *please confirm the best rate offered when booking*)

Name	Address	Email	Discount code	Double Room for single use, per night	Double room with double bed, per night
<a href="#">Galmont Hotel</a> (Cohab3 venue)	Lough Atalia Road, Galway, H91 CYN3	<a href="mailto:reservations@thegalmont.ie">reservations@thegalmont.ie</a> +353 (0)91 538 300	COHAB2026	€270	€280
<a href="#">Connaught Hotel</a>	Old Dublin Rd, Galway, H91 K5DD	<a href="mailto:Reservations@theconnacht.ie">Reservations@theconnacht.ie</a> +353 (0)91 381 200	947118 or 'Cohab 3 International Conference'	€150 Mon-Thu, €250 Fri-Sun	€160 Mon-Thu, €260 Fri-Sun
<a href="#">Connaught Hotel Self-catering apartments</a>	Old Dublin Rd, Galway, H91 K5DD	<a href="mailto:Reservations@theconnacht.ie">Reservations@theconnacht.ie</a> +353 (0)91 381 200	973025 or 'Cohab 3 International Conference'	€115	€200
<a href="#">The House Hotel</a>	Spanish Parade, Galway, H91 X309	<a href="mailto:info@thehousehotel.ie">info@thehousehotel.ie</a> +353 (0)91 538 900	COHAB	€ 219	€ 219



<a href="#">Hardiman Hotel</a>	Eyre Square Galway H91 NFD2	<a href="mailto:info@thehardiman.ie">info@thehardiman.ie</a> +353 (0)91 564041	COHAB	€235	€235
<a href="#">Leonardo Hotel</a>	Quay St, Galway, H91 E8D7	<a href="mailto:info@leonard-hotels.com">info@leonard-hotels.com</a> +353 (0)91 566 444	LHCOHA130926	€ 319	€ 319
<a href="#">Maldron Hotel Sandy Road</a>	Headford Point, Sandy Rd, Galway, H91 ET6N	<a href="mailto:reception.sandyroad@maldronhotels.com">reception.sandyroad@maldronhotels.com</a> +353 (0)91 513 200	COHB092026	€179 Mon-Thu, €198 Fri-Sun	€179 Mon-Thu, €198 Fri-Sun

There is a large number of [Bed and Breakfasts and Guesthouses](#) in Galway. For this option, we recommend looking for rooms in premises on College Road, Father Griffin Road, Father Griffin Place, or Whitestrand Road, or near Newtownsmith, Abbeygate Street, Lough Atalia Road, or Eyre Square.

**Please note** that the rules on short-term property rentals such as AirBnB are quite strict in Ireland; short-term rental premises must by law be registered and licenced with the local authority and /or the Irish tourism authority. This means that AirBnB is often not much cheaper than booking a regular bed and breakfast or guesthouse stay. We advise participants to look at several options before finalising their bookings.

### 3 How to get to Galway

As an island with numerous ports of arrival around the coastline, there are many ways to travel to Ireland and on to Galway. The most efficient and easiest is usually to fly to Dublin and then take a bus or coach to Galway.

#### **Travel to Ireland by air**

The main airport for travel to Ireland is *Dublin Airport* on the east coast, approximately 215 km from Galway City. Most major airlines connect with Dublin Airport. Details of the airlines flying to Dublin are available here: <https://www.dublinairport.com/flight-information/airlines>. Dublin is our recommended airport for travel to Galway for the conference, but you may prefer to explore other options.

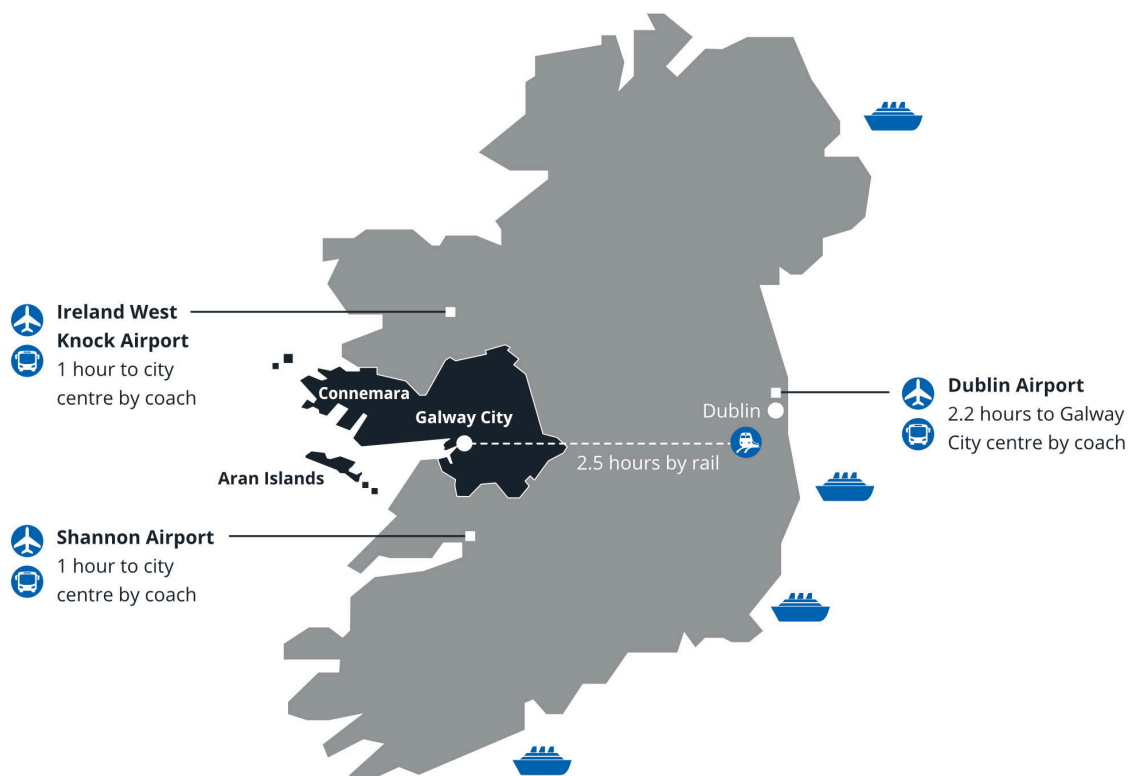
*Shannon Airport* is approximately 95 km to the south of Galway in County Clare. Shannon serves several European cities but has a more limited schedule than Dublin. Details of airlines and destinations to and from Shannon can be found here: <https://www.shannonairport.ie/destinations>

*Ireland West / Knock Airport* is located approximately 90 km to the north of Galway in County Mayo. It is a small regional airport serving 21 European cities, including nine UK airports, and is mainly served by Aer Lingus and Ryanair. Details can be found here: <https://www.irelandwestairport.com/flight-information/destinations>

Two other accessible airports are *Belfast International* and *Cork Airport*. Travelling from either location to Galway involves longer journeys; however it is often possible to get cheap flights to these airports, and the scenery on a bus journey to Galway can be quite beautiful, particularly from Cork. *Cork Airport* is 225 km to the south of Galway City. Another small regional airport, Cork serves around 46 European locations, details of which are found here: <https://www.corkairport.com/destinations/direct-from-cork-airport>. *Belfast International Airport* is 215 km to the northeast of Galway in Northern Ireland (UK). Serving around 65 destinations across Europe, it is good option if you want to explore the cosmopolitan heart of Northern Ireland and its rich history and cultural heritage. Details of flights to and from Belfast can be found here: <https://www.belfastairport.com/flights>

### From the airports to Galway by Bus

Whichever airport you land at, the easiest option for public transport to Galway City is by bus. *There are no metro lines or train stations close to the airports which serve Galway City*. Unless you are planning to tour parts of Ireland on your way to or from Galway, we strongly advise taking direct bus routes, since adding a bus change on your route can also add several hours to your journey. We also advise that when booking a bus online you select Galway Bus Station (also called Galway Ceannt Station or Galway Central Station), Galway Coach Station, or Galway City as your final destination (buses to “Galway ATU” or “Galway University” will require an additional bus or taxi journey). This will ensure you arrive just a short distance from the main conference venue and close to all of the main hotels in the city.



The table below includes links to the main bus companies serving Galway from each airport and gives you an indication of average travel times. Alternatively, you can use the journey planner on the Transport for Ireland website at: <https://www.transportforireland.ie/plan-a->

[journey](#). Note that there are no direct buses between Belfast Airport and Galway, so journeys from Belfast can take up to 5 hours if two or more transfers are required.

Point of arrival	Approximate duration by bus to Galway
<a href="#">Dublin Airport</a>	2 hrs 15mins - 2hrs 30 mins
<a href="#">Shannon Airport</a>	1 hr - 1hr 30 mins
<a href="#">Knock (Ireland West) Airport</a>	1 hr - 1hr 30 mins
<a href="#">Cork Airport</a>	2 hr 45 mins - 3hr 30 mins
<a href="#">Belfast International Airport</a>	3 to 5 hrs

### Getting to Galway by train

Unfortunately, there are no train stations at any of Ireland's airports, so taking a train to Galway is only practical if you are planning to visit other areas of Ireland with a good rail service to Galway.

From Cork or Dublin city, the service is usually efficient and comfortable, and takes approximately 2.5 hours from Dublin Heuston Station (direct) and 4.5 to 5.5 hours from Cork Kent Station (train change required *en route*). Trains from Belfast require first going to Dublin, and journeys can take in excess of 6 hours. You can plan your train journey here: <https://www.irishrail.ie/en-ie>

To get into Cork or Dublin city from their respective airports, you can take a coach or a taxi. If you are planning to explore either city or their surroundings, please contact the conference organisers in advance and we will be happy to advise on the best places to arrive, visit, eat and stay.

### Travelling by car

If you are planning to drive to Galway from anywhere in Ireland, many of the popular online mapping services will usually show you the best route. However, we recommend that you contact us ([cohab3@cohabinitiative.org](mailto:cohab3@cohabinitiative.org)) for suggestions on best routes, rest stops, places of interest etc. Car hire costs are comparable to those in most of western Europe. Car journey times to Galway from the airports are about the same as travel times by bus.

### Local transport

Most of Ireland's major cities and towns have good public bus services. In Dublin, local bus services are provided by [Dublin Bus](#). In Galway, local services are overseen by [Transport for Ireland](#). Click the links to access local timetables.

Taxi services in Ireland are well regulated and can be ordered using any of numerous booking apps. One of the most popular apps is [FreeNow](#), which is also in use in many European cities.

Please note that ride-hailing apps such as Uber and Lyft are highly regulated and all drivers using these apps must drive regular, licenced taxis and must charge the same rates. Therefore, these services are usually no cheaper than other taxi services.

#### 4 Welcome reception – Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September

**Location:** Veranda Lounge, Galmont Hotel, Lough Atalia Road, Galway, H91 CYN3

Our welcome reception will take place at the main conference venue, on the terrace overlooking Lough Atalia, which is part of the Galway Bay Complex Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area (protected under European Union law). We will offer some local food and drinks, meet some local biodiversity experts, as we watch the sun set over Galway Bay and listen to traditional Irish music.

#### 5 Field excursion – Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September

A field trip will be organised for participants who would like to experience some of Ireland's most beautiful natural and cultural heritage sites. We will visit one of Ireland's most important and spectacular national parks; the exact location will depend on local weather conditions and the number of participants who wish to join the excursion. We will visit either [Connemara National Park](#) to the north of Galway City, and [The Burren National Park](#) to the south. Both sites are under various protected area designations under Irish and international law.

##### **Connemara National Park**

The landscape of Connemara has been made famous internationally through cinema, music, literature and song. Its mix of rolling hills, exposed rocky slopes, blanket bogs, forests, lakes and pasture have been created by a complex geology of sedimentary, igneous and metamorphic processes.



*View from Diamond Head mountain, Connemara*

The national park is one of the smallest in Ireland at only 20km<sup>2</sup>, yet offers a great variety of vistas, habitats and sites of high cultural heritage significance. Connemara is home to abundant wildlife including one of Ireland's few native populations of red deer, as well as pine marten, red squirrel, stoats, and a diversity of birds including peregrine falcons, hen harriers and merlin. We will be brought to the national park by bus, and we will have a number of walking route options through spectacular hilly terrain in the Twelve Bens mountain range.

### **The Burren**

The Burren covers approximately 1% of the land surface of Ireland at around 350km<sup>2</sup>.



*Black Head and Gleninagh Mountain in The Burren*

It is internationally renowned amongst geologists, ecologists and botanists, for its limestone pavement habitats which hold a unique floral assemblage including species found in Atlantic, Alpine and Mediterranean ecosystems. The biodiversity value of large areas of the Burren have evolved in harmony with extensive agricultural practice, particularly cattle and goat rearing, leading to a unique co-production of ecosystem services where livestock, humans, and wildlife contribute to landscape patterns and processes.

This biocultural diversity is the source of much local history, traditions and mythology. Our visit to The Burren will include a guided walking tour to discover the work of farmers and landowners to promote nature-friendly farming and habitat management. We will be brought by bus to the edge of the national park where we will follow way-marked walking routes through the limestone habitats, learn about local traditions and wildlife, and enjoy some of Ireland's most exciting landscape.

**In case of very bad weather, an alternative option will be arranged.**

Sturdy footwear suitable for walking on mixed terrain and wet ground is required. The exact routes we take at each location will be dependent upon the weather on the day and over the previous week, as this will affect ground conditions and the level of difficulty on each route.

## 6 Practical information

### **Safety**

Galway is, in general, one of the safest urban areas in Ireland for tourists. It is also difficult to get lost, as long as you stay on the main streets – most roads will lead you to the docks, the main urban park at Eyre Square, or to the main shopping area. However, it can still be a busy, crowded city during the summer months so all sensible precautions should be taken, particularly against pick pockets – don't leave anything valuable exposed or accessible unless you are willing to lose it. Otherwise, keep to busy streets and formal paths, avoid poorly lit lanes, and feel free to ask the conference organisers if you have any questions or concerns.

In emergencies, the local number to call is 999, or 112.

### **Climate**

The end of summer in Galway is generally mild (17° – 21° C) and usually quite dry, though as a golden rule any visitor to Ireland should be prepared to experience wind, rain, heat or cold no matter what time of year you visit ("four seasons in one day" is not an uncommon experience!). The changing climate makes long-range forecasting very difficult, so the local organising team will inform all participants of the likely weather scenario in the weeks before the conference.

We recommend dressing for mild dry weather, but bring a light raincoat and a warm sweater, just in case. If you wish to attend the field excursion please also bring appropriate clothing and footwear (see section 5, above).

### **Power**

Plugs in Ireland are three-pronged (the same as in the UK) and the electricity supply is 230v/50hz. Cohab will have spare adaptors on hand if you are stuck.

## 7 Sustainable Event Management

The Cohab Initiative Secretariat is in the process of implementing a Sustainable Event Management System in accordance with international standard ISO 20121:2024.

The Cohab3 conference comprises part of our pre-audit testing for certification, and as such we would greatly appreciate your assistance in helping us to make Cohab3 as sustainable as possible. Our sustainability measures in place in Galway include:

- Running a largely paper-less event
- Prioritising sustainably sourced, locally-produced food and drinks, with vegetarian and vegan options



- Serving tap water instead of bottled water
- Avoiding single-use tableware and cutlery
- Choosing a venue which affords easy on-foot access from a majority of accommodation options
- Working with a venue with a strong sustainability ethos and an environmental management system
- Working with transport companies with environmental management systems in place
- Segregating waste for recycling and composting

Please direct all questions to: [cohab3@cohabinitiative.org](mailto:cohab3@cohabinitiative.org)

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