

## INITIAL TRAIL PLANNING

## QUESTIONNAIRE

## for

## Walking Trail Developments

Sport Ireland Trails

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D15 PN0N [www.irishtrails.ie](http://www.irishtrails.ie) Sport Ireland Trails requests that the following questionnaire be completed in full, by the organisation or committee proposing to develop the trail. When the questionnaire has been received by the Sport Ireland Trails, it will be assessed for suitability. If appropriate, a Site Assessment of the proposed project will be scheduled with the Sport Ireland Trails.

**Please e-mail the completed questionnaire (in MS Word format), and any attachments, to Doug Corrie -** [**dcorrie@sportireland.ie**](mailto:dcorrie@sportireland.ie)

If you have received this questionnaire in paper format, you can download an electronic version at [www.irishtrails.ie/Sport\_Ireland\_Trails/Publications/Trail\_Development](http://www.irishtrails.ie/Sport_Ireland_Trails/Publications/Trail_Development) or request a copy by e-mail to [dcorrie@sportireland.ie](mailto:dcorrie@sportireland.ie).

**What is Sport Ireland Trails?**

Sport Ireland Trails is a programme established by the Irish Sports Council (now Sport Ireland) to support recreational trail development in Ireland. Sport Ireland Trails seeks to act as a central resource to all individuals, agencies and organisations with an interest in recreational trails in Ireland including walking, cycling or water trails in both urban and rural environments. Sport Ireland Trails sets and monitors standards on Irish trails and promotes good practice for recreational trail development, maintenance and management. It also provides advice and support on new trail developments, maintains a register of all developed trails in Ireland and manages the website [www.irishtrails.ie](http://www.irishtrails.ie)

**What should I do before completing this questionnaire?**

This questionnaire is designed to:

1. **Guide your thinking and planning** at the early stages of development on your trail project.
2. **Inform Sport Ireland Trails** about the proposed trails, allowing us to facilitate a site assessment and give the most appropriate advice.

To make the most of the questionnaire and Sport Ireland Trails site assessment, you should do the following before completing the questionnaire:

1. **Read these Sport Ireland Trails publications:**

(available at [www.irishtrails.ie/Sport\_Ireland\_Trails/Publications/Trail\_Development](http://www.irishtrails.ie/Sport_Ireland_Trails/Publications/Trail_Development))

* A Guide to Planning and Developing Recreational Trails in Ireland
* Classification and Grading for Recreational Trails
* Management Standards for Recreational Trails

1. **Form a project development group** which will be responsible for the development and completion of the proposal.
2. **Consult provisionally with all potential stakeholders**: landowners, potential funding agencies, environmental protection authorities etc.

**What is a Site Assessment?**

If appropriate, Sport Ireland Trails will schedule a site visit by one of our advisors on receipt of a completed questionnaire. The site visit will have three main components:

1. **Site Assessment**

This is an on-the-ground survey of the proposed trail by an experienced trails advisor, who will get an overview of the location, features and sustainability potential of the trail. Based on many factors (outlined in Sport Ireland Trails publications, as mentioned above), Sport Ireland Trails will give their opinion on the suitability of the proposal for development.

1. **Advisory (During Assessment)**

The advisor will be happy to provide advice on various aspects of trail development such as:

* Trailhead location and requirements
* Waymarking and signage
* National policy and standards for trails
* Suitability of the proposed trail for the expected users
* Best practice in developing, managing and maintaining trails
* Overcoming hazards and issues on a trail
* Technical advice on trail construction and maintenance
* Other issues relevant to your particular trail

1. **Report**

Sport Ireland Trails will issue a report detailing the findings of the assessment. The report will comment on the suitability or otherwise of the proposed trail. If the trail is deemed suitable, the report will give comments and advice on the proposed development. As well as the trail developers, the report may be useful for potential funders, partners, landowners, engineers and other stakeholders.

1. **Cost for Site Assessment**

There is a cost associated with doing Site Assessments. To ensure the accreditation process remains sustainable it is necessary that the cost of the site assessment is covered by the organisation developing the trail. This will be based on the time the assessment takes and costs for site assessments will typically be in the region of €300 to €800 per site assessment depending on the time taken. This cost should be factored in when budgeting for the development of the trail. Please contact us to confirm a more exact cost when you know the length of your trail. The cost will be established in advance of the site assessment and an invoice issued to the trail management organisation once the site assessment report is finalised.

**Sport Ireland does not wish this cost to be a burden on voluntary groups developing trails. If payment of the cost of the site assessment is a significant issue please contact the office to discuss.**

**What happens then?**

1. **Project Development**

Based on recommendations in the Site Assessment Report, the project development group progresses the proposal, re-considers its direction, or shelves the project. If progressing, a clear Trail Development Plan should be drawn up to effectively guide all aspects of the project. At all times, Sport Ireland Trails is available for further advice, and welcomes regular progress updates.

1. **National Trails Register**

Once the trail is completed, the proposer can request a Registration Inspection from Sport Ireland Trails. If the trail meets the standard (as outlined in the *Management Standards for Recreational Trails*), the trail will be accredited on the National Trails Register.

1. **Management & Maintenance**

The trail proposer will be responsible for all aspects of the project. Remember that a trail requires a significant amount of on-going management, maintenance and funding after it is completed. This work and commitment should not be underestimated, and the proposer should only go ahead with the trail development if they are fully committed to the long-term needs of the trail.

**About this questionnaire**

This questionnaire is divided into 4 sections, designed to progressively clarify and structure your thinking and planning:

1. **General Information**

This is high-level and background information on the project, its aims and potential for sustainability.

1. **Project Organisation**

Details on the project development group, partners & stakeholders, funding streams and plans for future management & maintenance.

1. **Site Information**

This section will outline the main considerations related to the trail’s location: land ownership, environmental concerns and potential safety issues.

1. **Trail Information**

Specific details on the proposed trail, such as length, grade and sites of interest.

Completing the Trail Planning Questionnaire will ask questions which should help to give you a better understanding of what will be involved in developing a trail and managing it in future.

1. **General Information**
2. **Contact person for project:**

Who should Sport Ireland Trails contact to arrange a site assessment, for further information etc.?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name:**  **Address:**  **Tel:**  **Mobile:**  **E-mail:** |  |

1. **Background Reading:**

Please confirm that the following documents have been read by the development group.

(All available to download at [www.irishtrails.ie/Sport\_Ireland\_Trails/Publications/Trail\_Development](http://www.irishtrails.ie/Sport_Ireland_Trails/Publications/Trail_Development)**)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Booklet**   1. A Guide to Planning and Developing Recreational Trails in Ireland 2. Classification and Grading for Recreational Trails 3. Management Standards for Recreational Trails | **Confirm Read** |

1. **Name of proposed trail development:**

Name of overall project and individual trails (if more than one trail).

1. **General description of site / area where trail is being proposed:**

Describe the area where the development is proposed, its landscape, land use, infrastructure and activities on the site.

Include any details that would indicate the area’s suitability for recreational activity.

1. **General description of the proposed trail development:**

Give an overview of the project: Its purpose and objectives, background, development history and future plans.

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1. **Demand for Trail:**

What evidence is there that this kind of trail development is needed in this area? What other trails are already in the area?

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1. **Sustainability:**

Indicate how the trail project will have long term potential and sustainability.

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1. **Current Stage/Status:**

Give details of the current status of the project.

Has a route been finalised? Has funding been secured? Has a management body been formed? Any other details?

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1. **Sport Ireland Trails involvement:**

How is it hoped that Sport Ireland Trails can contribute to this trail development project?

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1. **Potential Issues:**

List any known constraints or conflicts which may impact the project, as well as proposed solutions.

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| --- | --- |
| **Issue** | **Proposed Solution** |

1. **Other Details:**

Give any other information relevant to the trail development project.

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1. **Project Organisation**
2. **Project Management:**

**(a) Responsible Body.**

What organisation or agency will take the lead role and responsibility for delivery of the proposed trail?

Give a brief history of the organisation.

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| **Responsible Body**:  **History:** |

**(b) What contribution will this organisation make to the project?**

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**(c) List the organisation’s members and their roles.**

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| --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Role** |

1. **Trail Development Experience:**

Has anyone directly involved in the project attended a Sport Ireland Trails Course, or have any qualifications or experience in trail development?

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| --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Qualification/Experience** |

1. **Partnership Organisations:**

###### List all partners in the project along with their reasons for being involved in the project and details of the contribution they will make (e.g. financial, land access, marketing, materials, labour resource etc.):

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Partner** | **Contribution** | **Contact Name & Phone Number** |

1. **Project Scale**

What is the scale of the proposed trail development (please select one)?

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| --- | --- |
| **Scale**   1. Small Scale Project (under €20,000): Short trail system, largely using existing infrastructure. 2. Medium Scale Project (between €20,000 and €50,000): Number of new trails, requiring some trail construction and infrastructure. 3. Large Scale Project (over €50,000): Number of trails with supporting facilities/amenities, varied landscapes, trail construction required. | **Select** |

1. **Sources of Finance:**

Give details on how the trail development will be financed: Sources, amounts & planned use.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Source**  Local Development (LEADER)  Údarás na Gaeltachta  Fáilte Ireland  Local Authority  Fundraising  Sponsorship  Other (Specify) | **Amount** | **Planned Use** |

1. **Trail Management and Maintenance (Post Development)**

Trails require much on-going management and maintenance. Give details of:

1. Who will be responsible for overall management of the trail?
2. How will regular maintenance and inspection of the trail be organised?
3. How will management and maintenance be funded over time?

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| --- |
| **a. Responsible Body & Details:**  **b. Maintenance & Inspection Plan:**  **c. Funding Plan:** |

1. **Site Information**
2. **Land Ownership**

List all owners of the land where this trail development is proposed.

Please confirm that each landowner has been consulted and has agreed in principle to the proposed trail development, and given permission to enter their land for a Sport Ireland Trails assessment.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Land Owner** | **Address** | **Agreed to Project** | **Agreed to Assessment** |

1. **Environmental and Heritage Considerations:**

List any areas of national heritage (natural, archeological or architectural) that the trail will pass through or near.

Please confirm that the relevant authorities have been consulted.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Heritage Area/Site** | **Location** | **Relevant Authority** | **Consulted** |

1. **Safety Considerations:**

List any potential safety issues on the site and proposed solutions to the problems.

*e.g. Working farmland with animals, electric fences, busy roads, dangerous rivers, flood areas, exposed cliffs, unstable buildings, tidal areas.*

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Safety Issue** | **Location** | **Proposed Solution** |

**4. Trail Information**

*In all questions below the word “trail” means trail or trails - where multiple trails are proposed.*

1. **For what type of users is the trail being developed?**

Indicate target user groups in either or both boxes below – as appropriate.

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| --- | --- |
| **User Group**   1. Reduced mobility/ disabled users 2. Family groups 3. Novice/ infrequent walkers 4. Casual/occasional walkers 5. Enthusiasts/ frequent walkers 6. Experienced walkers | **Select** |

1. **What is the expected origin of most users of the trail?**

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| --- | --- |
| **Origin**   1. The local community (10k radius) 2. People from within the county (50k radius) 3. People from within the region (100k radius) 4. People from all over the country, international visitors | **Select** |

1. **Trail Features:**

List the features and characteristics on the trail (e.g. scenery, physical features, heritage sites etc.)

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| **Location** | **Feature** |

1. **Trail Details:**

For each trail, give the length, format and proposed grade.

* The format could be Loop (circular) or Linear (point to point).
* For Grade, see the *Classification and Grading for Recreational Trails* handbook.

Grade options are: Walking Trails - Multi-Access, Easy, Moderate, Strenuous and Very Difficult.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Trail Name** | **Length (km)** | **Format** | **Grade** |

1. **Property Types:**

Estimate the length of trail which will be on the following properties:

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| --- | --- |
| **Property Type**   1. Private Property (Individuals/Commonage) 2. Private Property (Companies) 3. Local Authority Property (Surfaced Roads) 4. Local Authority Property (Other) 5. Coillte Property 6. National Parks & Wildlife Service Property 7. Bord na Mona Property 8. Waterways Ireland Property 9. Inland Fisheries Ireland Property 10. ESB (Electric Ireland) Property 11. Office of Public Works Property 12. Other Property (Specify) | **Estimated Length (km)** |

1. **Public Roads:**

Estimate the distance and percentage (%) of total trail length that will use public/surfaced roads, indicate the road classification (National (N) Regional (R), Local Primary (LP), Local Secondary (LS) and the longest continuous section on public roads.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Distance on Public Roads (km)** | **(%)** | **Road Class(es)** | **Longest Continuous Road Section (km)** |

1. **High Ground:**

Does any of the proposed trail cross land higher than 300 metres above sea-level?

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Location** | **Max. Height (m)** | **Description** |

1. **Trail Construction:**

Give details of areas that will require trail upgrade or construction. Unsustainable ground such as soft, boggy ground or steep areas are unsuitable for a wlking trail without significant intervention. When a trail has been developed, all surfaces should be robust and durable.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Location** | **Length** | **Ground Details** | **Proposed Upgrade** |

1. **Existing Trail Infrastructure:**

List any trail furniture already in place on the proposed route/site (e.g. map boards, signposts, waymarkers, stiles, footbridges).

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| **Location** | **Infrastructure** |

1. **Trailhead:**

Give details of the proposed location for a trailhead, or trailheads.

Outline the location, services (shops, cafés, toilets etc.), availability of car parking and other reasons for the choice.

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1. **Accompanying Documents:**

**Please confirm that the following document has been attached.**

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| **Document**  Map (preferably 1:50,000), showing the proposed trail, or general location if a specific route has not been identified. | **Included** |

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| --- | --- |
| **Name:** | **Dated:** |