



## **Review of International Best Practice**

*Prepared by Outdoor Recreation NI on behalf of the Blueway Partnership*

## Appendix 2: Review of International Best Practice

The preparation of this document requires a robust review of international best practice to:

- review standards used for water based trails in other countries
- review systems in place to verify that trails comply with standards
- review how water trails are monitored and managed
- document how activity providers are approved / accredited to provide visitor experiences on water trails in other countries

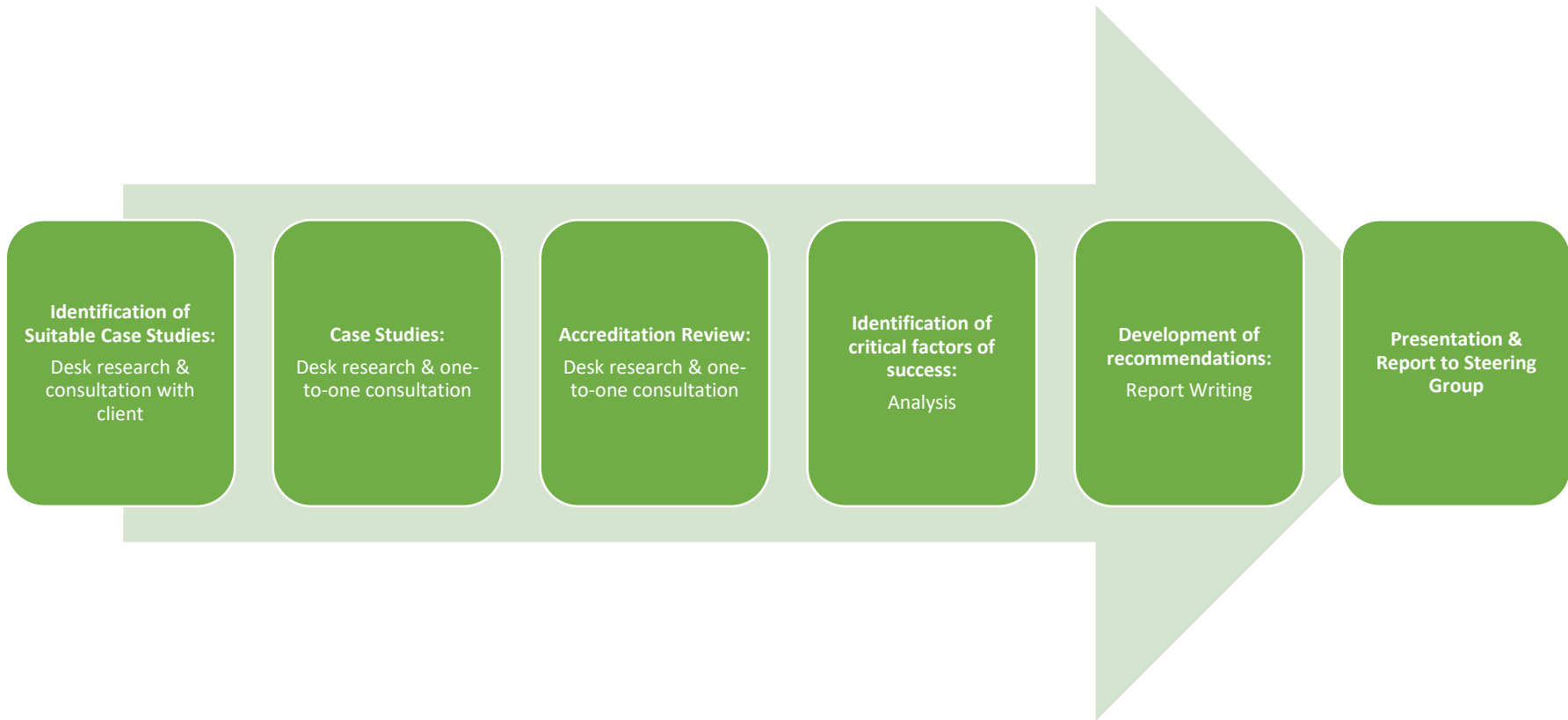
The

following

methodology

was

employed:



Water Trail Network Case Studies included:

- National Water Trails System – United States of America  
<https://www.nps.gov/watertrails/>
- Outdoors Finland  
<http://www.outdoorsfinland.com/>
- Scottish Canals  
<https://www.scottishcanals.co.uk/>
- Great Glen Canoe Trail  
<http://greatglencanoetrail.info/>
- Scottish Wildlife Trust Snorkel Trails  
<https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/things-to-do/snorkel-trails/>

Walking Trail Network Case Studies included:

- European Ramblers Association – Leading Quality Trails  
<http://www.era-ewv-ferp.com/programs/lqt/>
- Green Flag Trails  
<http://greenflagtrails.org/>

The review also considered accreditation schemes for activity provider including:

- An overview of the current position of Statutory and Voluntary Accreditation Schemes in Northern Ireland / Ireland
- National Governing Body Schemes relevant to Northern Ireland / Ireland
- Tourism Board Schemes – Visit Wales / Visit Scotland and Tourism Northern Ireland

Detailed recommendations relating to the critical factors of success were identified. A summary is outlined below:

**Recommendation 1:**

**Holistic criterion is developed to assess the quality of Blueways in Ireland.**

The review of International Best Practice has identified holistic criteria should combine a visitor focused approach with fundamental safety, technical, access and environmental components. All components are underpinned by sustainable management techniques and processes.

**Recommendation 2:**

**Refine and adopt the following system for ensuring trails comply with standards / criteria**



**Recommendation 3:**

**Adopt the following approach in terms of systems for activity provider accreditation:**

Minimum:

- Establish Activity Provider Permit Guidelines for administration by Trail Developer / Promoter

Future:

- Recognise / Adopt a National Safety Accreditation Scheme
- Recognise / Adopt a Tourist Board Visitor Experience Assurance Scheme