**Blueways Ireland**

**Blueway Assessment Form**

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# Introduction

Accreditation has been identified by the Blueway Partnership as fundamental to ensure a consistent high standard of Blueway development on the island of Ireland.

The Blueway Partnership has set the criteria required for Blueway accreditation and will also act as the awarding body. The Blueway Accreditation Panel (a sub group of the Blueway Partnership) will be responsible for the management of the accreditation process and will be supported by a Blueway Accreditation Inspector who will carry out required inspections of Blueways on the island of Ireland.

**Preliminary Assessment**

Projects **may not** progress directly to Blueway Registration Accreditation, it is **essential** projects undertake the Preliminary Assessment. It is strongly recommended that a successful preliminary assessment outcome is obtained prior to applications for capital funding or development.

**Blueway Registration Accreditation**

Blueway Registration Accreditation should be applied for once the following has been completed by the Blueway developer:

* Refine Development Plan
* Further consultation as necessary
* Secure funding
* Plan and complete development work

Following the submission of the form below the following actions will be undertaken by the Blueway Accreditation Inspector for the Blueway Accreditation Panel:

* Review of detailed submission and site inspection
* Report from Inspector provided to the Blueway accreditation panel
* Blueway accreditation issued (following successful review)

**Application Form**

This Application is in four parts.

1. Part A: Blueway Profile

* Outline information on the scale, location and activities on the Blueway.

1. Part B, The Blueway Experience

* The Experience, how the Blueway operates and how it appears from the participant’s perspective.

1. Part C, The Blueway Criteria

* How the Blueway satisfies the various Access, Sustainability, Safety, Technical, Conservation and Environment criteria.

1. Application Checklist

**Criteria**

Detailed guidance on the Blueway Accreditation Criteria is provided within the Blueway Management and Development Guide which **should be consulted** when preparing for Blueway Registration Accreditation.

**Contact:** Any questions or queries relating to the Blueway Accreditation Process should be addressed to

For Republic of Ireland Ciara Munnelly [cmunnelly@sportireland.ie](mailto:cmunnelly@sportireland.ie)

For Northern Ireland Mike McClure [mikemcclure@sportni.net](mailto:mikemcclure@sportni.net)

**Once completed, please submit this form with accompanying information to the Blueway Accreditation Inspector,**

**Humphrey Murphey via email** - [**humphrey@ilc.ie**](mailto:humphrey@ilc.ie)

# Part A: Blueway Profile

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Overview** |  |
| Date of Submission |  |
| Date of Preliminary Blueway Registration confirmation[[1]](#footnote-2) |  |
| Name of Blueway |  |
| Lead Agency |  |
| Main Contact - Name |  |
| Main Contact - Position |  |
| Main Contact – Telephone |  |
| Main Contact – Email |  |
| Please summarise any significant changes to the Blueway proposition since the Preliminary Blueway Assessment was successfully achieved (Max 400 words) |  |

Please provide a copy of the information which is available to the Blueway participant (map and brochure), or via links to relevant website. This should include:

* A graphic/map of the waterway(s) and the key hubs, Towns / villages / communities along the route and photographs of sites as appropriate.
* All trail components, each trail e.g. walking trail, snorkel trail etc. and a brief description of each trail including length.
* Trailheads, Access / Egress Points and Car Parks.
* Locations or operating areas of activity providers (permanent & mobile).
* Signage: example of a Blueway information panel and directional signage. Note that it must be possible to read all of the content on the information panel.

Please refer to this material throughout the application

# Part B: The Blueway Experience

People engage in the outdoors generally to spend time with family, have fun with friends as an alternative to traditional sports, to enjoy the scenery/be close to nature, for fresh air and to enjoy the weather and to relax and de-stress. While the initial development of the Blueway is about ensuring access, safety, infrastructure and sustainability, ultimately the purpose of the Blueway is to provide a meaningful experience for host communities and visitors.

Please outline in a brief narrative form below, the story of your Blueway with equal reference to a resident and a visitor’s perspective. Please see Section 8.1 of the Blueway Management and Development Guide for further information. You may also wish to reference the content in Appendix 1 regarding participant expectations and barriers.

* Who is the target participant or segments for the Blueway and what is the story of your Blueway to these participants? For example, what are the unique features or engaging aspects of the Blueway?
* What Blueway half and full day itineraries and bundling (activities, dining, accommodation), options are available, what Blueway events are hosted (races, come and try it days, tours), are there regular activities formally hosted on the Blueway and is there a signature annual Blueway event?
* How are the communities along-side the Blueway engaged with, have any new sports clubs been set up or strengthened, how has new access or additional infrastructure supported local Blueway use?
* What type of Blueway promotion materials or communications (brochure, website, video, social media updates, events and shows), are used and how frequently are these distributed/updated? Please provide a full selection of these supporting media separately ideally in digital form.
* What are the range of activities on offer along the Blueway including visitor itineraries?
* How does the participant (local and visitor), become aware of these and how/where can they book these activities?
* How do local businesses share the/their message of the Blueway? Do they include reference to the Blueway on their website or social media?
* How is the Blueway inclusive especially for people with a disability?
* How do you get feedback from locals and visitors about their Blueway experience?

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| **Blueway Experience Narrative** |

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# Part C, The Blueway Criteria

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| **Technical Criteria - See Section 8.2 of the Blueway Management and Development Guide** | |
| **Criteria** | **Proposal**  **Please detail how the Blueway meets the requirement of the criterion** |
| **Land Trails (Walking, cycling, shared use)**  Compliance with the Blueways Ireland – Management Standards for Recreational Trails. | **ROI**  Please list the names of the walking, cycling and shared use trails and provide evidence that these have been inspected by Sport Ireland Trails within past two years and are currently listed on the National Trails Register. (separate attachment).  **NI**  Please list the names of the walking, cycling and shared use trails and provide evidence that these trails have been inspected and meet the Blueways Ireland – Management Standard for Recreational Trails (separate attachment). |
| **Snorkel Trails**  Snorkel Trails follow the guidelines of the Irish Underwater Council. | **Please provide evidence the trail has been inspected by Irish Underwater Council (separate attachment).** |
| **Paddling Trails**  Paddling Trails follow the Blueway Paddling Trail Guidelines. | **Please list the names of the paddling trails and provide evidence that these trails have been inspected by Canoe Ireland or Canoe Association of Northern Ireland.** |
| **Sailing and Windsurfing Sites**  Sailing & Windsurfing Activities are compliant with Irish Sailing and/or RYANI Accreditation standards. | **Sailing and windsurfing activities should take place in centres that have either Irish Sailing or RYANI accreditation. Please provide evidence of accreditation (separate attachment).** |

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| **Criteria** | **Proposal**  **Please detail how the Blueway meets the requirement of the criterion** |
| **Trailhead Facilities**  Trailheads are clearly identified and offer adequate parking. Toilets and changing facilities are available within close proximity of water-based trails. | **Please provide any supporting information on trailheads which is not visible in the supporting visitor information you have included with this application.** |
| **Managing User Conflict**  Consideration and identification of steps to mitigate against potential conflict with waterway / trail users has been undertaken. | **Please provide details of any potential for visitor conflict identified and mitigation steps e.g. signage, code of conduct, zoning, consultation, awareness campaigns.** |

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| **Access Criteria - See Section 8.3 of the Blueway Management and Development Guide** | |
| **Criteria** | **Proposal**  **Please detail how the Blueway meets the requirement of the criterion** |
| **Landowner / Authority Agreement**   * Register of all land / property owners and authorities whose permission is required to permit access. |  |
| * Evidence of written permission for each of these land / property owners or authorities. |  |
| * **Insurance -** Written evidence of public liability insurance policy. |  |

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| **Safety Criteria - See Section 8.4 of Blueway Management and Development Guide for detailed requirements for each criterion.** | |
| **Criteria** | **Proposal**  **Please detail how the Blueway meets the requirement of the criterion** |
| **Suitability**  The experience is suitable for the ‘dabbler / novice’ with little to no skills or prior experience in undertaking adventure activities. | **Please provide a summary of grading for each component trail and indicate how ‘exceptional’ trail elements are highlighted and avoidable.** |
| **Responsibility**  Visitors are not exposed to hidden dangers.  Visitors should be aware of the risks they will face and that safety is a shared responsibility between the visitor and the Blueway Manager. | **Please outline the hazards / risk identified, the mitigation steps and the competence of the person undertaking the assessment. (separate attachment).** |
| **Activity Providers / Experiences**  A programme is in place for activity providers to demonstrate their safety credentials. | **Please outline how an activity provider permit scheme has been established and how it will be administered.** |

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| **Conservation and the Environment Criteria - See Section 8.5 of Blueway Management and Development Guide for detailed requirements for each criterion.** | |
| **Criteria** | **Proposal**  **Please detail how the Blueway meets the requirement of the criterion** |
| **Statutory Approval**  Evidence of consultation and approval with appropriate statutory bodies can be demonstrated. | **Please provide a list of statutory designations (natural and built) identification along the Blueway, the outcome of consultation / screening and proposed approach to action any necessary recommendations.**  **Please provide a list consultation undertaken with statutory bodies from which approval may be required.**  **Please provide evidence of statutory approval (if required) (separate attachment).** |
| **Biosecurity & Invasive Species** | **Identify that proactive measures are in place to stop the spread of invasive species and harmful pathogens.** |
| **Environmental Education** | **Confirm that the Leave No Trace Ireland Principles have been incorporated.** |
| **Litter**  The Blueway is free from litter and fly-tipped waste. | **Please highlight which actions within the management plan ensure this criterion is met.** |

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| **Sustainability Criteria - See Section 8.6 of the Blueway Management and Development Guide** | |
| **Criteria** | **Proposal**  **Please detail how the Blueway meets the requirement of the criterion** |
| **Blueway Management Group in place.**  **Formal Partnership and Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).** | **Identify Management Group organisation membership,** **roles and responsibilities and a copy of the Partnership Agreement or MOU** |
| **Frame of Reference** | **Amendments to the Frame of Reference since the preliminary application.** |
| **Detailed Management Plan**  (see page 40 – 41 Blueway Management and Development Guide). | **Attach Blueway Management Plan** |

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| **Checklist and attachments required** | **Attached or Referenced?** |
| **Overview** |
| **Completed** **Blueway Registration Accreditation Process**  Blueway developers must have successfully completed the initial Blueway accreditation process. | Y / N |
| **Blueway Participant Information**  Including maps, trail descriptions, trailheads, activity provider locations and supporting signage. | Y / N |
| **Sample Blueway itineraries and experiences.** | Y / N |
| **Experience Criteria** |
| A brief narrative on how the Blueway is presented and interaction opportunities for residents and visitors. | Y/N |
| **Technical Criteria** |
| **Trails:** Evidence of successful inspection for walking, cycling, shared use, paddling and snorkel trails. | Y / N or N/A |
| **Sailing and Windsurfing Sites –** Evidence of RYANI or ISA accreditation. | Y / N or N/A |
| **Access Criteria** |  |
| **Landowner / Authority Agreement** | Y / N |
| **Insurance evidence.** | Y / N |
| **Safety Criteria** |  |
| **Demonstrate Suitability, Responsibility** **and Provider Experience**. | Y / N |
| **Conservation and the Environment Criteria** |  |
| **Statutory Approval, Biosecurity and Leave no Trace.** | Y / N |
| **Sustainability Criteria** |  |
| **Management**   * Blueway Management Group and their roles and responsibilities. * Blueway Project Frame of Reference. * Blueway Management Plan | Y / N |

# Checklist

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| **Declaration** | |
| I confirm that the organisation named on this application has given me the authority to complete this  application on its behalf.  I confirm that, as far as I know, the information in this application is true and correct. | |
| **Name** |  |
| **Position** |  |
| **Organisation** |  |
| **Date** |  |

# Appendix 1: Blueway Experience Supporting Information

## Participant Motivators

The following research from the UK appears to map to the Irish experience of the outdoors. Participants in the outdoors are motivated by the following factors in order of popularity:

* ***To spend time with family***: this is the biggest influence in attracting new participants to outdoor activity and is the main reason for participating among youth outdoor participants. The sought outcome from this group is to strengthen family relationships.
* ***To have fun with friends***: having fun with friends is the top motivator for those under 18 years old.
* ***Alternative to traditional sport***: A growing proportion of young people are choosing ‘lifestyle sports’ as an alternative to more traditional school based sports either as a means of identifying themselves through recognisable styles, expressions and attitudes that develop in and around the activity, or because they have been alienated from more traditional/institutionalised sports[[2]](#footnote-3).
* ***To enjoy the scenery/be close to nature:***  Research shows that developing a ‘connection’ with nature, such as enjoyment of scenery and wildlife at favourite places, becomes the more important factor in maintaining levels of physical activity. This is especially the case for participants aged 55 years plus.
* ***For fresh air and to enjoy the weather***: a significant proportion exercise outdoors, primarily for the fresh air.
* ***To relax and de-stress/get away from modern life:*** Being active outdoors provides a return to nature and the natural environment - antidote to the stresses of modern day living. For 18 to 24 years, relaxation and exercise become the top motivations. The outdoors as a breathing space, away from family or peer pressures; a place where they can do what they want; where they can relax and feel free; a comfortable place, without adults, where they won’t be told to go away; a place to have a good time with friends.

## Barriers to Participation.

The following are the identified barriers to participation in the outdoors. Which does your Blueway address?

* **Deprived Communities**: distances, lack of local opportunities (perceived and actual), cost, confidence, perception (middle class).
* **People with physical disabilities:** visual impairments, hearing impairments, elderly. Physical access (gates, styles, bridges, steep or uneven paths), safety, route finding, confidence, access to information, shelter and rest points, distances.
* **Families**: no time to plan, don’t know where to get the information from, takes too long to get there and too busy at the weekends, parking stressful, costs (parking, activity fees), cumulative financial and emotional costs, balancing the different expectations/needs in a family, conscience about what they should be doing, fear of letting children go outside alone.
* **Generic Barriers**: weather, time, opportunity, lack of easy access interpretive information, confidence, girls not welcome, neglected poorly maintained, risks and anti-social behaviour.

1. All Blueway developments must complete the preliminary registration process prior to applying for this accreditation stage. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. B.Wheaton, 2005 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)