

BLUEWAY PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN 2023-2025



OUTDOOR
RECREATION
NORTHERN IRELAND

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01

Background



Background

1.1 Introduction

Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) was commissioned in April 2022 by Sport Ireland, on behalf of the Blueway Partnership, to develop a 3-Year Partnership Action Plan. The objective was to develop a vision to guide the ongoing and future support requirement by the Blueway Partnership.

1.2 The Blueway Partnership

The Blueway Partnership was established in 2019 and is the body responsible for the strategic oversight, guidance and the brand management of Blueways. The Partnership is an all-island body consisting of representatives of Waterways Ireland, Tourism Northern Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, Sport Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland.

The Partnership members are also responsible for the accreditation system which ensures that all Blueways are developed and managed to a high standard in a strategic and consistent manner. A Blueways Accreditation Inspector is contracted on behalf of the Partnership to support the accreditation process.

1.3 What is a Blueway?

Blueways are a new outdoor recreation offering, which encourage local people and visitors to engage with the waterscapes through activities such as walking on a trail, canoeing on the lakes and cycling by the canals. Traditionally the natural resources of rivers, canals, lakes and coastal areas have been under-utilised by local communities and visitors. Blueways provides a platform to open up experiences on or beside these waterways.

Definition: ‘A network of approved and branded multi-activity recreational trails and sites, based on, and closely linked with the water, together with providers facilitating access to activities and experiences.’

Length of a Blueway

A Blueway encompasses water and land-based trails of varying distances. A Blueway water trail should have at least one water ‘node’ or focal point. At this node a water trail can be a ‘stay and play’ water experience or it can include a short trail journey which returns you back to where you started. A Blueway can also bring you on a longer journey to finish at a different place.

Target audience

Blueways are targeted at the low or no-skilled ‘dabbler’, enthusiastic individuals, groups and families seeking light-hearted fun and for whom outdoor activities are an element of their stay. Blueways also provide a way for local communities to enjoy their local waterways.

Role of clubs

Clubs provide opportunities for local participation with activities such as canoeing, stand up paddle boarding, running or cycling, bringing great benefits at a community level.

An experience

Whilst Blueways are often compared to ‘greenways’, the proposition is significantly different. Greenways provide physical trail infrastructure. Blueways also provide physical infrastructure such as trails, canoe steps and jetties, but they must also be experiential including the provision of opportunities for high-quality on-water experiences. In addition, a Blueway experience should be of sufficient scale (at least half a day) to offer users a range of opportunities to engage in physical activity both on land and water.

1.4 Blueway Development

There are currently three Blueways which have been accredited in Ireland and there are a further 12 Blueway developments that are in feasibility stage or going through accreditation stage 1. This includes the Shannon Blueway and the Shannon-Erne Blueway which were the original Blueways developed by Waterways Ireland.

The development of Blueways to date has been led by a range of organisations including local authorities, Local Sports Partnerships, Waterways Ireland and community groups. Developers are guided by the ‘Blueway Management and Development Guide’ which outlines the key audience, factors for a successful Blueway and the accreditation criteria and process. The guide ensures that developers focus on the key audience of novices or ‘dabblers’ and the animation of the Blueway through guided activity experiences. There are a number of additional other support materials including the newly developed Blueways toolkit.

Blueway	Status
Boyne Blueway, Co. Meath	Accredited
Lough Derg Blueway, Co. Galway/Co. Clare/Co. Tipperary	
Suir Blueway, Co. Tipperary	
Shannon Blueway	Waterways Ireland
Shannon-Erne Blueway	
Arranmore Island, Co. Donegal	Under development
Bright-Light Blueway	
River Erkina Community Blueway	
Lower Bann Blueway	
Barrow Blueway	
Bantry Blueway and Illaun River Blueway	
River Feale Blueway	
River Nore Blueway	
Gaeltacht Island Blueways	
Lagan Valley Blueway	

Accreditation status of Blueways in 2022



Blueway Management and Development Guide



Background

1.5 Strategic Context

In the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, there has been significant interest in the development of Blueways. There are a number of factors driving this including the accessibility of funding (predominantly in the Republic of Ireland through Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme), the recognition of Blueways as the primary mechanism to open up waterways and the inclusion of Blueways in a number of policies and strategies.

Blueways have been specifically called out as a key development objective under the Programme for Government in the Republic of Ireland. They are also included in a number of national plans and policies including the National Development plan, National Sports Policy, Tourism Recovery Action Plan, Our Great Outdoors and the Outdoor Recreation Action Plan for Northern Ireland.

1.6 Need for an action plan

To date, the key focus of the Blueway Partnership has been the development and refinement of the Blueway proposition and the accreditation process. However, three Blueways have now gained accreditation and there is a recognition by the Partnership members that the Blueways brand and product now needs to move to the next step.

Furthermore, the demand for the development of Blueways since 2019 has been very significant and has exceeded levels anticipated by the Partnership. Due to a lack of resource, the Partnership have found themselves reacting to the rapid growth in demand, sometimes in an ad-hoc

manner. There is no dedicated human resource to support the development, management, maintenance, promotion and animation of Blueways. The Partnership realised that this was not sustainable, nor would it be possible to realise the ambition for Blueways as called out in the Programme for Government, the National Development Plan and Our Great Outdoors.

In order to take stock of what has been achieved and determine the way forward, the Partnership commissioned the development of a vision and 3-year action plan, by procuring the services of ORNI in April 2022.

1.7 Process to develop the action plan

In order to develop the action plan, ORNI undertook the following consultation and research:

- » Extensive consultation with the Partnership group as well as one-to-one sessions with all Partnership members
- » Establishment of a steering group which met on 3 occasions
- » 4 stakeholder consultation workshops covering regional and national stakeholders in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland
- » Desk research and site visits

The Blueway Partnership

Stakeholder Organisation	Representative
Sport Ireland	Ciara Munnelly, Anna Grant
Sport Northern Ireland	Mike McClure
Tourism Northern Ireland	Sheena Dickson
Waterways Ireland	Norma Forrest
Fáilte Ireland	Orla Woods, Marian Leydon

Members of the Blueway's Vision Steering Group

Stakeholder Organisation	Representative
Get Ireland Walking	Jason King
Canoeing Ireland	Ciarán Maguire
Cycling Ireland	Gary Lavery
Kildare Co. Co.	Annette Keaveney
Local Sports Partnership, Tipperary	Valerie Connolly
Blueway User / Tipperary Co. Council	Sinead Cahalan
Blueway Developer – Waterways Ireland	Brian Treacy
Blueways Inspector	Humphrey Murphy
Club Representative	Paul Harrington
Ards and North Down Borough Council	Edel Trainor
Ireland's Association for Adventure Tourism	Brendan Kenny



02

Vision



Vision

To achieve the ambition to grow the network of accredited Blueways to 10 by the end of 2025, an action plan has been developed (see Section 3), primarily based on stakeholder consultation. The actions fall into seven areas, each with a clear objective.



Action area	In 3 years' time, we will see:
Partnership capacity	Appropriate resources in place to deliver on the Partnership's vision and strategic ambition
Support for Blueways	Greater engagement and buy in from key stakeholders, senior management and Departments
Support for developers and managers	Blueway developers and managers are comprehensively supported by Partnership
Support for sustainable Blueways	Blueway managers are inspired and supported to deliver a quality, animated, safe and sustainable user experience
Blueway animation	Blueways are vibrant spaces with opportunities for local people and visitors to confidently get on the water
Consumer awareness	Stakeholders, local communities and visitors are aware of Blueways and understand the Blueway promise
Monitoring and evaluation	The benefits and impact of Blueways are understood by local and national stakeholders



03

Action Plan



Action Plan

3.1 Partnership Capacity

3.1.1 What are the challenges and opportunities?

From consultation it has been identified that there is a need for the Partnership to have greater capacity to deliver on the strategic national ambition. The demand for the development of Blueways since 2019 has been very significant and has exceeded levels anticipated by the Partnership. In addition, the support requirement from Blueway developers can be significantly greater than other outdoor recreation products such as walking trail developments, given that Blueways are 'experiences' as opposed to simply a 'physical product'.

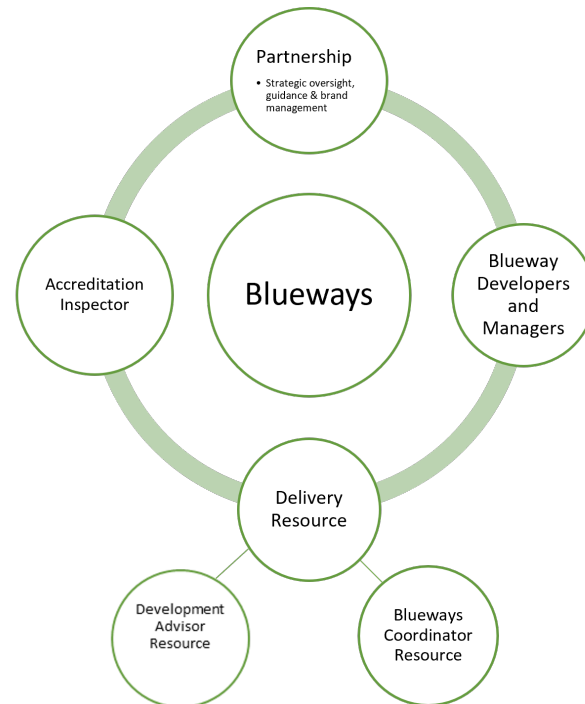
The Partnership members have an oversight role however there is no dedicated resource to support the development, management, maintenance, promotion and animation of Blueways. The lack of dedicated resources has led to a fragmented and reactive approach to Blueway development and support for developers and managers. In order to deliver a high-quality network of Blueways in Ireland, as is the national ambition, dedicated resources are required.

3.1.2 What is our ambition?

The ambition is to have a clear structure for both the oversight and delivery of Blueways with defined roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder. The Partnership will retain the oversight role and the recommended delivery resource will lead on delivery.

The responsibilities of the additional resources fall broadly into two distinct areas:

- » Blueways Coordinator Resource
 - » Secretariat for Partnership and admin
 - » Coordination of the delivery of the Blueways action plan
 - » Delivery of communication, marketing and training
- » Development Advisor Resource
 - » Education/advice to potential Blueway developers or interested parties
 - » Ongoing support for existing Blueways and Blueways going through accreditation process
 - » Delivery of training



Further consideration is given to the delivery resources, the associated roles and responsibilities and how this dedicated resource could be best deployed in Section 4.

3.1.3 Action Plan

Taking account of the opportunities and challenges as well as feedback from consultation, the following action plan will deliver the Partnership's greater capacity to deliver on the strategic ambition for Blueways.

Partnership Capacity				
In 3 years' time we will see: Appropriate resources in place to deliver on the Partnership's vision and strategic ambition				
No.	Action	Timescale	Lead Delivery	Stakeholders
1.1	Secure financial commitment to deliver the Resource Plan, including the Blueways Coordinator resource and Development Advisor resource. Pursue options to secure funding from other Departments and organisations.	Year 1	Blueways Partnership	
1.2	Scope out and secure services for the Blueways Coordinator resource and Development Advisor resource.	Year 1	Lead Partner in Blueways Partnership	Blueways Partnership
1.3	Implement the recommended revised structure for Blueways (Accreditation Inspector reverts to original role; technical panel in place).	Year 1	Blueways Coordinator Resource	Blueways Partnership
1.4	Continue to convene regular meetings of the Blueways Partnership and create regular reporting mechanisms.	Ongoing	Blueways Coordinator Resource	Blueways Partnership



Action Plan

3.2 Support for Blueways

3.2.1 What are the challenges and opportunities?

From consultation it has been identified that whilst Blueways are called out at Ministerial level and in numerous national and local plans, there is insufficient understanding of what the Blueway experience is and the complexity to support and deliver on this.

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Fund (ORIS) calls out Blueways within the criteria and has created access to funding for capital works and feasibility studies. This has been welcomed, however access to other funding for other aspects of the Blueway experience such as animating the experience is key to the success of Blueways.

Blueway developers and managers in Northern Ireland have found that the Department for Infrastructure's Blue Green funding strand has been difficult to access.

The ambition is to use this Vision and Action Plan as a platform to foster greater support for the delivery of Blueways, positioning them alongside other outdoor recreation initiatives and infrastructure called out at national level. Regular communication will be established as well as a more co-ordinated approach to engagement with key stakeholders in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. This will include funders and potential funding organisations.

The ambition is to gain endorsement for a more ambitious plan to reflect the national ambition for Blueways and secure appropriate, sustainable investment to deliver on the plan.

3.2.3 Action plan

Taking account of the opportunities and challenges as well as feedback from consultation, the following action plan will ensure the Partnership garners greater advocacy for the delivery of a high-quality network of Blueways.

Support for Blueways				
In 3 years' time we will see: Greater engagement and buy in from key stakeholders, senior management and Departments				
No.	Action	Timescale	Lead Delivery	Stakeholders
2.1	Communicate the vision and 3-year action plan to all relevant national and regional stakeholders	Year 1	Blueways Partnership	Blueways Coordinator Resource
2.2	Align Blueway actions with the objectives of the new National Outdoor Recreation Strategy (ROI) and Outdoor Recreation Action Plan (NI)	Year 1	Blueways Partnership	Blueways Coordinator Resource
2.3	Gain endorsement for a more ambitious plan (to commence in 2026) to reflect the national ambition for Blueways and secure appropriate, sustainable investment to deliver on the plan.	Year 2	Blueways Partnership	Partnership organisations; relevant government departments.
2.4	Establish regular communication on the progress of the delivery of the Blueway vision to senior management at partner organisations and other key stakeholders including DRCD, DfI, SORG and Comhairle na Tuaithe	Ongoing	Blueways Coordinator Resource	Blueways Partnership
2.5	Engage with relevant organisations to ensure criteria for funding streams (e.g. DRCD/ORIS, LEADER, DfI Blue/Green Spaces) align with the Blueways vision and action plan.	Ongoing	Blueways Coordinator Resource	Blueways Partnership

Action Plan - Support for Blueways

3.2.2 What is our ambition?



Action Plan

3.3 Support for developers and managers

3.3.1 What are the challenges and opportunities?

Consultation has shown that Blueways developers and those contemplating initiating the development of a Blueway require a high level of advice and support. There are a number of factors contributing to this, including the requirement for developers to deliver a product based around water, and the requirement for Blueway infrastructure to be 'animated' to suit the dabbler. Also, no two Blueways are the same, with each presenting different challenges for developers and managers.

Currently there is no dedicated support for developers and managers of Blueways. The Accreditation Inspector has taken on some of this responsibility in the absence of any other planned support. Even though the Inspector has not been contracted to do this, he has provided invaluable support to developers and managers to date. However the needs of the developers and managers exceeds what the Inspector could reasonably deliver in the time available and going forward the provision of support for developers and managers needs to be better defined, coordinated and resourced. It is not appropriate that the Inspector carries out this role as there is a possible conflict of interest with the responsibility for inspections.

3.3.2 What is our ambition?

The ambition is to ensure there is appropriate advice and support for Blueway developers and managers and that they have a clear point of contact. This is required for both the development phase and post-accreditation to ensure that the Blueway offers a strong experience ongoing for the dabbler.

The provision of dedicated support from a Development Advisor Resource will be critical to meeting the strategic ambition. In addition, a peer-to-peer support mechanism will be established whereby Blueway developers and managers can share learnings and good practice.

3.3.3 Action plan

Taking account of the opportunities and challenges as well as feedback from consultation, the following action plan will ensure the Partnership is supporting developers and managers adequately.

Support for Developers and Managers				
In 3 years' time we will see: Greater engagement and buy in from key stakeholders, senior management and Departments				
No.	Action	Timescale	Lead Delivery	Stakeholders
3.1	Provide ongoing advice and support to Blueway developers and those considering developing Blueways in future.	Ongoing	Development Advisor Resource	Blueways Partnership, Blueways Technical Advisory Panel, Blueways developers
3.2	Establish a Blueways Network (a forum for representatives from Blueways developers and managers), and develop a Blueways Network engagement programme, including seminars, training, and e-zines, in order to share best practice and address common issues such as risk management and environmental issues	Year 2 and ongoing	Development Advisor Resource	Blueways developers and managers
3.3	Review the development process to identify any challenges/barriers and adjust requirements accordingly	Year 3	Blueways Coordinator Resource	Blueways developers and managers
3.4	Identify potential sources of funding for ongoing Blueway maintenance and animation costs and build capacity of individual Blueways to apply for such funding.	Year 2 and ongoing	Blueways Development Resource	Blueways developers

Action Plan - Support for Developers and Managers



Action Plan

3.4 Support for sustainable Blueways

3.4.1 What are the challenges and opportunities?

Consultation indicated that not all accredited Blueways offered a consistently high level of experience, particularly in terms of the provision of guided activities on water. This is also exacerbated by the fact that there is no adequate accreditation system for activity providers in Ireland. Whilst this is a general issue across the sector, stakeholders were keen to see some measures put in place specifically for Blueways until a national solution is in place.

Water safety and safety awareness were highlighted by Blueway managers and developers as areas where they required greater guidance and support. Environmental sustainability was also a key area raised. Developers and managers, as well as those organisations involved in water quality, wanted to see better guidance and measures in place such as the implementation of effective measures to mitigate for invasive species at Blueway access points.

Many potential Blueways locations and ideas are being suggested by local communities, however, from early evaluation, it is often evident that these will not meet some of the Blueway criteria in the short, medium or long term. This is often particularly relating to tourism-related criteria (such as East/Stay/Go and activity provider provision). This is a lost opportunity for local communities and participation.

3.4.2 What is our ambition?

The ambition is that the dabbler can enjoy a sustainable, safe and quality experience at all accredited Blueways. To deliver this, the guidance and accreditation process will be refined, and training delivered to address some specific areas of concern such as water safety and water quality. Also, greater emphasis will be placed on the ongoing visitor experience and animation of the Blueways.

The Partnership will advocate for a strategic approach to activity provider accreditation in Ireland. A short-term solution specifically for Blueways will be agreed and implemented in the interim.

The enthusiasm and ambition to have a Blueway-style proposition so local communities can engage with the water will be embraced. Options will be explored to how this will operate and sit alongside the Blueways brand.

3.4.3 Action plan

Taking account of the opportunities and challenges as well as feedback from consultation, the following action plan will ensure the Blueway experience is sustainable.

Support for sustainable Blueways

In 3 years' time we will see:

Blueway managers are inspired and supported to deliver a quality, animated, safe and sustainable user experience

No.	Action	Timescale	Lead Delivery	Stakeholders
4.1	Review the Accreditation criteria, guidance, and the Accreditation process to ensure delivery of quality Blueways promise.	Year 1 and ongoing	Blueways Coordinator Resource	Blueways Partnership
4.2	Align the Technical Criteria with changes in national standards.	Year 1 and ongoing	Development Advisor Resource	
4.3	Develop good practice guidance for activity experiences led by activity providers to ensure the offer is appropriate to the needs of dabbles and fulfils the Blueways promise	Year 1	Development Advisor Resource	Blueways Partnership, IAAT, LNTI
4.4	Review the Blueway experience being delivered and provide support to improve standards where necessary	Year 2	Development Advisor Resource	Blueways Accreditor, Blueways developers
4.5	Advocate for and input into ROI and NI measures to develop registration/ accreditation scheme for activity providers	Ongoing	Sport Ireland/ Sport NI/ Fáilte Ireland	
4.6	Carry out a review of safety information in line with VSG guidance	Year 2	Development Advisor Resource	Blueways managers, VSG
4.7	Develop and deliver training programmes to the developers, managers and activity providers including improving awareness of safety/risk, environmental impacts and related mitigation measures as well as any changes to the criteria and Accreditation process.	Year 2 and ongoing	Development Advisor Resource	Blueways managers/ developers
4.8	Explore the options and possible approaches for development of a Blueway-style offering for local communities that don't meet the Blueway criteria relating to visitors (such as east/stay/go and activity provider provision) and create a corresponding development pathway.	Year 2-3	Blueways Coordinator Resource	Blueways Partnership



Action Plan

3.5 Blueway Animation

3.5.1 What are the challenges and opportunities?

Blueways are experiences where dabblers, local people or visitors, have the ability to enjoy guided on-water activities. However, for some existing Blueways and many of those in development, it has been a challenge to ensure provision of on-water activities and experiences. This impacts the visitor experience and access for local people.

3.5.2 What is our ambition?

The ambition is to ensure that Blueways are vibrant spaces with opportunities for local people and visitors to confidently get on the water. One key route to success is through greater involvement of the Local Sports Partnerships and/or clubs to engage local communities and explore pathways to provide visitor experiences. The enthusiasm and engagement will be further supported by a Blueway participation initiative to generate interest locally and nationally.

3.5.3 Action plan

Taking account of the opportunities and challenges as well as feedback from consultation, the following action plan will ensure Blueways are animated.

Blueway animation				
In 3 years' time we will see: Blueways are vibrant spaces with opportunities for local people and visitors to confidently get on the water				
No.	Action	Timescale	Lead Delivery	Stakeholders
5.1	Raise awareness, amongst Blueway developers and managers, of the important role Local Sports Partnerships can play in the development and activation of Blueways, e.g. engagement of clubs, communities, and encourage developers to foster partnerships with LSPs to deliver on this potential.	Year 1 and ongoing	Blueways Coordinator Resource	Blueway developers, NGBs, clubs, activity providers
5.2	Support Local Sports Partnerships to engage with the Blueway development and activation process with local clubs and communities.	Ongoing	Sport Ireland	LSPs
5.3	Raise the profile of Blueways through national participatory campaigns (e.g. Get Wet, HER Outdoors Week, European Week of Sport) and facilitate LSPs and others to engage with local communities to get active on their Blueways	Year 3	Blueways Coordinator Resource	Blueway developers, NGBs, clubs, activity providers, (e.g. Get Wet campaign, European Week of Sport, Her Outdoors)
5.4	Support Blueway developers and managers, wider destinations and providers to provide an appropriate Eat/Stay/Go offer through the provision of business supports and capacity building.	Year 2	Fáilte Ireland/ Tourism NI	Blueways developers, managers, Local Tourism teams, Eat/ Stay/Go providers

Action Plan - Blueway Animation



Action Plan

3.6 Consumer Awareness

3.6.1 What are the challenges and opportunities

To date, the focus of Blueways has been on the development and not on the marketing and promotion. However, the product has become more mature with three Blueways now accredited and more due to come onstream in 2023, consultees strongly believe that raising the consumer awareness of Blueways should also be a priority. The potential to be part of a successful national consumer brand is the key reason that many developers have invested time and effort to develop an accredited Blueway.

There is no central source of information for Blueways online. Numerous non-accredited Blueways cloud the online space and the Waterways Ireland Blueway website (bluewaysireland.org) hosts only those Blueways developed by Waterways Ireland.

From consultation, there is a concern that the Blueway concept is not easily understood by the consumer and will warrant careful consideration when bringing the product to market.

3.6.2 What is our ambition?

The Blueways Partnership will take the lead on developing a coordinated approach to marketing the Blueways so that accredited Blueways can reap the benefits of being part of this national brand. The Marketing Strategy will drive greater awareness of the Blueway experience, and through carefully considered messaging, consumers will clearly understand the proposition. Central to delivering the vision, a clear online presence will be established.

3.6.3 Action plan

Taking account of the opportunities and challenges as well as feedback from consultation, the following action plan will ensure there is greater consumer awareness and understanding of the Blueway experience.

Consumer awareness

In 3 years' time we will see:

Stakeholders, local communities and visitors are aware of Blueways and understand the Blueway promise

No.	Action	Timescale	Lead Delivery	Stakeholders
6.1	Development and implementation of a Marketing Strategy at national level, covering aspects of brand management, raising awareness, and the provision of visitor information both on and offline. Agree roles and responsibilities for partner organisations and support required to facilitate Blueways managers market locally.	Year 2-3	Blueways Coordinator Resource	Blueways Partnership, Waterways Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, Blueway managers
6.2	Define the role of the Bluewaysireland.org website and develop a consistent online presence for all accredited Blueways.	Year 2	Blueways Coordinator Resource	Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Northern Ireland
6.3	Integrate Blueways into national and regional tourism strategies.	Ongoing	Fáilte Ireland, Tourism NI	

Action Plan - Consumer awareness



Action Plan

3.7 Monitoring and evaluation

3.7.1 What are the challenges and opportunities?

The development of metrics and approaches to evaluating the success of Blueways is extremely challenging given the nature of the product and the manner in which it is accessed by consumers. However consultees felt that it was important for the Partnership to agree an evaluation framework which would guide Blueway developers and managers for the future.

3.7.2 What is our ambition?

The Blueways Partnership will take the lead role in defining how the impact of Blueways is measured and guide the developers and managers accordingly so that they are collecting appropriate and consistent data. Whilst some measures could be quantitative, qualitative data regarding the visitor experience will also be an important factor.

3.7.3 Action plan

Taking account of the opportunities and challenges as well as feedback from consultation, the following action plan will ensure appropriate monitoring and evaluation takes place.

Monitoring and evaluation				
In 3 years' time we will see: The benefits and impact of Blueways are understood by local and national stakeholders				
No.	Action	Timescale	Lead Delivery	Stakeholders
7.1	Carry out an annual progress review of the implementation of Blueway Vision and Action Plan.	Annual	Partnership with support from Blueways Coordinator Resource	
7.2	Commission a study to measure the impact of the Blueways and disseminate the insights obtained. Within this, develop a process for Blueways managers to collect appropriate data to populate the model and to provide this data to the partnership.	Year 2 and ongoing	Blueways Coordinator Resource	Blueways Partnership, Blueways managers

Action Plan - Monitoring and evaluation



04

How will we
get there?



How will we get there?

The Partnership will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Vision and Action Plans. However, the delivery of the Blueway Action Plan requires a dedicated 'delivery resource'. This delivery resource falls into two broad areas of responsibility:

- » Coordinator resource
- » Development advisor resource

4.1 Delivery resource

4.1.1 Blueways Coordinator Resource

The proposed responsibilities of the Blueways Coordinator Resource are detailed in the table.

Based on consultation and an estimation of the time taken to carry out the responsibilities of this role, it is anticipated that this would represent a minimum of a 0.4 Full Time Equivalent (FTE).

4.1.2 Development Advisor Resource

The responsibilities of the Development Advisor Resource are detailed in the table.

Based on consultation and an estimation of the time taken to carry out the responsibilities of this role, it is anticipated that this would represent a minimum of a 0.6 Full Time Equivalent (FTE). The estimated annual cost of the resource is €77,000.

Areas of Responsibility	Responsibilities - Blueways Coordinator
Supporting the Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Secretariat for the Blueways Partnership; convene regular meetings and create regular reporting mechanisms » Coordinate the delivery of the Blueways Action Plan » Support the Blueways Partnership in stakeholder engagement and alignment with relevant National Strategies
Marketing and promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Develop and implement a marketing strategy » Develop and maintain a consistent online presence for all accredited Blueways » Raise the profile of Blueways by leveraging National Participatory Campaigns e.g., EWOS, Get Wet, HER Outdoors, etc » Review and update Blueways brand and signage guidelines periodically » Encourage local community participation in Blueways through collaboration and engagement with stakeholders including Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs)
Communication support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Establish communications and develop relationships with key stakeholders to raise awareness of Blueways e.g., DRCD, DfI, SORG, Comhairle na Tuaithe, etc. » Support the Development Advisor resource in delivering the Network engagement programme/ training
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Keep abreast of potential funding sources and raise awareness among Developers of new funding opportunities e.g., ORIS, LEADER, RRDF
Reporting and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Support the Blueways Partnership to identify and measure KPIs to monitor the implementation of the Blueways Vision and Action Plan » At Blueways Partnership meetings report on status and progress of each action allocated to the coordinator resource » Carry out annual progress review of the implementation of the Action Plan

Areas of Responsibility	Responsibilities - Development Advisor
Developer support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Provide ongoing advice and support to Blueways developers and those considering developing Blueways in future. (This will include site visits and liaising with technical experts). » Build capability of individual Blueways Developers to apply for funding » Establish a Blueways Network (a forum for Blueways developers and managers)
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Develop a Blueways Network Engagement Programme, including seminars, conferences, training, and e-zines to share best practice and address common issues » Design Training Courses for Blueway Developers in partnership with relevant specialists e.g., NGBs, Tourism, Sport
Accreditation and criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Periodically review the Blueways Technical Criteria to align with changes in National standards e.g. Water, Walking and Cycling Trails standards » Review the Blueways experience being delivered and where necessary provide support to raise standards, including developing Good Practice Guidance for activity providers » Review, develop and/or update Blueways guidance documents as required including the development process, accreditation criteria and guidance, to ensure challenges/barriers are addressed and that the process continues to deliver on Blueway promise » Liaise with NGBs/Technical Advisory Panel
Reporting and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Develop a register of all prospective Blueways and those engaged in the accreditation process and maintain real-time status reports » Report on identified challenges and opportunities and make proposals to the Blueways Partnership for solutions/interventions.



How will we get there?

4.1.3 Deployment of Resource

There are a number of approaches to how the Development Advisor Resource and Blueways Coordinator Resource could be deployed. Upon consideration of a number of options, the Partnership concluded that:

- » Development Advisor Resource: preferred option is tender for services under contract
- » Blueways Coordinator Resource: accommodating the responsibilities within the role of an existing staff member at one of the Partnership organisations was deemed not feasible and therefore a tender for services under contract is the preferred option

In order for this to work most effectively it is recommended that both resources are delivered by the same organisation although it is recognised that the skill sets required to deliver each of the resources are significantly different. One option to consider is a tender for services under one tender, but in two lots.

4.2 Programme Costs

In addition to the delivery resource, there are a number of actions within the action plans that will require programme costs to deliver or require the services of external expertise. These costs are estimated in the table below:

4.3 Total Costs

The total cost per annum is estimated at €105,000 with one off costs totalling €70,000.

The financial commitment to the resource delivery and programme costs are called out in action point 1.1 and will be considered in more detail by each of the Partnership member's organisations.

	Estimated Cost (one off)	Estimated Cost (per annum)
Programme Costs		
Development of a marketing strategy	€20,000	
Implementation of the marketing strategy		€10,000
Development of an online presence (potential website)	€10,000	
Development of training materials and roll out of stakeholder training, seminars and other comms		€8,000
Safety information review	€10,000	
National Blueways Initiative		€10,000
Study to measure the impact of Blueways	€30,000	
Resource Cost		
Resource for accreditor, coordinator and developer		€77,000
Total Costs	€ 70,000	€105,000





For more information:

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