

# Method for New Trail Impact Surveys

Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland partnered with 56 Degree Insight\* to design and develop the Impact Survey for new trails. A key metric within the Impact Survey is a valuation of the Social Return on Investment (SROI) for each trail/greenspace infrastructure. SROI is a standardised and recognised framework for measuring non-financial benefits and the method adopted for the surveys is consistent with these good practice principles.

“Involve stakeholders”

“Understand what changes”

“Value the things that matter”

“Only include what is material”

“Do not over claim”

“Be transparent”

Below, is a step-by-step guide on how the key components of the SROI framework were applied to the pilot surveys at Ballynahinch Rugby Family Trail, Bunkers Hill, and Darkley Forest Community Trail. The approach focuses on the return on investment from a path user's perspective (e.g., the benefits obtained by those who walk, wheel, cycle or ride on trails).

## - 1 - Established approaches to measure the number of path users

Data is from onsite automated people counters taken for the 12 months.

## - 2 - Identifying the range of positive outcomes from path use to be measured

- Physical health - key metric is % meeting CMO physical activity targets\* solely at trails
- Mental health and wellbeing - subjective wellbeing measures included within survey
- Environmental benefits - key metric is connection to nature
- Learning outcomes - in related to the natural world and local heritage.



## - 3 - Identifying other measures needed in analysis

- Deadweight - positive outcomes which would have happened in any case (e.g., users would have gained benefits elsewhere if trail did not exist)
- Displacement - positive outcomes archived at the expense of another (e.g., if trail did not exist, users would take part in other activities that provide a similar positive outcomes)

## - 4 - Design questionnaire incorporating key measures and implement survey

Survey designed with 21 questions and due to COVID-19 restrictions only online surveying was used – ideally it would be online and on-site surveying.

## - 5 - Identify and source financial proxies for each positive outcome area

- Physical health = cost of swimming or gym session
- Mental health and wellbeing = cost of social club/group membership
- Environmental = cost of conservation holiday per hour
- Learning = cost of outdoor education session or entrance fee to National Trust site.

## - 6 - Obtain estimates of the investment made to create paths

- Darkley Forest Community Trail £234,570
- Bunkers Hill £132,445
- Ballynahinch Rugby Family Trail £88,000

## - 8 - Analyse data

All data was analysed by 56 Degree Insight, and the headline data summarised in short case study reports.

\*<https://www.56degreeinsight.com> \*\* Chief Medical Officer (CMO) recommends adults do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity every week to achieve physical health benefits. For more information on the New Trail Impact Survey contact Elizabeth Rogers (e.rogers@outdoorrecreationni.com).

## Pilot site findings

Over the lifespan of the trails (25 years), the SROI is **10:1** for **Darkley Forest Community Trail**, and **16:1** for **Ballynahinch Rugby Family Trail** and **Bunkers Hill**. The valuations are summarised to the right.

	Visits	Average price per hour (£)	Total Value (£)
<b>Darkley Forest</b> (total visits = 20,617)			
Physical health benefits (meeting CMO targets)	2,408	3.33	8,019
Wellbeing benefits	12,492	0.90	11,243
Environmental benefits	9,933	2.50	24,833
Learning benefits	7,074	7.00	49,516
Annual Return on Investment			<b>93,611</b>
SROI over 5 years (for every £1 invested)			2
SROI over 10 years (for every £1 invested)			4
<b>SROI over 25 years (for every £1 invested)</b>			<b>10</b>
<b>Bunkers Hill</b> (total visits = 29,815)			
Physical health benefits (meeting CMO targets)	1,938	4.40	8,527
Wellbeing benefits	12,403	2.23	27,659
Environmental benefits	7,752	2.50	19,380
Learning benefits	3,876	7.00	27,132
Annual Return on Investment			<b>82,697</b>
SROI over 5 years (for every £1 invested)			3
SROI over 10 years (for every £1 invested)			6
<b>SROI over 25 years (for every £1 invested)</b>			<b>16</b>
<b>Ballynahinch Rugby Family Trail</b> (total visits = 16,119)			
Physical health benefits (meeting CMO targets)	1,986	4.09	8,122
Wellbeing benefits	9,681	1.68	16,264
Environmental benefits	5,709	2.50	14,273
Learning benefits	2,482	7.00	17,376
Annual Return on Investment			<b>56,036</b>
SROI over 5 years (for every £1 invested)			3
SROI over 10 years (for every £1 invested)			6
<b>SROI over 25 years (for every £1 invested)</b>			<b>16</b>

## New Trail Impact Survey Questionnaire Template

### Measuring the value of SITE – user survey

This short survey is being undertaken by Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland to obtain feedback from people who have visited SITE, with a focus on any benefits it has provided.

Please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your responses will be treated anonymously.

Q1 In general over the last 12 months, how often have you visited the trail at SITE NAME?

Every day

4 to 6 times week

2 or 3 times a week

Once a week

Once or twice a month

Once every 2 to 3 months

Once or twice over 12 months

Not visited in last 12 months ROUTE TO SCREEN OUT THANK YOU PAGE IF VISITS LESS THAN ONCE A WEEK ASK Q2 OTHERWISE SKIP TO Q2

Q2 Which of the following physical activities have you undertaken when visiting the trail at SITE NAME?

Select all of the physical activities you do

Dog walking

Walking without a dog

Running/jogging

Cycling

Horse-riding

Wheeling (i.e on wheelchair or mobility scooter)

None of the above

Q3 Typically how would you describe your level of activity when you are undertaking these physical activities when visiting the trail?

Easy (easy effort, breathing normal or slightly raised)

Moderate (moderate effort, breathing somewhat harder than normal)

Vigorous (significantly hard effort, breathing much harder than normal)

Q4 Typically how long do you spend taking part in these physical activities whilst visiting the trail at SITE NAME?

If you aren't sure or it varies provide an estimate of how long you would typically spend taking part in the activity

Minutes \_\_\_\_\_

Q5 Compared to before you started using the trail, how would you rate your health and fitness levels?

Much better now

Somewhat better now

About the same

Somewhat worse now

Much worse now

Don't know

Q6 Which of the following best describes who you normally visit the trail at SITE NAME with?

Select all of those which apply to you

No one, I normally go on my own

My children/grandchildren

Other family members

Friends

A club/organised group I am a member of

Someone else (please specify)

Q7 In your own words, what benefits do you gain from spending time on the trail at SITE NAME?

Q8 Thinking about your recent visits to the trail at SITE NAME, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Visiting made me feel cheerful and good spirits

Visiting made me feel calm and relaxed

Visiting made me feel active and vigorous

I learned about the natural world

I learned about local history and heritage

I felt closer to nature

I enjoyed spending time with family

I enjoyed spending time with friends/ other people

Q9 How far is your home from the trail at SITE NAME?

If you aren't sure provide an estimate

Within 300 metres (5 minutes or less to walk)

Within 1km/0.6 miles - (Less than 10-minute walk)

Within 2km/1.2 miles - (Less than 20-minute walk)

Within 5km/3 miles

Within 10km/6 miles

More than 10km/ 6 miles

Q10 How do you normally travel from your home to the trail at SITE NAME?

Walk

Bicycle/e-bike

Horseback

Car, van or motorbike

Other (please specify)

Q11 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the trail at SITE NAME?

The trail is within easy walking distance of my house

The trail is of a high enough standard for me to want to continue to use it

I feel safe using the trail

If the trail didn't exist I would probably do the same outdoor activities somewhere else instead (e.g. on another path)

Q12 What, if anything, could be done to improve the trail at SITE NAME?

TYPE IN

To help us to analyse your responses please answer the following questions about you

Q13 Are you...?

Male

Female

Other

Prefer not to say

Q14 What age are you?

16-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65+

Prefer not to say

Q15 How would you describe your health in general?

Very good

Good

Fair

Bad

Very Bad

Prefer not to say

Q16 Have you ever had any of the following?

Coronary heart disease

Cancer

Depression

Dementia

Type 2 diabetes

No, none of the above

Don't know

Q17 In a typical week for how long in total do you normally take part in any form of physical activity or sport?

By physical activity we include things like brisk walking, cycling. Please include any activity you might do on the trail.

Less than 30 mins

31 mins to 1 hour and 15 minutes (75 mins)

Between 1 hour 15 mins and 2 and a half hours (150 mins)

More than 2 and a half hours

Don't know

In a typical week for how long in total do you normally take part in any form of physical activity or sport?

Q18 And how would you describe the normal intensity of this activity?

Easy (easy effort, breathing normal or slightly raised)

Moderate (moderate effort, breathing somewhat harder than normal)

Vigorous (significantly hard effort, breathing much harder than normal)

Q19 Please type in your full postcode (this information will only be used to allow us to analyse results).

Prefer not to provide

Q20 Finally would you be willing to provide a short video of yourself to tell us more about how you have used SITE NAME and the benefits you have obtained from using this site?

Yes

No

IF YES: Please type in your name, email address and/or telephone contact number so that a member of our team can contact you.

Thank you for completing this survey. Your views matter.