

National Outdoor Recreation Strategy (NORS)

Daithi de Forge
Chair of NORS Working Group
Head of Recreation, Coillte

29 March 2022



Today

- ✓ Background
- ✓ Process and Insights
- ✓ Key Outputs to date
- ✓ Next Steps



National Outdoor Recreation Strategy

- Stakeholder-led Strategy (development and oversight)
- Cross-Departmental Strategy (delivery)
- Outdoor recreation brings benefits to ALL areas of Irish society
- Previous strategy suffered due to lack of cross-department collaboration and leadership



National Outdoor Recreation Strategy (NORS)

Two key bodies leading on the development of NORS

Comhairle na Tuaithe

- leading the development of the National Outdoor Recreation Strategy
- established in February 2004 as a non-statutory body
- made up of representatives from farming organisations, recreational users of the countryside, and state bodies with a responsibility or interest in the countryside

Department of Rural and Community Development

- lead Department in supporting the development of the Strategy
- acts as Secretariat to Comhairle na Tuaithe



**An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail**
Department of Rural and
Community Development

National Outdoor Recreation Strategy

Steering Group

- Daithi de Forge, Coillte (Chairperson);
- Helen Lawless, Mountaineering Ireland (Vice-Chair);
- Deirdre Maloney, Department of Rural & Community Development;
- Ciara Munnelly, Louise Burke, Sport Ireland
- Léon Fox, Department of Rural & Community Development (Secretariat)

Comhairle na Tuaithe Working Group

- Daithi de Forge, Coillte (Chairperson);
- Helen Lawless, Mountaineering Ireland (Vice-Chair);
- Deirdre Maloney, Department of Rural & Community Development;
- Derek O'Neill, Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport;
- Denis Griffin, Irish Farmers Association;
- Inga Bock, Rural Recreation Officer, Donegal;
- Mark Rowlette, Fáilte Ireland;
- Wesley Atkinson, NPWS;
- Declan Rice, Irish Local Development Network;
- Ciara Munnelly, Sport Ireland;
- Sonya Kavanagh, City & County Managers Association;
- Léon Fox, Department of Rural & Community Development (Secretariat)

Support process

- Outdoor Recreation NI



Strategy Development Process



Develop the mission, vision and values



Phase 1 Consultation: Consult on key themes

- Strategic Workshop: IDG, Comhairle na Tuaithe
- Regional Workshops: county stakeholders
- Online Questionnaire: general public



Development of Strategic Objectives and Action Plan

- Subgroups for each key theme
- Bilateral meetings with Departments and other government and state agencies



Phase 2 Consultation: Online consultation on draft strategy



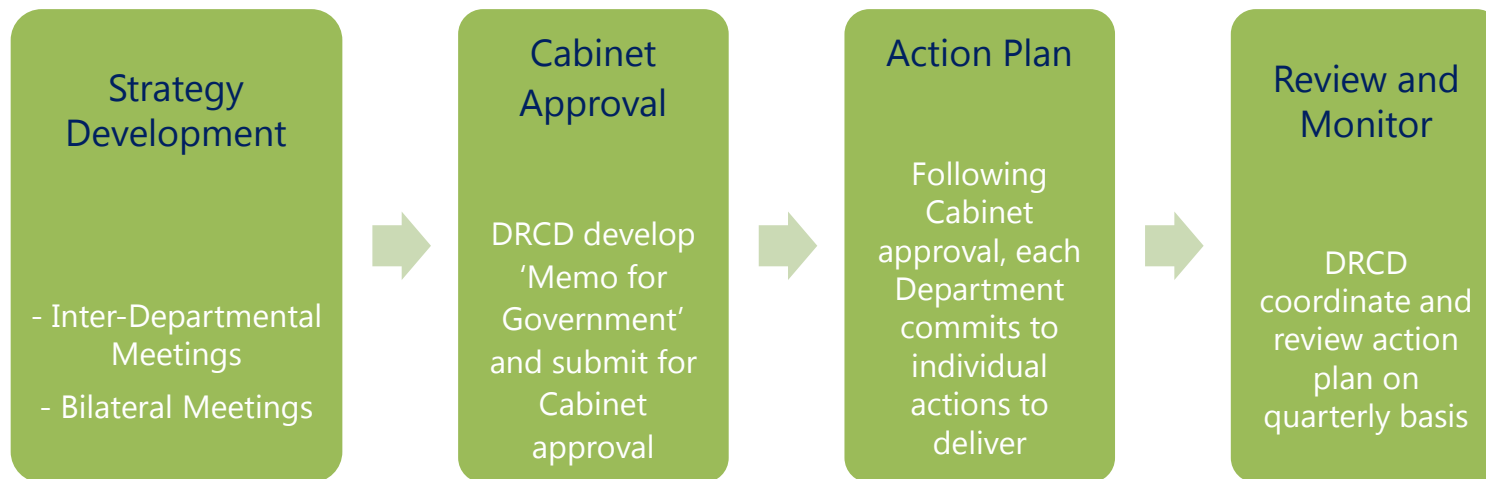
Finalise strategy



Publish strategy – August 2022

Departmental Involvement - Key

- ✓ Department of Rural and Community Development (lead)
- ✓ Other Departments involved, including:
 - ✓ Department of Education
 - ✓ Department of Health
 - ✓ Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
 - ✓ Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
 - ✓ Department of Transport



Stakeholder-led approach

- ✓ Development of strategy has been truly collaborative, and stakeholder led
- ✓ Process has been time-consuming and resource-intensive
 - ✓ February 2021; planned launch August 2022

However, investment in process is paying dividends

- ✓ All stakeholders fully bought into Strategy outcomes
- ✓ All stakeholders already engaged in how and when they will deliver actions
- ✓ Government departments and agencies agreeing resources

Stakeholder excitement and energy about delivery of the Strategy



Strategy Development



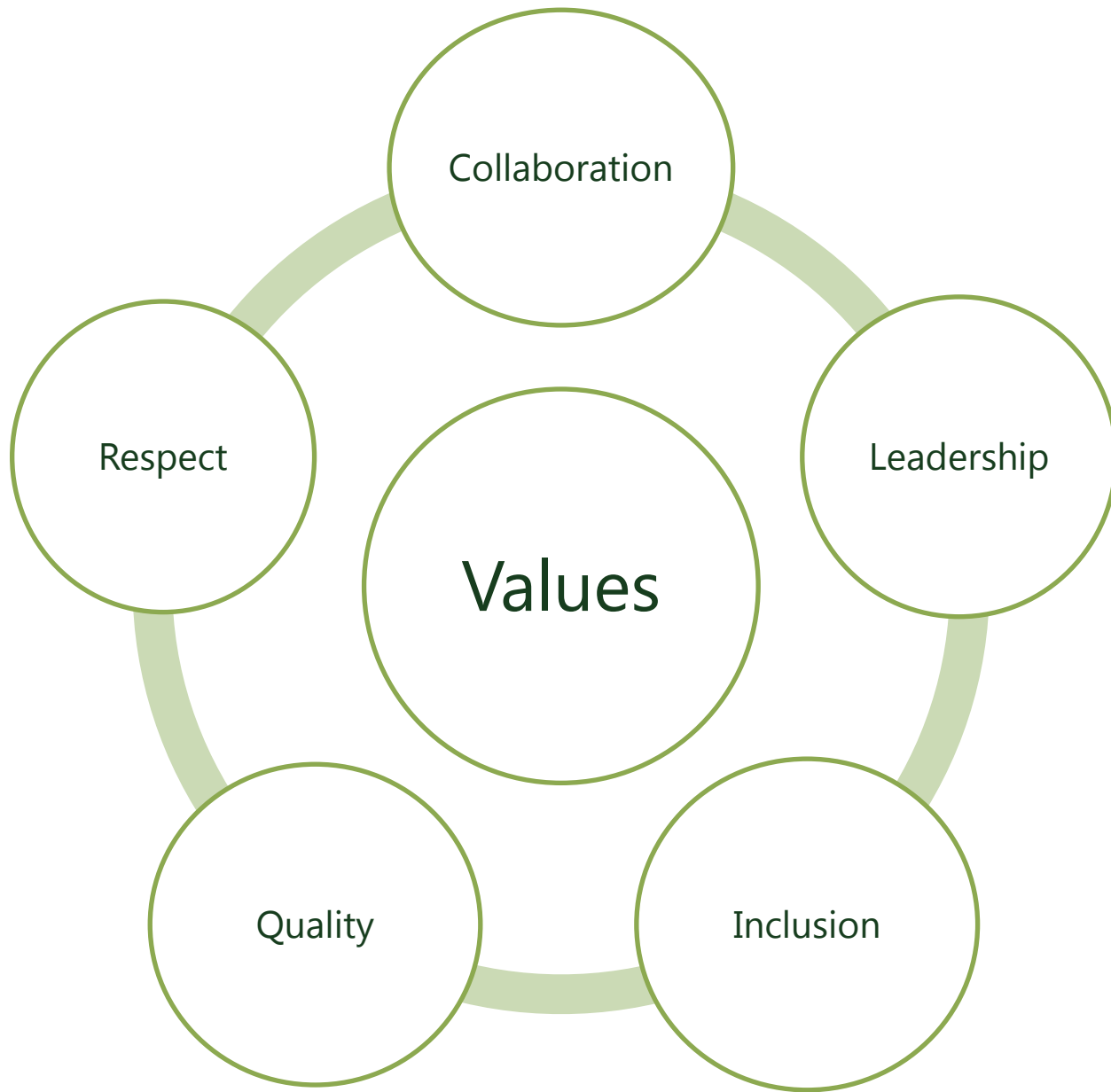


Ireland's outdoors,
a world of activities for all.

Mission

The strategy will lead, guide and facilitate the sustainable development and management of outdoor recreation and increased participation, in order to realise the social, health and economic benefits. We will do this whilst respecting the custodians of the land, caring for the environment and promoting responsible recreation.





Collaboration

Leadership

Values

Respect

Inclusion

Quality

Outdoor recreation definition

A wide-angle landscape photograph showing rolling green hills in the foreground, a dense forest in the middle ground, and a town or village in the distance. The sky is filled with large, grey clouds, and the overall scene is bathed in soft, natural light.

Physical activities that take place in the natural environment.

Activities included

(within the context of Ireland)

Land-Based	Water-Based	Air-Based
Walking	Canoeing/Kayaking	Paragliding
Hillwalking/Hiking	Rowing	Hang-gliding
Leisure cycling	Wild swimming	
Mountain biking	Surfing	
Horse riding	Coasteering	
Trail/Off-road running	Wind surfing/Kite surfing	
Orienteering	Sailing	
Bouldering, scrambling, rock climbing, mountaineering	Diving	
Caving	Angling	
Natural Play	Stand Up Paddleboarding	
Passive enjoyment of outdoors		



Case Studies

- Scotland
- New Zealand
- Norway

External Environment & Trends

Theme	Trend
Macro Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Positive economic outlookWarmer and wetterEmerging care for sustainabilityPopulation is agingMulti-generational leisureBusier lives, but more flexibleA connected worldLess connected to natureA more demanding consumer
Outdoor Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">More people enjoying the outdoorsLess traditional profile'Soft' activities and walking keyInterest in a range of activitiesOutdoor swimming and E-bikes importantMore informal recreation
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information is king, especially imagesSocial media growth continues

Key themes from consultation

Theme	Key areas
Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of investment across Departments • Not just capital investment – human resource and activation programmes • Level of investment continues/grows • Evidence – measuring the ROI in terms of economic and wellbeing value
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership and leadership of outdoor recreation in Ireland • Governance, including clarity of roles and structure at national and county level, and role of CnT • Collaboration across government Department and reduction in silo working • Clear guidance on approach for stakeholders (community groups, local authorities etc)
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and carrying capacity of sites – the right trail in right place, capacity to access site • Visitor management due pressure of increased visitor numbers • Geographic spread of developments • Potential role of volunteers and schemes (e.g., CE/RSS/Tus) in development and maintenance
Environment/ Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting the natural environment and sustainable development • Communication & information on where to go • Educating on Leave No Trace and good practice in the outdoors • Sharing best practices and common approach to outdoor recreation stakeholders
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain momentum post-Covid, especially through local/doorstep outdoor recreation opportunities • Hard-to-reach target groups
Access/ Indemnity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear approach to access in Ireland • Solution-focused with respect for custodians of land and those who want to enjoy the outdoors



Strategic Objectives, Actions & Action Plans

Strategic Objectives

Leadership

To create a more coordinated, cohesive approach at national and county level to ensure best use of our resources

Environment

To protect the environment by improving how we plan and develop outdoor recreation

Awareness

To create awareness of our outdoor recreation opportunities and how to enjoy them responsibly

Opportunities

To increase and support the number of people active in the outdoors, especially from under-represented groups and young people

Expertise

To improve the knowledge, skills and expertise of stakeholders and partners

Access

To protect and improve access to the outdoors, for the benefit of all

Each objective has a set of Actions – an example is:

Opportunities

Actions are grouped into 4 key areas

In 5 years time, we will see:

An increase in under-represented groups taking part in outdoor recreation

A greater focus on learning and playing in the outdoors during early years

Every child in primary and secondary education has multiple opportunities to participate in outdoor recreation

An updated curriculum and courses in Further and Higher Education

Example from Action Plan tables:

In 5 years time we will see:	Action no:	Action	Timescale	Lead Delivery Org:	Delivery Partner
An updated curriculum and courses in Further and Higher Education	4.21	Embed outdoor recreation related topics that currently are not covered in QQI modules (Level 5 & 6), including responsible behaviour; sustainability; inclusivity; natural play; access; designated areas	2 to 4 years	DFHERIS	DRCD/ Sport Ireland
	4.22	Introduce additional degrees and courses (Level 7 to 10) to meet the needs of sector, for example, Outdoor Recreation Management.	2 to 4 years	DFHERIS	DRCD/ Sport Ireland
	4.23	Develop and administer new training schemes and education in relation to safe and responsible participation, trail development and maintenance etc	1 to 3 years	DFHERIS	DRCD/ Sport Ireland

Ministerial Launch

- ✓ Cabinet Sign off in July
- ✓ Ministerial Launch in August 2022



Thank you.