

WalkNI.com

WalkNI Marketing Consortium Proposal 2019/2020

Introduction:

WalkNI.com attracted 813,096 visits in calendar year 2018 confirming its position as the definitive guide to walking in Northern Ireland.

With 50% of visits from Northern Ireland, 30% from Great Britain, 10% from Republic of Ireland and 10% from the Rest of the World it is clear the website is an important platform for locals and tourists alike.

It is clear that walking brings significant tourism and local participation benefits:

Local Participation:

- 47% of all adults in Northern Ireland indicated that they participated in walking for recreation at least once within the last year, increasing from 36% in 2011/12¹.

Tourism:

- Walking or rambling is the most popular activity (36%) undertaken by Northern Irish residents on domestic overnight trips²
- Hiking or cross-country walking was the most popular sporting activity (14%) undertaken by external overnight visitors whilst in Northern Ireland. This is more than all those who went mountain biking, cycling and golfing added together³

WalkNI.com Key Stats:

The followings statistics clearly highlight the reach and engagement level of WalkNI.com:

- 813,096 visits per year (2018)
- 23,385 social media subscribers
- 25,000 + unique views per year to WalkNI Blog
- 26,741 e-newsletter subscribers
- Key driver of walking product information and content to DiscoverNorthernIreland.com

¹ Continuous Household Survey 2016/17, Experience of sport and physical activity by adults in Northern Ireland, Department for Communities

² Northern Ireland Domestic Tourism 2016, NISRA

³ External Overnight Trips to Northern Ireland 2016, NISRA

Rationale and Benefits:

WalkNI.com is delivered by Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI), a not-for-profit organisation with the vision of 'placing outdoor recreation at the heart of society.'

In recent years, ORNI has transformed from an entirely core funded position to now deliver its strategic not-for-profit role through a [variety of arrangements](#) including delivering for Strategic Partnerships, Consortia, Service Level Agreements and on a project by project basis.

In 2016 / 2017, ORNI successfully established the WalkNI Marketing Consortium to ensure local authorities could continue to benefit from the success of WalkNI.com. The consortium is therefore entering into its fourth year.

By continuing to contribute to the WalkNI Marketing Consortium – local authorities can reap the following benefits:

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|-----------------------------|--|
| Solid Foundation: | Significant investment has already been made to establish a website, e-marketing and social media channels |
| Engaged Visitors: | As indicated by 'WalkNI Key Stats' the website / brand has a strong engagement from the target market |
| Combined Resources: | The small investments from a number of local authority partners can be combined to produce an outcome greater than the sum of its parts. |
| Cross Sell: | There will be opportunities to cross sell between destinations i.e. visitors to the Mourne Mountains will be able to learn about the Causeway Coast and Glens and vice versa. |
| Redeveloped Website: | A redeveloped WalkNI.com is imminent. The new look website will provide an enhanced user experience, be responsive across platforms (mobile, tablet, desktop) and can avail of the latest interactive mapping. |

Why Outdoor Recreation NI?

The benefits of ORNI delivering the project are:

- Not-for-profit:** ORNI's not-for-profit status means that all the investment will be retained within this project
- Marketing Expertise:** ORNI's marketing expertise is demonstrated by the success of our digital consumer platforms between April 2017 and March 2018.
- 956,800 + unique visitors ORNI consumer websites
 - 270,000 + people viewed ORNI online promotional videos
 - 3.5 million people reached through ORNI Facebook Channels
- Product Knowledge:** ORNI has significant knowledge of Northern Ireland's walking portfolio gained through its strategic role in walking development, management and promotion since 1999 and more specifically since the launch of WalkNI.com in 2006
- Tourism Knowledge:** ORNI's tourism knowledge has been recognised by Tourism Northern Ireland who view ORNI as strategic partner. The key area of focus is to recruit, curate and provide accurate and up-to-date information for DiscoverNorthernIreland.com
- Volunteer Rangers:** ORNI deliver a Walk Volunteer Ranger Programme which audits over 200 Quality Walks, Ulster Way and Waymarked Ways. This ensures information provided to the customer can be accurately verified on a regular basis
- Track Record:** ORNI has been successfully delivering the MountainBikeNI Consortium since 2012 and the WalkNI Marketing Consortium since 2016

For more information on Outdoor Recreation NI see www.outdoorrecreationni.com

Partnership Approach:

The WalkNI Marketing Consortium was established in 2016 / 2017. The WalkNI.com website and associated promotional campaigns are delivered by ORNI with local authorities contributing at a level based on their walking product portfolio's potential to meet the demands of specific markets.

Based on the portfolio of walking trails listed on WalkNI.com, ORNI has identified the partner level for each council area as follows:

Local Partner
An area which has a portfolio of walking product, access and infrastructure to meet the demands of local walkers.
Delivery for these partners is funded by ORNI's Strategic Partners (primarily via funding provided through DAERA NIEA's Environment Fund)
Potential Partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council• Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council• Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council• Mid & East Antrim Borough Council• Derry City & Strabane District Council

Regional Partner

An area which has a portfolio of walking product, access, infrastructure and supporting tourism services to meet the demands of:

- Local walkers
- Visitors from Northern Ireland or Republic of Ireland on either day trips or short breaks of which walking is a key part of a wider itinerary
 - This segment will combine walking with other interests e.g. food, photography, wildlife, culture and heritage

The foundation of delivery for these partners is funded by ORNI's Strategic Partners (primarily via funding provided through DAERA NIEA's Environment Fund). However, an additional contribution is required to meet tourism objectives.

Potential Partners:

- Mid Ulster District Council
- Fermanagh & Omagh District Council
- Ards & North Down Borough Council
- Belfast City Council

National Partner

An area which has a portfolio of walking product, access, infrastructure and supporting tourism services to meet the demands of:

- Local walkers
- Visitors from Northern Ireland or Republic of Ireland on either day trips or short breaks of which walking is key part of a wider itinerary
 - This segment will often combine walking with other interests e.g. food, photography, wildlife, culture and heritage
- Walking Clubs from Republic of Ireland

The foundation of delivery for these partners is funded by ORNI's Strategic Partners (primarily via funding provided through DAERA NIEA's Environment Fund). However, an additional contribution is required to meet tourism objectives.

Potential Partners:

- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
- Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Marketing Activity

Target Market	Local	Regional	National
Local Walkers	Y	Y	Y
Northern Ireland Visitors	N	Y	Y
Republic of Ireland Visitors	N	Y	Y
Walking Clubs	N	Y	Y

Marketing Activity	Local	Regional	National
WalkNI.com Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual audit of routes and incorporation in public liability insurance for private landowners 	Y*	Y*	Y*
WalkNI.com Website ^ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactive content management e.g. updating route info, news items, events 	Y*	Y*	Y*
WalkNI.com Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated 'Walking Destination' section including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Itineraries Walker Friendly accommodation Events Walking Tours 	N	Y	Y
WalkNI.com Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated downloadable Walker's Destination Guide PDF including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maps Itineraries Accommodation Food and Drink Specialist Providers Festivals Other attractions & activities within the destination 	N	N	Y
Launch of New WalkNI.com Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the website redevelopment, ORNI will execute a marketing campaign to launch the new website which will include a PR and advertising campaign 	Y	Y	Y
WalkNI Awards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review categories and select nominees Develop SurveyMonkey questionnaire Promote awards to gain maximum votes and interaction Gain online PR and in local and regional press 	Y	Y	Y

Northern Ireland Promotional Campaigns including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PR in Regional and National Press • Feature inclusion e.g. Blogs / articles on Walking Festivals, Best Winter Walks etc within: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E-marketing to min 12,985 NI contacts ○ Social media engagement with min 11,000 NI followers 	N	Y	Y
Republic of Ireland Visitors Promotional Campaigns including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-marketing to min 4,566 Republic of Ireland (ROI) based walkers • Social media engagement with min 3,260 ROI followers • Bespoke Facebook advertising for National Partners only – targeting to those key customer segments living in the Republic of Ireland with an interest in walking <p>N.B. National Partners will receive twice as much coverage as Regional Partners in campaigns as their level of monetary support is double that of a Regional Partner.</p>	N	Y	Y
Walking Club Promotional Campaigns including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-marketing to 566 walking club contacts 	N	Y	Y

* The delivery costs for this activity are covered by funding provided via ORNI's Strategic Partners (primarily via funding provided through DAERA NIEA's Environment Fund)

^ Completion of the New WalkNI.com Website

Following completion of the website redevelopment, ORNI will continue to review and improve content including:

- Development of content for sections of websites including new destination section 'Plan Your Visit'
- Consumer testing on mobile and desktop platform
- Upgrade and review walk data e.g. for new 'Trail Update' section
- Addition of contact person and email address for all walks for new 'Report A Problem' section

Accountability:

The WalkNI.com consortium will be managed by ORNI's Marketing Manager who will:

- Agree an annual work programme including KPIs
- Provide Quarterly progress reports
- Hold two meetings per year to report on progress, discuss campaigns etc.

Delivery Costs for the WalkNI Marketing Consortium - 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020:

In order to continue the proactive marketing activity for Regional and National Partners, ORNI will dedicate the equivalent of 2 days per week through a combination of ORNI's Marketing Manager and a Marketing Officer.

Staff Costs including Salary / National Insurance / Employers Pension Contributions Operating Costs Management / Finance Overheads	£27,560.00
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Partner Support Required – 2019 / 2020

The following support is required for partners at each level:

Partner Level	Number of Partners	Support per partner	Total Support
Local*	5	0	0
Regional	4	£3,445.00	£13,780.00
National	2	£6,890.00	£13,780.00
		TOTAL	£27,560.00

*The base level of the project above i.e. local partners is still covered by the funding provided by ORNI's Strategic Partners (primarily via funding provided through DAERA NIEA's Environment Fund)

If you have any questions or queries regarding this proposal, please contact:

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