



Proposal for the delivery of the MountainBikeNI Consortium 2020 – 2021

August 2020

Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) has prepared this proposal in order to request support from trail managing Councils for the financial year 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021.

However, in light of the current impact of COVID-19 and social distancing measures, ORNI has proposed a reduced fee relating to activity from 1st August 2020 – 31st March 2021.

This proposal outlines:

- 1. Overview of Outputs**
- 2. Added value gained from adopting a consortium approach**
- 3. Proposal for 2020 / 2021**

1. Overview of Outputs:

Outdoor Recreation NI will continue to assign staff resources to the MountainBikeNI Consortium in order to continue to promote Northern Ireland as a 'must visit mountain bike destination'.

Whilst promotion will take place under the MountainBikeNI umbrella brand each destination will be clearly differentiated within marketing activity.

The focus of marketing activity will be within Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in order to deliver on key objectives:

- Increase number of visits within each trail centre
- Increase the engagement of mountain bikers with the local economy i.e. increase economic impact

Partner	MUDC	NMDDC	BCC	FODC
Partner Support	£5,666	£7,777	£3,333	£6,950
Sponsorship Contribution	£5,000	£10,000	0	£0
Partner Total	£10,666	£17,777	£3,333	£6,950
% of Delivery Capacity	28%	46%	9%	18%
Fundamental Outputs				
Mountain Bike NI Consortium	✓	✓	✓	✓
MountainBikeNI.com Website	✓	✓	✓	✓
Customer Interaction	✓	✓	✓	✓
Trail Centre Specific Outputs				
Trail Cards E-commerce	✓	✓	x	x
Mountain Bike NI Trails Team (Volunteer Ranger Scheme)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sponsorship Liaison	✓	✓	x	x
Marketing Outputs				
NI Marketing via MTBNI Channels	✓	✓	✓	✓
ROI Marketing Campaigns	✓ (£1000)	✓ (£2000)	x	x
Destination Support / Business Upskilling	✓	✓	x	x

A. Fundamental Outputs

A.1. MountainBikeNI Consortium

- Act as the Secretariat for the MountainBikeNI Consortium - minimum of 2 meetings per annum
- Agree meeting dates, venue, agenda and circulate minutes
- Prepare and agree annual work programme and provide a progress report on a quarterly basis

A.2. MountainBikeNI.com Website

- Manage and maintain the MountainBikeNI.com website including:
 - All Trail Centres
 - Manage Trail Centre Profile including event calendar in liaison with trail managers
 - Update of Trail Conditions (diversions, closures etc) as required in liaison with trail managers
 - National Trail Centres Only
 - Annual update of downloadable online destination guides
 - Proactive liaison with local tourism service providers (accommodation and eatery) to ensure their web profiles are targeted to the mountain bike market and offers are available in line with campaigns
- Continue to provide high quality and accurate information and content (as required) for Tourism Northern Ireland's consumer website DiscoverNorthernIreland.com
- Provide accurate information and content (as required) for councils' tourism websites
- Proactive Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) to ensure competitive Google Ranking for key terms in both Great Britain (GB) and Republic of Ireland (ROI) markets

A.3. Customer Interaction

- Deal with customer enquiries via telephone, email and social media in a timely manner

B. Trail Centre Specific Outputs

B.1. Trail Cards

- Manage and maintain the e-commerce platform within MountainBikeNI.com
- Proactively engage with tourism service providers and relevant retail outlets to encourage stocking and sale of trail cards
- Facilitate any reprint / redesign of trail cards¹
- Provide quarterly report of trail card sales within overall work programme report

¹ Additional budget will be required for trail card design and print costs

B.2. MountainBikeNI Trails Team (Volunteer Ranger Scheme)²

- Lead the recruitment of MTB volunteers and manage database
- Communicate dates of maintenance days and allocate volunteers
- Manage MountainBikeNI Trails Team Facebook Group
- Proactively publicise the work of the MountainBikeNI Trails Team
- Organise a training and reward programme in conjunction with the trail sponsor

B.3. Sponsorship Liaison

- In partnership with National Trail Centre managing councils recruit a title sponsor for MountainBikeNI.com and the National Trail Centres
- Agree annual support programme with sponsors and act as key liaison to maximise benefits of both parties
- Manage the ongoing relationship with the sponsor

C. Marketing Outputs

C.1. NI Marketing via MTBNI Channels

- Increase awareness levels, visitation and spend from NI based Mountain bikers via:
 - Design and implementation of the annual content, social media and e-marketing plan against key segments and trigger points
 - Create and circulate positive media stories to local and NI media re mountain biking and events, ensuring prominent destination / local authority message (as appropriate)

C.2. ROI Marketing Campaigns

- Increase awareness levels, visitation and spend from ROI based Mountain bikers via:
 - Delivery of a targeted campaign activity (within budget – proposed £4,000) to include editorial, advertorial, advertising (online / offline bundles), advocacy, PR FAM Trips

² Council partners to deliver maintenance days including provision of lunch

C.3. Destination Support and Business Upskilling

- Business Upskilling:
 - Support Council workshops for local tourism service providers
 - Proactive engagement with local tourism service providers (accommodation, eateries and activity providers) to ensure:
 - their offering is targeted to the mountain bike market i.e. 'MTB Friendly'
 - innovative offers are available in line with campaigns
 - increased awareness of MTB product offering within their destination
 - Deliver on-line toolkit for local tourism service providers including visitor profiles and requirements, product and service advice, marketing recommendations / opportunities and best practice benchmarking
 - Distribution of two e-newsletters to relevant stakeholders re marketing campaign updates, promotional opportunities and support

- Destination Support:
 - Provide support to Council Tourism teams to accurately incorporate the promotion of mountain biking within a wider tourism offering

2. Added value gained from adopting a consortium approach

Outdoor Recreation NI is able to provide the following added value to those councils supporting the MountainBikeNI Consortium:

Consortium Approach

A consortium approach provides the following benefits:

- **Economies of scale** in campaign costs, project costs such as MTB Research
- The ability to **cross sell** between trail centres i.e. consumers interested in or visiting the Mourne based trails will learn about the Davagh Trails and vice versa
- A greater potential to attract (via tender) a **sponsor**
- **Improved brand, destination and product recognition**

Marketing Foundation

The following marketing foundation is already in place – reducing the need for supporting councils to further invest elsewhere:

- MountainBikeNI.com website
- E-marketing Database of 12,807
- Social media following of 26,070 (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Strong relationship with MTB journalists demonstrated by generation of PR worth an equivalent advertising value of £1.3 million since April 2013

Expertise & Knowledge

Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland is a not-for-profit organisation whose role is to develop, manage and promote outdoor recreation across Northern Ireland therefore those councils supporting the consortium benefit from its significant expertise and knowledge.

- Product knowledge gained from:
 - proactive campaigning for 10+ years for the development of mountain biking in Northern Ireland
 - driving the development of Rostrevor, Castlewellan, Blessingbourne, Castle Ward and Barnett Demesne Mountain Bike Trails
- Visitor Safety knowledge gained from:
 - membership of Visitor Safety Group (VSG)
 - staff training investment including VSG and other relevant workshops
- Mountain bike market knowledge gained from proactive:
 - benchmarking from competitor destinations
 - engagement with UK and ROI wide industry experts
 - staff training investment including learning journeys and industry conferences
- Marketing expertise gained from:
 - 10+ years of proactively promoting outdoor recreation / activity tourism in Northern Ireland via Outdoor Recreation NI platforms such as OutdoorNI.com. WalkNI.com
 - 10+ years delivering activity tourism marketing outputs for Tourism Northern Ireland

3. Proposal 2020 / 2021

Delivery of Outputs

Partner	MUDC / £	NMDDC / £	BCC / £	FODC / £
Partner Support	5,666	7,777	3,333	6,950
Sponsorship Contribution	5,000	10,000	0	0
Partner Total	10,666	17,777	3,333	6,950
% of Delivery Capacity	28%	46%	9%	18%

Campaigns

Source	Amount / £	% of campaign delivery
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council	2,000	67%
Mid Ulster District Council	1,000	33%
TOTAL	3,000	100%

In 2020 / 2021, proactive promotion in Northern Ireland will be achieved via MTBNI's extensive web visitors, e-zine subscribers and social media followers.

A ROI focused campaign is proposed to encourage visits in Spring 2021.



MOUNTAINBIKENI.COM MARKETING CONSORTIUM

WORK PROGRAMME AND REPORTING

(APRIL 2019 – 2020)

INCREASING AWARENESS OF OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

*denotes where extra programme budget may be required on a case per case basis

	WORK TO BE DELIVERED (2019-2020)	PROGRESS
MountainBikeNI Consortium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as the Secretariat for the MountainBikeNI Consortium - minimum of 2 meetings per annum • Agree meeting dates, venue, agenda and circulate minutes • Prepare and agree annual work programme and provide a progress report on a quarterly basis 	<p>Consortium meeting took place November 2019 to update consortium meeting on success of Spring Campaign, Summer Campaign and to preview autumn campaign.</p> <p>Worked with consortium to inform public following the Covid-19 outbreak.</p>
MountainBikeNI.com Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage and maintain the MountainBikeNI.com website including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All Trail Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manage Trail Centre Profile including event calendar in liaison with trail managers ▪ Update of Trail Conditions (diversions, closures etc) as required in liaison with trail managers ○ National Trail Centres Only <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual update of downloadable online destination guides ▪ Proactive liaison with local tourism service providers (accommodation and eatery) to ensure their web profiles are targeted to the mountain bike market and offers are available in line with campaigns • Continue to provide high quality and accurate information and content (as required) for Tourism Northern Ireland's consumer website DiscoverNorthernIreland.com • Provide accurate information and content (as required) for councils' tourism websites • Proactive Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) to ensure competitive Google Ranking for key terms in both Great Britain (GB) and Republic of Ireland (ROI) markets 	<p>Complete</p>
Customer Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deal with customer enquiries via telephone, email and social media in a timely manner 	<p>Complete</p>
Trail Cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage and maintain the e-commerce platform within MountainBikeNI.com • Proactively engage with tourism service providers and relevant retail outlets to encourage stocking and sale of trail cards • Facilitate any reprint / redesign of trail cards • Provide quarterly report of trail card sales within overall work programme report 	<p>Online Sales for 19-20 = 190</p>

<p>Sponsorship Liaison</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with National Trail Centre managing councils recruit a title sponsor for MountainBikeNI.com and the National Trail Centres • Agree annual support programme with sponsors and act as key liaison to maximise benefits of both parties • Manage the ongoing relationship with the sponsor 	<p>Q1: Private sponsor recruited for 2019/2020. Monthly sponsorship plan being sent to Chain Reaction Cycles.</p> <p>Q2: Chain Reaction Cycles agreed to sponsorship plan for the year.</p> <p>Q3. Updated consortium on CRC sponsorship agreement.</p>
<p>NI Marketing via MTBNI Channels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness levels, visitation and spend from NI based mountain bikers via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Design and implementation of the annual content, social media and e-marketing plan against key segments and trigger points ○ Create and circulate positive media stories to local and NI media re mountain biking and events, ensuring prominent destination / local authority message (as appropriate) 	<p>Total number of e-newsletter subscribers on average = 11,237 Number of e-newsletters sent = 11</p> <p>Social media database: Facebook followers increased by 7% from 21,813 likes to 23,357 likes Instagram followers increased by 22% from 1,991 to 2,425 Twitter followers increased by 4% from 2,482 to 2,575</p> <p>Number of blogs created and disseminated = 10</p> <p>MountainBikeNI Awards – Over 700 votes cast. Press release printed in Newry Reporter.</p>
<p>NI Marketing Campaigns – MUDC Only</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness levels, visitation and spend from NI based Mountain bikers through the further enhancement of activities under C.1 via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Delivery of a targeted campaign activity (within budget – proposed £2075) to include editorial, advertorial, advertising (online / offline bundles), advocacy, PR FAM Trips 	<p>Summer Campaign – Davagh & Blessingbourne only 2 FAM Trips secured with Mark O’Kane and Philip Mullan, both riders for Chain Reaction Cycles Belfast Store. Both riders continued to provide positive coverage of the Blessingbourne Estate and Davagh Forest Trail centres for some time.</p> <p>Previously developed video content from MountainBikeNI was also used in geo-targeted social media adverts to followers in Northern Ireland, resulting in 2,844 engagements.</p> <p>New users visiting MountainBikeNI from Northern Ireland increased by 33% from 3,414 to 4,542.</p> <p>Davagh Forest trail page activity increased by 78% and Blessingbourne Estate trail page activity increased by 35%.</p> <p>Facebook followers from NI increased by 5% Instagram followers from NI increased by 4.5%</p>

<p>ROI Marketing Campaigns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness levels, visitation and spend from ROI based Mountain bikers via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Delivery of a targeted campaign activity (within budget – proposed £13,000) to include editorial, advertorial, advertising (online / offline bundles), advocacy, PR FAM Trips 	<p>Spring Campaign Outputs: 85,000+ video views achieved across a range of specialist media (Dirt Magazine) and MountainBikeNI channels.</p> <p>The two videos produced followed an instructional ‘how to’ format which continually proves popular with online searches, carried out by one of Ireland’s rising stars in the mountain bike world, Dan Wolfe.</p> <p>It also resulted in a large amount of User Generated Content (UGC) for MountainBikeNI, in the form of over 120 submitted pictures. This was achieved by way of securing £700 in vouchers from Chain Reaction Cycles, which MountainBikeNI followers could win by sending in their own data.</p> <p>The campaign also resulted in: RoI Instagram followers grew by 5.6% RoI Facebook followers increased by 3%. Average FB engagement rate was 5.5% (Industry average is 0.05%) Number of RoI website sessions: 1,875 (-15% on previous year)</p> <p>Autumn Campaign Outputs: 83,041 RoI video views across specialist media (Dirt Magazine) and MountainBikeNI channels.</p> <p>This campaign directly targeted the two most common segments; the ‘diehard’ mountain biker, and the ‘weekend warrior’. The video highlighted the way both types of riders enjoy trail centres and promoted a number of local businesses in doing so.</p> <p>Social influencer Glyn O’Brien was secured as the ‘die hard’ model and added significant coverage of the campaign to his own followers.</p> <p>The campaign also resulted in: RoI Instagram followers grew by 10% RoI Facebook followers increased by 4%</p>
---------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

		Average FB engagement rate was 5.5%
		Spring 2020 Campaign: Temporarily suspended due to Covid-19 outbreak
Destination Support and Business Upskilling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Upskilling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support Council workshops for local tourism service providers ○ Proactive engagement with local tourism service providers (accommodation, eateries and activity providers) to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ their offering is targeted to the mountain bike market i.e. 'MTB Friendly' ▪ innovative offers are available in line with campaigns ▪ increased awareness of MTB product offering within their destination ○ Deliver on-line toolkit for local tourism service providers including visitor profiles and requirements, product and service advice, marketing recommendations / opportunities and best practice benchmarking ○ Distribution of two e-newsletters to relevant stakeholders re marketing campaign updates, promotional opportunities and support • Destination Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide support to Council Tourism teams to accurately incorporate the promotion of mountain biking within a wider tourism offering 	Ongoing.

EMPOWERING VOLUNTEERS		
MountainBikeNI Trails Team (Volunteer Ranger Scheme¹)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the recruitment of MTB volunteers and manage database • Communicate dates of maintenance days and allocate volunteers • Manage MountainBikeNI Trails Team Facebook Group • Proactively publicise the work of the MountainBikeNI Trails Team • Organise a training and reward programme in conjunction with the trail sponsor 	<p>135 MTBNI Volunteers.</p> <p>Maintenance Sessions for the year = 1 - Rostrevor, Sat 8th June, 5 volunteers attended</p> <p>MHT and Mid Ulster want to hold off for some time on trail maintenance days.</p> <p>Volunteer Day scheduled for Barnett Demesne postponed due to Covid-19.</p>