Gougane Barra

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

FINAL REPORT

GAELTACHT MHÚSCRAÍ

ActiveMe Tourism
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TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ActiveMe Tourism are pleased to present the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí Tourism Development and Implementation Plan which aims to promote the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí region as a consistent brand and develop tourism in a responsible and sustainable manner while protecting the unique culture and heritage of the region with community consultation at the core of the plan.

Vision: While the tourism potential of Gaeltacht Mhúscraí is obvious, this Plan presents a unique opportunity for Gaeltacht Mhúscraí to be developed in a sustainable manner and attract visitors through improved infrastructure and experiences with the overall aim to ensure the region is firstly a great place to live and work and therefore by definition a great place to visit.

The rural location of Gaeltacht Mhúscraí means that it is critical to target those domestic and overseas tourists who look for 'hidden gems' and those 'secrets places' known only to locals and those lucky tourists who venture off the beaten track.

Although not widely known as a tourist destination, it is important to remember that the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí boundaries as shown above are less than 20mins drive from major tourist and populations centres such as Killarney, Kenmare and Bantry and less than 40mins from Cork and Kinsale.

Therefore, Gaeltacht Mhúscraí has an opportunity to look beyond and influence flexible independent visitors and point them towards the region during their holiday 'choosing' and 'planning' stage using a highly quality online presence or changing the visitor's itinerary during their trip at the 'holiday' stage with good referrals, reviews and recommendations.

Lastly, making a good impression on tourists who visit the area and giving them great holiday memories is a great form of marketing and can result in repeat visitors and recommendations to friends and family which accounts for how many tourists choose their holiday destination.

Many of Irelands most scenic and most visited areas and attractions are within rural communities but these communities often do not benefit as tourists 'pass through' the area by car or bus. Therefore, the aim of this Plan is not to attract as many tourists as possible but attract a type of tourist who will stay longer and spend more locally. Key market segments include:

- Domestic – Walkers, Cyclists, Over 55's & Active, Connected Families & Footloose Socialisers
- Overseas – Culturally Curious and Great Escapers

Culturally Curious	Great Escapers
Want to learn about Irish culture & traditions	Feel connected to nature
Looking for authentic local experiences	Seek value for money
Interested in bringing history to life	Rural touring holidays off the beaten track
Adventure off the beaten track – walking, bike	Want local, authentic communities & activities
Seek to explore and be curious	Meeting local people to learn Irish way of life
Seek quality, fresh, well prepared local food	Little interest in formal cultural artefacts
Want to hear local stories	Seek an urban-rural less touristy experience

The overall objective is to create a simple but focused 3-year Plan which contains a set of structured, connected and costed Actions which will provide a clear pathway for both fundamental and key/catalyst tourism projects to attract both domestic and overseas tourists to the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí area.

The Plan will aim to focus efforts and maximise all available funding opportunities by recommending 'smart' tourism investment, whereby the output from one Action can be used again for another. For example, if designing a brochure, the content can be used to develop map boards and other measures.

A wide range of Actions have been proposed as part of the Plan, and importantly, contain those distilled and extracted from recent and ongoing projects and those developed from key community feedback and insight received from the project outset. In fact, the evolving nature of the project and ideal timing has meant that some proposed Actions such as destination 'Branding' have already been completed with others such as road signage ongoing and more about to commerce.

Community Consultation	
Key challenges	Key Opportunities
Destination awareness and Sense of Place	Culture – Language, music, song, dance
Minimal existing online presence or content	Themed trails: heritage, music, food & more
Limited accommodation and other services	Potential for great walks, cycles & experiences
Limited awareness of experiences & heritage	Off the beaten track tourism opportunities

This is a Plan with a difference, in that it also presents 'how' to deliver some key actions. Within the appendices of the report, a number of specifications and step-by-step guides have been provided to support implementation and can be used to prepare tender documents (i.e. website) or work plans (social media), thereby saving considerable time and funding. This Plan is created to assist the Múscraí Tourism Development Working Group and other partners to focus their efforts, select a proposed Action, set a timeline, select a lead promoter and working groups, identify and secure funding, maximise investment and go and get the job done.

Experience has shown that the inclusions of 'too many' actions can dilute effort and available funding. Therefore, to help focus efforts, a final 'short list' of key tourism development actions has been identified and agreed by the Tourism Group and other stakeholders. With the delivery of some of these actions already commenced, these actions have the realistic potential to be undertaken within the lifetime of the plan, will have the biggest impact and cover a wide range of key themes.

As shown below, the agreed Year 1 'short list' of key actions which are fundamental to tourism development and which

The following year 1 'short list' of key tourism development actions was identified and agreed with the Tourism Group and other stakeholders. The aim is to commence each of these actions in 2022. These essential actions will help develop and grow tourism in the region in a sustainable manner and set Gaeltacht Mhúscraí apart from other destinations.

#	KEY ACTIONS – 2022 – Short List	Year / Status	Lead / Partners	Cost Est	Refer to
8.2	Tourism Development Officer	2022	CFM/CCC	TBC	Section 4.8 & Appendix K
3.0	Online Presence: Website, Social Media, Content	2022	CFM	€20k+	See 4.6 & Appendix C & D
3.3	Online Tourism Mapping: Digitisation & Content	Ongoing	MTG	€10k+	See 4.6 & Appendix C & D
8.1	Support the Tourism Working Group	Ongoing	CFM	/	See 4.8
6.1	Multi-Theme Trail through Múscraí	2022	CFM	€30k+	See 4.6 and Appendix D & F

Considering the short project programme and that the plan was being developed during a very difficult period for the hospitality industry, we appreciate the commitment and time of the many people who attended the online meetings, those consulted by phone and those who contributed valuable written feedback and insights. ActiveMe are therefore grateful for the support of the many people involved in the creation of this Tourism Development and Implementation Plan.

Thanks goes to stakeholders from Múscraí Tourism Development Working Group, Comharchumann Forbartha Mhúscraí, Fáilte Ireland, Cork County Council, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Mirador, Atlantic CulturScape, Munster Institute of Technology (MTU), Stór Mhúscraí and others who participated in the project and who openly and generously sharing their experience, knowledge and insights.

This project could not have gone ahead without the financial support from LEADER and Údarás na Gaeltachta, facilitated through Comharchumann Forbartha Mhúscraí.

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 General

ActiveMe Tourism are pleased to present the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí Tourism Development and Implementation Plan which aims to promote the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí region as a consistent brand and develop tourism in a responsible and sustainable manner while protecting the unique culture and heritage of the region and keeping the local community at the core of the plan.

The objective of the overall Plan is to help promote a sense of place, identity and the geographical area of Gaeltacht Mhúscraí as a unique destination brand, increase the socio-economic benefits of sustainable tourism, heritage and culture in the area and provide an enhanced visitor experience through the consideration, feasibility and implementation of various 'actions' including new and improved experiences, physical infrastructure, online presence, marketing materials and much more.

Importantly, the implementation of these action must be undertaken whilst also ensuring a greater sense of appreciation and understanding of the history, heritage, linguistic culture, music, folklore and culture in Gaeltacht Mhúscraí by connecting with and placing the local businesses, communities and ongoing initiatives at the core of the Plan.

1.2 Gaeltacht Mhúscraí region

Gaeltacht Mhúscraí is a culturally unique region and is one of the few remaining Irish speaking areas in Ireland. As shown in Figure 1.1, the region is located in the Lee Valley catchment area in Co. Cork on the border of Co. Kerry. Although only approximately 20km at its widest point, over 250km^2 in size, the region contains the villages of Baile Bhúirne (Ballyvourney), Baile Mhic Íre (Ballymakeera) and Cúil Áodha (Coolea) are located on the Sullane River with the region and the vilalges of Beál Átha 'n Ghaorthaidh (Ballingeary) and Guagán Barra (Gougane Barra) on the River Lee. Connecting both river valleys, lie the villages of Reidh na nDoirí (Renaniree) and Cill na Martra (Kilnamartra).

Figure 1.1 – Location and Area of Gaeltacht Mhúscraí

The Gaeltacht Mhúscraí boundaries as shown in Figure 1.1 are less than 20mins drive from major tourist and populations centres such as Killarney, Kenmare and Bantry and less than 40mins from Cork and Kinsale.

The rural location of Gaeltacht Mhúscraí means that it is not only critical to target those domestic and overseas tourists who look for 'hidden gems' and those 'secrets places' known only to locals and those lucky tourists who venture off the beaten track, but also to promote Gaeltacht Mhúscraí as an ideal base from which to explore southwest Ireland.

1.3 Destination Vision

While the tourism potential of Gaeltacht Mhúscraí is obvious, this Plan presents a unique opportunity for Gaeltacht Mhúscraí to be developed in a sustainable manner and attract visitors through improved infrastructure and experiences with the overall aim to ensure the region is firstly a great place to live and work and therefore by definition a great place to visit.

Every visitor to the region should leave as an Ambassador for the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí !

1.4 Overall Project Objective

The overall objective is to create a simple but focused 3-year Plan which contains a set of structured, connected and costed Actions which will provide a clear pathway for both fundamental and key/catalyst tourism projects to attract both domestic and overseas tourists to the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí area. This Plan also promotes a joined-up approach between businesses, attractions and the community to ensure Gaeltacht Mhúscraí is promoted and developed as a consistent brand and tourism product.

1.5 Previous and Ongoing Work

The project has reviewed several ongoing and recent projects and studies in Gaeltacht Mhúscraí, some of which are outlined below. The overall aim of this Plan is to distil, summarise and build upon this previous work where appropriate, extracting key elements with the most potential and incorporating these into the Plan.

- Recent: The Múscraí Heritage, Conservation, Management and Interpretation Plan 2018-2032 was undertaken by Research & Dig consultants and commissioned by Cork County Council and Acadamh Fodhla. Key elements of this superb, comprehensive and invaluable report have been extracted and incorporated into this plan. In particular, this plan recommends assessing the feasibility of creating a Heritage (multi-theme) trail throughout the region incorporating high quality interpretation and also to expand on the folklore work already undertaken in the region.

- Ongoing: The Múscraí Gaeltacht Ecosystem project is currently ongoing and being undertaken as part of the overall Interreg Atlantic Area CultureScape EU project. Led by the Munster Institute of Technology (MTU) in Ireland, the project aims create authentic and sellable intangible cultural heritage (ICH) experiences for tourists and enable the culture of the region to remain alive with local inhabitants and who can benefit from and recognising its value and significance. Many of the following project deliverables have been included as part of this Plan.

  - Support the continuing development of a Tourism Cluster in the region.

  - A brokerage event and study visit for regional, national and international visitors

- o Develop digital content including videos and images for the ICH businesses and this content will be made freely available for use by stakeholders within the region.

- o Develop Atlantic Area ICH Experiences route in the region and support promotion.

- Ongoing: An Sugán Museum project - Museum of the Irish Language and Gaelic Revival in the original Colaiste Na Mumhan building Béal Átha'n Ghaorthaidh. This project is spearheaded by Coiste Forbartha Bhéal Átha'n Ghaorthaidh with the feasibility study currently being undertaken by Mirador Media.

- Ongoing: The redevelopment of Coláiste Íosagáin in Baile Mhúirne is currently underway following a Masterplan report in 2019. Part of the building, which closed as a school in 1989, is to be transformed into a 'Gteic' regional digital hub with offices and hot-desk facilities with an exhibition space and more planned.

- Upcoming: The new Plean Teanga Mhúscraí - Irish Language Plan for Gaeltacht Mhúscraí is currently being undertaken.

2 Community Consultation

2.1   General

Considering the short project programme and that the plan was being developed during a very difficult period for the hospitality industry, we appreciate the commitment and time of the many people who attended the online meetings, one-to-one phone conversations and those who provided valuable written contributions in the form of:

- o   SWOT analysis – destination evaluated on Strength Weakness Opportunities and Threats.

- o   Destination Questionnaire which asked the following:

    - o   Top things to see and do

    - o   Top walks

    - o   Top cycles and scenic drives

    - o   Annual events and festivals

    - o   Create a day out / destination experience.

    - o   Local story to tell

    - o   Other key aspirations, what's missing, feedback and insights.

This consultation process provided a wealth of information and insight in addition to constructive and practical feedback including such things as broadband issues, local services, employment, population, seasonality concerns and gaps in tourism services and information. They are all key issues but at the same time are opportunities that when addressed will assist in the growth and development of the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí region to both live, work and visit.

Thanks goes to stakeholders from Múscraí Tourism Development Working Group, Comharchumann Forbartha Mhúscraí, Fáilte Ireland, Cork County Council, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Mirador, Atlantic CulturScape, Munster Institute of Technology (MTU), Stór Mhúscraí and others who participated in the project and who openly and generously sharing their experience, knowledge and insights.

An anonymous summary of the SWOT and questionnaire information is shown in Section 3 which is combined with the information collected during the destination review and existing offering process.

3 Destination Review

3.1   Introduction

In order to determine how the development of tourism in the region can take place, a destination review was undertaken at the project outset which looked at the current tourism offerings including services such as food and accommodation, attractions, activities, tours, existing tourist information both online and offline (i.e. in print) and much more. This review also took into account information received during the community consultation process above in Section 2.

The review of tourism information, content and promotional materials available in both print (including brochures, maps, books, guides, posters, etc.) and digital (including, tourism websites, business websites, apps, photography, video) revealed that there were many gaps present that require addressing.

3.2   Tourist Market

Although not widely known as a tourist destination, it is important to remember that the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí region is less than 20mins drive from major tourist and populations centres such as Killarney, Kenmare and Bantry and less than 40mins from Cork and Kinsale.

Therefore, Gaeltacht Mhúscraí has an opportunity to look beyond and influence the market of flexible independent visitors and point them towards the region during their holiday 'choosing' and 'planning' stage using a highly quality online presence or changing the visitor's itinerary during their trip at the 'holiday' stage with good referrals, reviews and recommendations.

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Many of Irelands most scenic and most visited areas and attractions are within rural communities but these communities often do not benefit as tourists 'pass through' the area by car or bus. Therefore, the aim of this Plan is not to attract as many tourists as possible but attract a type of tourist who will stay longer and spend more locally. Key market segments include:

3.3   Domestic Market

The Domestic Market is vital to all year-round tourism and has been somewhat underappreciated in the past. This target market is on our doorstep and Irish people annually demonstrate their love of leisure breaks and home holidays. It is also essential to the continued existence of small family run businesses be they accommodation, food, pub, activity, attraction or service providers. Without the domestic market, many of the rural destinations and communities within the Cork and Kerry area would cease to exist. In addition, what the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic has revealed is that domestic tourists will travel in numbers and spend, as is evident from the 2020 summer season. Fáilte Ireland has identified market segments here too and whilst the "Connected Families" and "Footloose Socialisers" are the two most relevant to the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí, we have added the key Special Interest / Segments of Walkers, Cyclists and the Active Retirement Market

Domestic Market	
Walkers and Cyclists	Over 55's and Active
Connected Families	Footloose Socialisers

3.4 Overseas Market

The overseas market includes the key market segments of Culturally Curious and Great Escapers. These 2 significant market segments have been identified and are currently being targeted by all the marketing and promotional activities directed by Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland.

Overseas Markets	
Culturally Curious	**Great Escapers**
Want to learn about Irish culture & traditions	Feel connected to nature
Looking for authentic local experiences	Seek value for money
Interested in bringing history to life	Rural touring holidays off the beaten track
Adventure off the beaten track – walking, bike	Want local, authentic communities & activities
Seek to explore and be curious	Meeting local people to learn Irish way of life
Seek quality, fresh, well prepared local food	Little interest in formal cultural artefacts
Want to hear local stories	Seek an urban-rural less touristy experience

3.5 SWOT Analysis

An anonymous brief summary of the SWOT analysis is shown below which combines the information collected during the community consultation and destination review and existing offering process.

Destination Review and Community Tourism Group Consultation	
Key Strengths	**Key Weakness**
Culture: language, music, song & dance	Destination awareness and sense of place
Heritage: history, folklore and mythology	Minimal existing online presence or content
Trails: walking, cycling and scenic drives	Limited accommodation and other services
Gougane Barra - lake, oratory and woods	Population, staffing and employment
Ideal touring base, rural & back roads	Broadband availability and opening hours
Local restaurants and food/drink producers	Limited trail infrastructure and information
Museums and visitor centres	Access, road signage & public transport
Scenery, mountains, lakes & natural heritage	Long off season and no tourism office
Guided tours and other experiences	Bike hire, rest areas, picnic spots and more
	Limited collaboration & referrals
Key Opportunities	**Key Threats**
Themed trail: heritage, music, food & language	Destination awareness
Language: fun, simple, easy and accessible	Covid long term impacts
Taster experiences: music, language, sport	Pass-by trips and minimal spends
Intangible Cultural Heritage experiences	Population, eemployment and available staff
Potential for great new walks & loops	Brexit and impact on tourism, stock etc.
Bike hire, ebikes, MTB, and back road trails	Macroom bypass: access and passing traffic
Lough Allua – watersports, heritage, fishing	Day trips, dwell time, overnights, tourist spend
Off the beaten track tourism opportunities	Lack of tourist services and opening hours

Remote working and Live/Work/Visit	Availability of required funding
An Sugán Museum – Colaiste Na Mumhan	Other nearby towns
Coláiste Íosagáin – Gteic and more	Wild Atlantic Way
Mind and Body Experiences – Yoga, etc	Tourism development sustainability
Signed tourist route on the R584 Road	Risk of Exploiting Language/Culture
Ballingeary Blueway and Approved Trails	
Slí Gaeltacht Mhúscraí Greenway / Bridleway	
Glamping, Trail Sleeping pods, wild camping	
Source of the Lee River	
Renewable energy and eco holidays	
St. Gobnait – Bees, Brehon laws and walks	
Dual use projects: Tourism & Community	

The above analysis has been used to develop a range of key actions for consideration and implementation as outlined in Section 4.

3.6   Gaeltacht Mhúscraí - Unique Selling Points (USP's)

The region offers a great combination of unique selling points (USP's), heritage sites, language, music, dance, art, food, craft, mountains, valleys, lakes and rivers and offers a great mix of activities to promote:

- The Irish Language and Culture
- Traditional music, song, dance, famous composers, literature and more
- Gougane Barra Lake, Oratory and Woods
- Toy Soldier Factory – unique experience, fun attraction and rainy-day activity
- The Slí Gaeltacht Mhuscraí waymarked trail upgraded to Greenway and through entire region
- The combination of charming villages, rivers, lakes, mountain ranges and valleys
- Unique ancient heritage – Lough Allua Crannog, Irelands second tallest standing stone

3.7   Accommodation, Food and Drink

The destination review and consultation process revealed the following summary and non-exhaustive list of accommodation, food and drink options in and around the area in no particular order of importance.

Accommodation	Food and Drink
Gougane Barra Hotel	Gougane Barra Hotel Restaurant
The Mills Inn, Ballyvourney	The Mills Inn Restaurant, Ballyvourney
The Abbey Hotel	The Abbey Hotel Restaurant, Ballyvourney
Creedon's Inchigeelagh	Cronin's Bar & Cafe, Ballingeary
Tír na Spideoige Fishing Lodge	Tig Seartan / Shortans, Ballingeary

Accommodation	Food and Drink
An Locta Fáda	Stán bán craft brewery tour
Airbnb Self catering (several options)	Árd na Laoi, Ballingeary
	An Crúiscín Lán Cafe, Ballyvourney
	Tigh Ó Murchú, Cill Na Martra
	Cronin's café, Gougane Barra

3.8   Tourist Attractions, Experiences and Tours

The destination review and consultation process revealed the following summary and non-exhaustive list of key attractions, places to visit, experiences and tours in and around the area in no particular order of importance.

Key Tourist Attractions, Experiences and Tours	
Gougane Barra Lake and St Finbarr's Oratory	Toy Soldier Factory, Kilnamartra
Gougane Barra Forest Walks	O'Touma Tours incl Lee Valley Taste Trails
St. Gobnait's Monastic Site and Walk	Folláin Jam Visitor Centre
The Buffalo Mozzarella Farm and Tours	Fishing in the Rivers and Lakes
Lough Allua – Kayak Rental, Fishing,	Traditional Music Venues: Pubs / Hotels
Ballingeary and Ballyvourney Walks	Outdoor Swimming Pool: Ballingeary/Coolea
An Ionad Cultúrtha – Heritage Centre	9 White Deer Brewery
Local food served in various locations	Stán Bán craft brewery tour
Ballingeary Heritage Trail	Ballingeary Clapper bridge
The Forge Museum, Ballingeary	Public tennis and table tennis
Saol Eile guided walks	Kilmurry Independence Museum
Top of Coom Pub and Loop Walk	The Gearagh
Garden of the Senses, Ballyvourney	Kilgarvan Motor Museum
Kilmichael Ambush Site	Millstreet Country Park
And Much Much More –	

3.9   Walking

Walking trails can be major attractions. Although on the same trail, the Slí Mhúscraí Gaeltacht, Beara-Breifne Way, St. Finbarr's Way and Ireland Way are a perfect opportunity to piggyback on other marketing initiatives. The destination review and consultation process revealed the following summary and non-exhaustive list of key walks in and around the area in no particular order of importance.

Walks	Length (km) & other stats
Slí Gaeltacht Mhuscraí (Beara Breifne, Ireland Way)	TBC during GPS mapping
Gougane Barra Sli Ghaorthaidh Nature Walk	
Gougane Barra Sli Doire na Coise	

Walks	Length (km) & other stats
Gougane Barra Sli Laoi	TBC during GPS mapping
Gougane Barra Sli Com Rua	
Gougane Barra Sli an Easa	
Gougane Barra Sli Sleitbhe	
Ballyvourney Woods	
Lee Valley Walks	
The Gearagh, Macroom	
The Nursery Way - Ballyvourney	
The Bóna Bán Way - Ballyvourney	
The Seana Bhóthar Way - Ballyvourney	
The Kippaghs Way - Ballyvourney	
Mullaghanish Way - Ballyvourney	
Ballingeary Heritage Trail 'Blue Plaque'	
Stepping Stones Loop – Ballingeary (1km)	
Ceimcoraboula Loop – Ballingeary (7km) – Walk and Cycle	
Cahir Loop – Ballingeary (8.8km) – Walk and Cycle	
Eachros Loop – Ballingeary (7.5km) – Walk and Cycle	
Currahy Loop – Ballingeary (10km) – Walk and Cycle	
Kealvaugh Loop - Ballingeary (9.5km) – Walk and Cycle	
Gougane Barra Loop – Ballingeary (15km) – Walk and Cycle	
St Gobnaits Shrine Walk – Ballyvourney	
Clapper Bridge 'Stepping Stones' Walk	
Illauninagh hill - Oileán Eidhneach	
Ballingeary to Gougane Barra via the back road	
South Lake Road	
Bog Road Walk	
River Walk taking in Gurteenacuille	
Gougane Barra Horseshoe mountain walk	
Blackwater Duhallow Way connecting trail	
Gleandabh Wood	
The Paps	
E8 Dursey to Istanbul connecting trail	
St Finbarr's Pilgrim Path & Sheeps Head Way connecting trail	
Beara Way and Kerry Way connecting trail	
Slí Iarthuaisceart Chorcaí / North West Cork Way	

3.10 Cycling and Scenic Drives

Muscraí's quiet back roads are ideal for the development of additional cycling and walking trails, especially the possibility of combining the stunning but rarely promoted scenic routes of the Borlin Valley and Priests Leap as one of the most stunning and challenging cycle loops or scenic drives in Ireland. The destination review and consultation process revealed the following summary and non-exhaustive list of key cycles and scenic drives in and around the area in no particular order of importance.

Cycles and Scenic Drives	Length (km) & other stats
Several Múscraí Loop Trail Options	TBC during GPS mapping
Pass of Keimaneigh, Borlin Valley, Top of the Coom Loop	
Lough Allua Loop	
Borlin Valley Cycle	
Priests Leap Cycle	
Mullaghanish Way	
Kenmare – Killarney National Park – Múscraí Loop	

3.11 Events and Festivals

The destination review and consultation process revealed the following summary and non-exhaustive list of key events and festivals in and around the area in no particular order of importance. It is recommended that this list be reviewed, edited and expanded if required and in order to keep the information up to date. This event list can then be incorporated into the tourism content strategy.

Events and Festivals	Where	Month
		Jan
Ból Chumainn – Road Bowling (Feb – Sept)	Cúil Aodha & Cill na Martra	Feb
St. Gobnait's Feastday	Baile Mhúirne	Feb
Paráid lá fhéile Pádraig (St Patricks Day)	Béal Átha an Ghaorthaigh	Mar
Paráid Lachtain Naofa	Cill na Martra	Mar
Cruinniú na bhfliúit – The Flute Meeting	Cúil Aodha & Baile Mhúirne	Apr
St. Finbarr Pilgrim Path	Guagán Barra	Apr
Shrone Walk	Cill na Martra & Baile Mhúirne	May
Comórtas peile na Gaeltachta 2022	Cill na Martra	May
Lá Pátrúin (St. Gobnait) Whit Sunday	Baile Mhuirne	Jun
Coláiste Samhraidh (Irish College)	Béal Átha an Ghaorthaigh	Jun
Seó	Cúil Aodha & Baile Mhúirne	Jul
Sheep Shearing	Barr an Chuma	Jul
Campa Samhraidh Mhúscraí	Cúil Aodha	July
An Dóchtúir ó'Loingsigh – gathering	Baile Mhúirne	Aug

Events and Festivals	Where	Month
Acadamh Fódhla		Aug
Féile na Laoch – Every 7 years		Aug
Féile Sráide	Cúil Aodha	Aug
Gougán Sunday	Guagán & Cill na Martra	Sept
Daonscoil an Fhómhair	Guagán	Sept
OÍCHE CHULTÚIR – Culture Night	Béal Átha an Ghaorthaigh	Sept
Comóradh Shéamus úí Shíocháin	Cill na Martra	Sept
Adventure Race	Béal Átha an Ghaorthaigh	Sept
		Oct
Éigse Dhiarmuidín Music Festival	Cúil Aodha & Baile Mhúirne	Nov
Christmas Market	Cúil Aodha	Dec

4   Action Plan

Using the information gathered during the destination review process, ongoing projects, community consultation, SWOT and analysis and tourism group meetings; a set of structured, connected and costed 'Actions' have been identified for consideration over the 3-year lifetime of the plan.

These actions provide a clear pathway for both fundamental and key/catalyst tourism projects to attract both domestic and overseas tourists to the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí area.

In fact, the evolving fast nature of the project and ideal timing has meant that some proposed Actions such as destination 'Branding' have already been completed with others such as road signage ongoing and more about to commerce.

The Plan will aim to focus efforts and maximise all available funding opportunities by recommending 'smart' tourism investment, whereby the output from one Action can be used again for another. For example, if designing a brochure, the content can be used to develop map boards, heritage trails and other measures.

This Plan is created to assist the Múscraí Tourism Development Working Group and other partners to focus their efforts, select a proposed Action, set a timeline, select a lead promoter and working groups, identify and secure funding, maximise investment and go and get the job done.

As shown below, the Plan contains a range of fundamental tourism actions which are considered core essential items required to build and grow any tourism destination. These fundamental actions will support the investigation and feasibility of delivering a set of key tourism actions and catalyst projects which will help grow the region in a sustainable manner and set Gaeltacht Mhúscraí apart from other destinations.

Experience has shown that the inclusions of 'too many' actions can dilute the community effort and available funding. Therefore, it is crucial that a final short list and hierarchy of Key Actions be identified as part of the Implementation Plan in Section 5 which have the realistic potential to be undertaken within the lifetime of the plan, have the biggest impact and cover a wide range of key themes.

This is a Plan with a difference, in that it also presents 'how' to deliver some of the key actions identified in the short list. Within the appendices of the report, a number of specifications and step-by-step guides have been provided to support implementation and can be used to prepare tender documents (i.e. website) or work plans (social media), thereby saving considerable time and funding.

That said, section 5 of the Plan will contain a non-exhaustive 'long list' of potential actions and ideas which can be considered, further developed and implemented where appropriate over time.

4.1   Action 1.0 - Destination Identity and Branding

Action 1.0 – Identity and Branding	Timeframe / Status	Lead / Partners	Cost Estimate
Action 1.1 – Identity and Branding	Complete	MTU	na
Action 1.2 – Embed branding into all marketing material	Short		na
Action 1.3 – Encourage community to embrace branding	Short		na

A key objective of this overall implementation plan report is to promote the geographical area of Gaeltacht Mhúscraí as a consistent identity and brand. It is one of the most essential and critical tourism marketing elements, without which, a range of other marketing measures could not be progressed such as the destination website, social media, brochures and more.

Action 1.1: A distinctive and memorable set of brand guidelines was recently completed by Urban Design Studio as part of the 'Culturescape Project' and is now ready for use. The final brand guidelines document is contained in Appendix A which provides the final logo (see below), colour scheme, font and examples of how the branding can be used in various marketing platforms and materials.

Action 1.2: Now that the destination identity and branding exercise is complete, it is crucial that the branding be embedded into all subsequent tourism marketing products such as websites, social media, brochures, maps, photographs, road signage, events, launches, competitions and more as discussed in the various actions below. The branding logo will be embedded on a sample of both professional and community sourced photographs prior to launch with photographs sourced through a competition titled 'Pride of Place/Gaeltacht Mhúscraí' commencing 14/07/21.

Action 1.3: Encourage the local community and tourism businesses to embrace and adopt the branding and promote Gaeltacht Mhúscraí as a tourism destination using the various marketing materials, website and social media platforms produced through this implementation plan.

See additional detail and background information in **Appendix A.**

4.2   Action 2.0 – Destination Signage

Action 2.0 - Destination Signage	Timeframe / Status	Lead / Partners	Cost Estimate
Action 2.1 – Road Signage for N22 Macroom Bypass Road	Ongoing		/
Action 2.2 – Directional Road Signage Audit	Short		€7-10k
Action 2.3 – Install Recommended Road and Trail Signage	Medium		TBC
Action 2.4 – Branded Entry/Exit Signs for Gaeltacht Mhúscraí	Short		TBC
Action 2.5 – Information Map Boards / Trailhead Boards	Medium		TBC
Action 2.6 – Feasibility of Signed Tourism Route on R584	Short		TBC

The aim of these actions is to guide and encourage tourists off the well signposting main routes and into Gaeltacht Mhúscraí and make it easier for people to find and navigate through the area.

Action 2.1: A preliminary road sign design (see below) for installation on the upcoming N22 Macroom Bypass Road has been issued to TII (Transport Infrastructure Ireland) via Cork County Council and is subject to review and approval by TII. Road signs on the existing N22 will be retained and modified (if required) by Cork County Council when this old National Road changes to Regional Road status.

Action 2.2: It is recommended that a Road Signage Audit be undertaken within and on the approach roads to Gaeltacht Mhúscraí. This engineering report would identify key routes, gaps and missing directional signage to key towns, village and key attractions and also identify where sign clutter or confusion may exist. The report would contain sufficient detail for the Local Authority to cost and design signs for installation. The final sign schedule and mapping would determine overall costs for subsequent sign design, manufacture, poles, delivery, foundations and installation.

Action 2.3: Subject to funding, install new road and trail signage where required.

Action 2.4: Design and install new branded entry signs to Gaeltacht Mhúscraí on key roads

Action 2.5: Design and install new information/trailhead map boards at key locations (see Action 5.8)

Action 2.6: Investigate the feasibility of creating an official alternative Tourism / Wild Atlantic Way (WAW) route through Gaeltacht Mhúscraí from the new N22 Bypass to Bantry/West Cork area of WAW

See additional detail and background information in **Appendix B.**

4.3 Action 3.0 - Online Marketing

Action 3.0 Online Marketing	Timeframe / Status	Lead / Partners	Cost Estimate
Action 3.1 – Destination Website, Domain and SEO	Ongoing		€5-25k
Action 3.2 – Social Media Platforms	Short		€2k+
Action 3.3 – Develop Online Interactive Map of Destination	Ongoing		€5-25k
Action 3.4 – Sharing portal for marketing material	Short		€2k+
Action 3.5 – Google, TripAdvisor, AirBnB Experiences, etc	Short		Free

With over 50% tourists choosing their holiday destination based on internet research and over 70% planning their holiday on the internet, a good website and social media presence is essential.

Action 3.1: Choose and buy domain name(s) and develop new destination website using brand guidelines and high-quality content. A website is only as good as the tourism content it displays (see Action 4.0) and this content will have a significant impact on where it appears on Google search results (SEO) and how it sells your destination. See sample website specification in Appendix C.

Action 3.2: Social Media platforms should be the "live" presentation of the destination on the domestic and international stage. Set up various key social media pages using branding and follow a sample social media strategy outlined in Appendix C. All social media must carry the continuity of the banding (see samples below). Key pages include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube but other platforms should also be considered depending on available budget/staff, target markets and demographics.
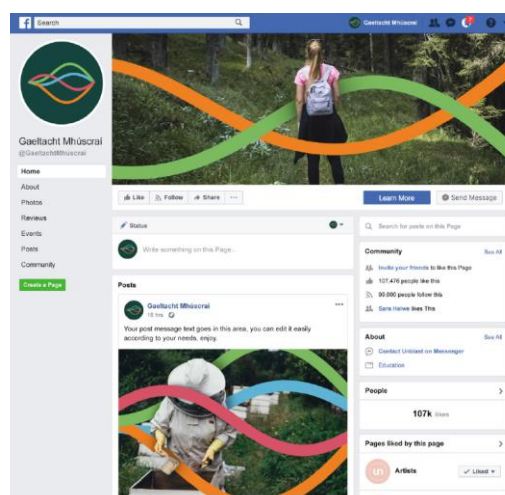
Action 3.3: Develop an online interactive map of the region which will illustrate the locations of key attractions, places of interest, activities and local businesses and key trails within the region such as walks, cycles, drives, heritage/food trails and more. The cost associated with digital mapping depends on the mapping specification and level of detail required.

Action 3.4: Open to anyone promoting the region, create a sharing platform / online library (Dropbox, Filecamp, other) for all branding, tourism content (see Action 4.0) and 'publish ready' promotional material such as high-quality photographs (original & branded), brochures, maps, video, social media posts, itineraries, links and more. See example from Clare County Council https://www.clare.ie/share.

Action 3.5: Actively encourage all tourism related businesses, activities, tours and experiences in the region register with the following services and if required seek training if help is required; Google My Business, Tripadvisor, AirBnB Experiences and other key tourism related services such as Google Local Guide where locals can contribute photos, video and descriptions to improve Google ranking.

See additional detail and background information in **Appendix C.**

4.4   Action 4.0 - Tourism Content Strategy

Action 4.0 Tourism Content Strategy	Timeframe / Status	Lead / Partners	Cost Estimate
Action 4.1 – Text (Research, Interpretation, Copy, SEO)	Ongoing		€5-10k
Action 4.2 – Photography (Phase 1)	Short		na
Action 4.3 – Video Stock	Short		€
Action 4.4 – Aerial and Drone	Short		TBC
Action 4.5 – Audio Recordings and Interviews	Short		TBC
Action 4.6 – Visitor Experiences and Itineraries	Short		TBC
Action 4.7 – Pre-prepared Social Media Text and Hashtags	Short		TBC

The importance of Tourism Content cannot be underestimated. For tourism marketing, 'Content is King' and selling your destination through original, local, authentic, high quality, interesting and captivating tourism content telling 'Your Story' is essential. Quality content affects tourist decision making, behaviour & satisfaction.

A phased investment in 'design ready' content is invaluable and low risk as it can be used not only used to populate your website, but continually used in the future for other tourism products, businesses, projects and marketing materials.

Action 4.1: Research and write interpretive text for a variety of attractions, places, heritage sites and more. Interpretive text must follow the fundamental guidelines whereby it should be written so a 10-year-old can understand the information but also contain fun and memorable facts that people can remember and share thereby promoting the area. Short (25 words), medium (up to 200 words) and long up to 500 words should be written for each item for diffident mediums (print and online).

Action 4.2: It is recommended to create a stock of both professional and locally sourced images (see also Action 1.2) starting with key attractions and experiences (Phase 1) which are required to deliver the first marketing materials such as a website and brochure. If additional funding becomes available, future phases could include heritage sites, portraits of local people, dance, music and other points of interest. Ensure during tender specification that you have full royalty free lifetime use of the professional photographs.

Action 4.3: Similar to photography, commission a stock of professional video shots of all key attractions, experiences, activities, people speaking the Irish language, music, dance, art, and more. This stock can then be used to create short videos, social media posts, website content and more.

Action 4.4: Commission aerial and drone photo and video of a select few sites for Phase 1.

Action 4.5: Undertake audio interviews with local people about history, folklore, music, song and more

Action 4.6: Create range of visitor experiences from half to 7-day itineraries to give an inspiring and authentic experience to the visitor aligning with the vision of Gaeltacht Mhúscraí and linking various locations, activities, businesses and service providers within the region. Ensure you have a good mix of heritage, culture, attractions, family, food, walking, cycling, fishing, watersports & more.

Action 4.7: Using the content above, pre-prepare a wide variety of social media post with relevant businesses tagged and hashtags which can then be used over time and can be scheduled to repeat if required. This approach will save considerable time and effort and ensure consistency of post style.

See additional detail and background information in **Appendix D.**

4.5　Action 5.0 – Marketing Material and Products

Action 5.0　Marketing Material & Products	Timeframe / Status	Lead / Partners	Cost Estimate
Action 5.1 – Printed Map (s)	Ongoing		€2.5k+
Action 5.2 – Printed Brochure incl above Map	Short		€3k+
Action 5.3 – Digital Magazine / Brochure	Short		TBC
Action 5.4 – Video Production (Features, Clips and Shorts)	Short		€3-50k
Action 5.5 – Irish Language Useful Phrases Guide	Short		€1k+
Action 5.6 – Promotional Displays	Short		TBC
Action 5.7 – Branded Pre-prepared Social Media Posts	Short		TBC
Action 5.8 – Large Map & Boards (incl Trailheads)	Short		TBC
Action 5.9 – Interpretation at Key Sites	Short/Med		TBC
Action 5.10 – Printing Cost for above material – quantity TBC	Short		TBC

Using the branding, tourism content and online map information, printed promotional material is an essential element of tourism development which can be modified and expanded over time as required.

Action 5.1: Using the branding undertake a high-quality graphic designed printed map of the area which can be printed at different sizes and for use on multiple products including brochures, map boards, tear off maps and for online pdf download, thereby saving significant costs over time. Ensure map design is clear and easy to understand with minimal 'clutter'.

Action 5.2: It is recommended to produce a typical A2/A3 to DL style tourism brochure, the template and base map of which can be used to develop separate attractions, walking, cycle, heritage trail brochures, etc if required.

Action 5.3: Create a digital magazine style brochure with high quality photos and content which can be used online and printed if required. A Múscraí digital magazine should complement the recently developed West Cork Tourism digital magazine.

Action 5.4: Investigate the feasibility of producing a short 'Welcome to Mhúscraí' video highlighting the key attractions, beauty, music, language, song, art, dance, literature, theatre, heritage and local people of the area. Required budget will depend on required production quality and other factors. Use stock to also create series of clips and shorts. See also Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) videos produced as part of the Atlantic Culturscape project (Action 6.5).

Action 5.5: Produce a branded guide to useful Irish words and phrases and phonetic pronunciations which can be placed at the reception/bar counter/till of each business and incorporated into menus and more. Make it fun and part of the overall marketing to encourage visitors to 'have a go' pronouncing Múscraí (voos-kree) and other placenames. Embrace how difficult Irish can be for some and have fun with it. Incorporate into the website, social media, printed brochures and more. Assist businesses to produce their own branded materials using this approach such as menus and more.

Action 5.6: Produce a range of typical branded promotional displays and used throughout region.

Action 5.7: Produce branded social media posts incorporating images/videos (see also 4.7)

Action 5.8: Develop large information map board for each village and key trailheads (See 5.1& 7.7)

Action 5.9: Investigate the provision of branded and consistent physical interpretation signs at all key sites (phase 1) as part of a proposed heritage trail (see 6.8) and expand over time when budgets are

available. Consider innovative and creative interpretation where appropriate, for example wooden sculptures at each village representing a key feature or history of the village, natural slate interpretative signs and translations, a lakeshore viewing point for the Crannog could provide artwork sketches on a large perspex screen where visitors could view 'how it could have looked' and much more.

Action 5.10: Ensure sufficient budgets are available not only to print the marketing material but also to distribute same where required in Ireland.

See additional detail and background information in **Appendix E.**

See below an example of a Trails map which incorporates professional aerial photography, placename research, digital walking routes and key placenames and mountain peaks labelled in Irish with the translation and height for each.

McGillycuddy's Reeks main walking routes
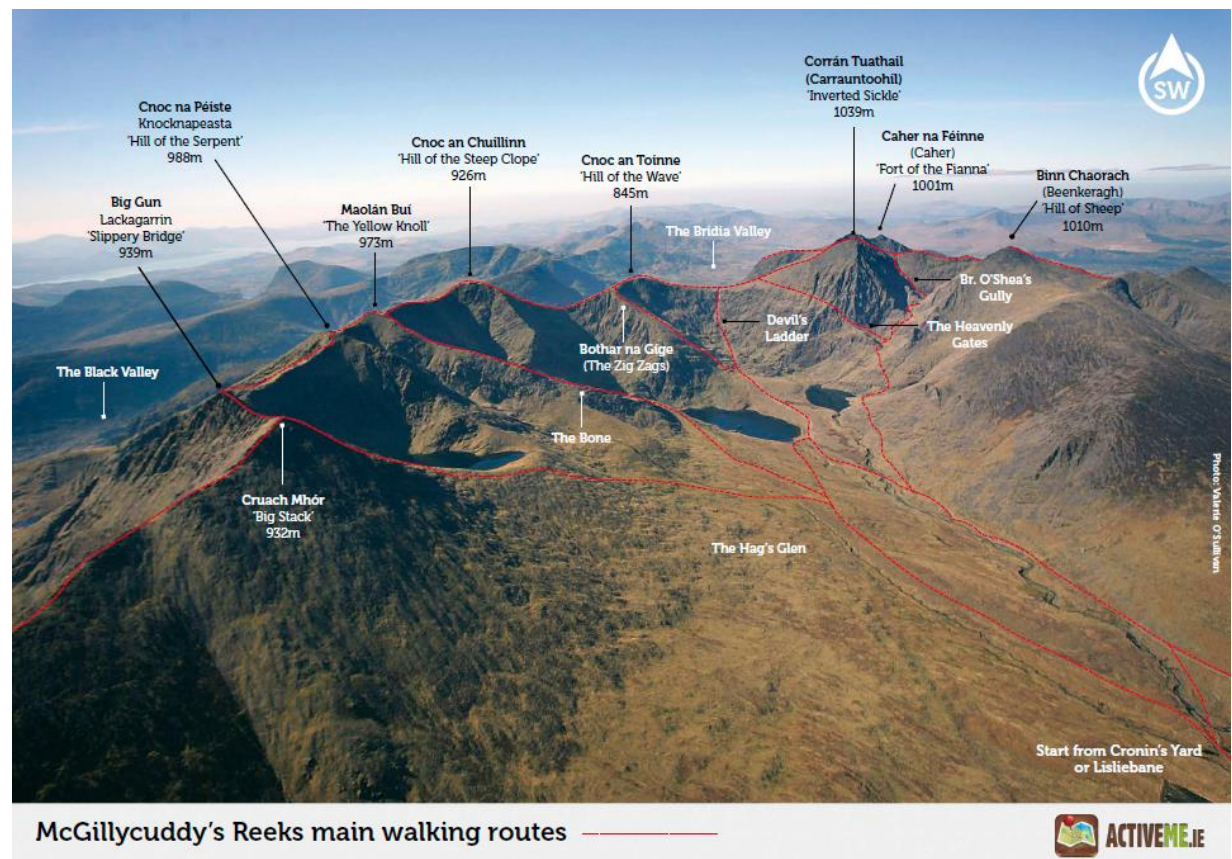
4.6   Action 6.0 – Language, Culture and Heritage

Key & Catalyst projects highlighted in the orange of Gaeltacht Mhúscraí branding

Action 6.0 Language, Culture & Heritage	Timeframe / Status	Lead / Partners	Cost Estimate
Action 6.1 – Heritage / Multi-Theme Trail for the Region	Short/Med		€30k+
Action 6.2 – Support the development of An Sugán Museum	Ongoing		
Action 6.3 – Actions from Mhúscraí Heritage Plan 2017-2032	Ongoing	CCC	/
Action 6.4 – Plean Teanga Mhúscraí – Irish Language Plan	Ongoing	LNR	/
Action 6.5 – Intangible Culture: Atlantic Culturescape Project	Ongoing	MTU	/
Action 6.6 – Welcome Video including music, speaking Irish	Short/Med		€20k+
Action 6.7 – Encourage simple Irish in all settings (i.e. Slán)	Short		TBC
Action 6.8 – Irish Language Useful Phrases (see also 5.5)	Short		/
Action 6.9 – Bilingual Guided Tours / Experiences (walks, etc)	Short		/
Action 6.10 - Support development of Coláiste Íosagáin	Long		/
Action 6.11 – Heritage Week – Experiences / Event	Short		/
Action 6.12 – Have a go Language, Music, Song, & Dance	Short		/
Action 6.13 – Walk & Lunch at Ancient Heritage Site	Short		/
Action 6.14 – Treasure Hunt/Quest Style Experience (see 6.1)	Short		/
Action 6.15 – Expand on existing Folklore project (s)	Long		/
Action 6.16 – 'As Gaeilge' hour/evening in the Pub	Short		/
Action 6.17 – Short Irish Taster Sessions / Ranganna Gaeilge	Short		/
Action 6.18 – Have a go GAA & traditional sports experience	Short		/
Action 6.19 – Redevelopment of summer scoil samhraidh	Medium		/
Action 6.20 – Mind and Body Experiences (ie forest bathing)	Short		/
Action 6.21 – Organised Workshops for music, song, dance	Medium		/
Action 6.22 – Geocaching As Gaeilge – Fun Puzzle for Kids	Short		/
Action 6.23 – Experience Road bowling, Handball, etc	Short		/
Action 6.24 – Ogham Experience – hands on/tactile	Medium		/
Action 6.25 – Translate all tourism content (see 5.0)	Short		/

As a Gaeltacht region, it is critical that the Irish language and culture are central to your branding and marketing using creative ideas, fun and play-on-words around language, music, song, art, dance, literature, theatre, folklore, local stories, sport, food and heritage. This will provide a competitive edge and provide unique selling points (USP's).

There is a need to instil pride and use the language to entice the curious who may not speak the language, rather than limit ourselves only to Irish speakers.

It is intended that above set of actions overlap with the majority of all other actions to ensure that the Irish Language and culture is embedded in all marketing initiatives.

Action 6.1: Investigate the feasibility of creating a Multi Theme 'An Thóir Mhúscraí' Trail containing various colour coded themes where the visitor can customise the trail and choose their area of interest and use the trail to explore the entire region. The trail should include high quality interpretation comprising visual, tactile and audible which can also incorporate other cultural and outdoor experiences.

Themes may include some or all of the following: history, culture, ancient heritage, natural heritage, attractions, family activities for kids, scenic views, food, walks, cycles, language, music, song, art, dance, literature, theatre, folklore, local stories and sport.

Actions 6.2: Support the development of An Sugán Museum as a key heritage and cultural attraction in the region. Investigate the feasibility of extending the proposals outside and creating an outdoor museum style trail to encourage visitors to firstly explore the village heritage and beyond, throughout the region (see 6.1 above)

Support the progress and delivery of various outputs from the recent and ongoing projects discussed in Section 3.0 Múscraí Gaeltacht Ecosystem Project in particular the creation of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) experiences and their associated promotional tourism content including video and more. Enquire if content created through the project can be used by all to promote the region.

Action 6.3: The development of a Heritage Trail (6.1) and interpretation (4.1 & 5.9) are key recommendations contained in the existing Mhúscraí Heritage Plan**.** All relevant actions contained with this tourism plan should be developed in keeping with the heritage plan.

Action 6.4: All relevant actions contained with this tourism plan should be developed in keeping with the upcoming The Plean Teanga Mhúscraí – Irish Language Plan.

Action 6.5: Support MTU and all ongoing Atlantic Culturescape project deliverables in relation to creating authentic and sellable intangible cultural heritage (ICH) experiences.

Action 6.6: Investigate the feasibility of producing a short 'Welcome to Mhúscraí' video highlighting the attractions, beauty, music, language, song, art, dance, literature, theatre, heritage and local people of the area. This video can embrace the Irish language and have fun showing how to pronounce Irish words, places and phrases such as Mhúscraí (voos-kree), etc. Required budget will depend on required production quality and other factors.

Action 6.7: A key aim is to encourage the use of simple Irish in all settings and marketing materials and make the use of Irish fun and approachable. Embrace the real difficulties and fun by encouraging visitors to try pronouncing placenames and other words and even considering a 'discount', 'free coffee' etc if they try. Actively encourage all gaeltacht community and businesses to start saying 'Slán' and 'Go raibh maith agat' and other simple phrases in all conversations (including international business). Using the Irish phrases content developed in Action 6.8,

Action 6.8: Investigate producing a fun Irish Phrase Book/Leaflet and providing printed branded signs (i.e. small perspex display stand) of simple Irish phrases for uses in businesses. For example, a small sign showing how to order simple things in a pub, restaurant, shop as Gaeilge and the same approach online and on printed material such as brochures.

Action 6.9: Support the development of further bilingual guided tours and cultural experiences such as guided walks, cycles, heritage trails and have a go taster sessions for language, music, song, dance and more. If required, the provision of training should be sought. The aim again should be to make Irish more accessible and leave the visitor knowing some Irish words and phrases when finished or if the visitors are Irish speakers then these tours and experiences can be delivered as Gaeilge. For example, a traditional music experience could involve meeting a musician in a local pub, have a drink and a chat

with some Irish, learn a tune on a tin whistle and when finished you can take away the tin whistle, the memories and the few words of Irish as a souvenirs. These are the type of experiences that people remember and importantly

Action 6.10: Support the development of Coláiste Íosagáin some of which is currently being transformed into a 'Gteic' regional digital hub with offices and hot-desk facilities and an exhibition space. The tourism actions in this plan should be used to attract people to live and work in the area.

Action 6.11 to 6.25: Investigate the feasibility and support the development of a range of cultural products and experiences which add value to the overall destination and can be used as part of the national Heritage Week each year. Aim to become the benchmark destination for Heritage Week and organise a week long Múscraí Heritage, Culture and Activity event to coincide with this and piggyback on the national promotion, reach and public interest in Heritage Week. Use the week to test and trail new experiences. Participation in Heritage Week can also assist you in applying for Heritage Council funding where required.

See additional detail and background information in **Appendix F**.

4.7   Action 7.0 – Trails and Infrastructure

Key & Catalyst projects highlighted in the orange of Gaeltacht Mhúscraí branding

Action 7.0 Trails and Trail Infrastructure	Timeframe / Status	Lead / Partners	Cost Estimate
Action 7.1 – Multi-Themed Trail (see 6.1) – Entire Region	Short		€30k+
Action 7.2 – Upgrade existing walks to Sport Ireland standard	Medium		€20k+
Action 7.3 – St. Gobnaits Shrine and Trail Infrastructure	Short		€10k+
Action 7.4 – Ballingeary Boardwalk & Blueway Trails	Medium		TBC
Action 7.5 – Sli Gaeltacht Mhúscraí Greenway, Loops, Links	Ongoing		€50k+
Action 7.6 – Mullaghanish Hiking, Mountain/Fat Bike Trails	Medium		€25k+
Action 7.7 – Trail Infrastructure (signs, parking, picnic, etc)	Medium		/
Action 7.8 – Cycle / Scenic Drives – Lough Allua entire region	Short		/
Action 7.9 – Gougane Barra Horseshoe Trail Feasibility	Medium		/
Action 7.10 – Bike and e-Bike Hire Co-op and maybe eCar	Short		/
Action 7.11 – Food Trail – Taste and Cooking Experience	Short		/
Action 7.12 – Trail along river banks and lakes (See 8.5)	Long		/
Action 7.13 – Source of the River Lee Walk	Medium		/
Action 7.14 – Running Routes and Trail Running	Short		/
Action 7.15 – The Gearagh Trails promotion	Short		€2k+
Action 7.16 – Piggyback on Beara Breifne & St. Finbarrs Trails	Short		/
Action 7.17 – Toilet facilities in key places	Long		/
Action 7.18 – Sleeping pods & wild camping on key trails	Medium		/
Action 7.19 – Forest Bathing / Mind and Body Experiences	Short		/
Action 7.20 – Plant Fruit Trees along walk sections	Long		/
Action 7.21 – Bridle Trails	Medium		/
Action 7.22 – EV Tourism Route and charging stations	Medium		/

Examining the feasibility of developing priority list of new and improved walks and other trails in the region. Trail development comprises a number of key elements, from trail feasibility studies to route auditing and from branded online promotional material to printed brochures and essential physical trail infrastructure such as road signs, parking, large map boards, finger post signs, rest areas, photo opportunities and trail interpretation.

Action 7.1: see 6.1.

Action 7.2: Investigate the feasibility of improving the existing St Gobnaits walking trail to Sport Ireland standards and associated infrastructure, marketing material and overall awareness.

Action 7.3: Investigate the feasibility of upgrading existing trails and creating new trails to Sport Ireland standards in terms of trails quality, waymarking, infrastructure, furniture/service, information, trail monitoring, maintenance and auditing.

Action 7.4: Support the development of Ballingeary Boardwalk, Trails & Blueway Proposal

Action 7.5: Support the development of the proposed upgrade of Slí Gaeltacht Mhúscraí to Greenway standard and investigate the feasibility of creating new connected Loop Walks and trail links with nearby villages and other major trails.

Action 7.6: Investigate the feasibility of creating additional trails on and around Mullaghanish such as walking trails, mountain bike and fat bike trails.

Action 7.7: Investigate the feasibility of new and improved trail and trailhead infrastructure at key locations such as road signs, directions, parking, mapboards, rest areas, picnic areas, waymarking, trail furniture and more. Quality trailheads are key to trail promotion and can have a dual use as a place where visitors can stop on route.

Action 7.8: It is recommended that a number of key cycle and scenic driving routes in and around Gaeltacht Mhúscraí be mapped (action 3.3 and 5.1), signed where appropriate (action 2.3) and promoted as a key experience. Consideration should also be given to creating a guided cycle tour along these routes (see Section 3.9).

Action 7.9: Investigate the feasibility of the upgrading the Gougane Barra Horseshoe Trail as a Sport Ireland approved waymarked trail.

Action 7.10: Investigate the feasibility of introducing a Bike and e-Bike Hire Co-op within the region with collaboration between businesses and other groups regarding payment, luggage and bike transfers and more. The roads within the region are ideal for cycling and convenient bike hire is a key way of increase bed nights and tourism spend.

Action 7.11: Create local food, drink and cooking trail within the region, possibly as part of Action 6.1.

Action 7.12: Assess the feasibility of creating walking trails along riverbanks and lakes. See Action 8.5.

Action 7.13: Investigate the feasibility of a 'Source of the Lee' walk and promote as Rite of Passage

Action 7.14: Assess the possibility of creating running and trail running routes in the region (5k, 10k,)

Action 7.15: Map and improve the promotion and awareness of walks in the Gearagh

Action 7.16: Piggyback on all marketing initiatives for the Beara Breifne way and other in the region

Action 7.17: Consider the upgrade and provision of new toilet facilities at key locations in the region

Action 7.18: Investigate the feasibility of creating sleeping pods/huts and wild camping locations along key remote routes such as Slí Gaeltacht Mhúscraí, thereby enabling long distance walkers to visit the area from trails outside the region and create a unique experience along the way.

Action 7.19: Consider adding to the mind, body and wellness experiences already in the region such as Forest Bathing in Gougane, Meditation, etc. Additional experiences could include lakefront yoga and pilates, journaling, detox, tech detox, spiritual and eco retreats, art and energy therapy.

Action 7.20: Investigate the feasibility of planting a variety of fruit trees and other edible plants at appropriate locations along key walking routes and provide interpretive signs with name, Irish name, translations and more.

Action 7.21: Investigate the feasibility of creating bridal ways within the region (see West Cork trails).

Action 7.22: Assess feasibility of introducing EV charging facilities in the region.

See additional detail and background information in **Appendix F and J.**

4.8   Action 8.0 – Tourism Development Actions

Action 8.0 Tourism Development Actions	Timeframe / Status	Lead / Partners	Cost Estimate
Action 8.1 – Support Tourism Development Working Group	Ongoing		/
Action 8.2 – Employ Tourism Officer to Implement Plan	Short		/
Action 8.3 – Failte Ireland Training and Support	Short/Med		TBC
Action 8.4 – Leader Funding Community Heritage Training	Medium		TBC
Action 8.5 – Destination Launch and Marketing	Short		TBC
Action 8.6 – Experience Mhúscraí Invite for Travel Journalists	Short		TBC
Action 8.7 – Mhúscraí Event and Festival Development	Medium		TBC
Action 8.8 – Promote Mhúscraí nationally & internationally	Short		TBC
Action 8.9 – Mhúscraí Village Enhancement	Long		TBC
Action 8.10 – Lough Allua Management Plan incl Crannog	Medium		€20k+
Action 8.11 – Support Development of Coláiste Íosagáin	Medium		/
Action 8.12 – Transport: Public Transport, e-Bus, E-charging	Medium		/
Action 8.13 – Glamping Site, Walk Sleeping Pods, Wild Camp	Long		/
Action 8.14 – Eco Holidays – Sustainable Energy in Mhúscraí	Medium		/
Action 8.15 – Develop outdoor eating areas and rest stops	Medium		/
Action 8.16 – Feasibility of Operating Bus Tour of Region	Medium		/
Action 8.17 – Feasibility of increasing accommodation stock	Medium		/
Action 8.18 – Feasibility of Dark Skies Park in Mhúscraí	Medium		/
Action 8.19 – Feasibility of opening a Tourism Office	Medium		/
Action 8.20 – Motorhome Self Service Parking	Medium		/
Action 8.21 – Wood Sculptures and Natural Slate Signs	Medium		/
Action 8.22 – Atlantic Area ICH Experiences route	Medium	MTU	/
Action 8.23 – Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Videos	Medium	MTU	/
Action 8.24 – ICH Brokerage event and Tourism Cluster	Medium	MTU	/
Action 8.25 – Support Coláiste na Mumhan	Long		

Action 8.1: Ensure that the currently established Múscraí Tourism Development Working Group continues into the future, adapts, grows and collaborates with appropriate governance. Ensure commitment to promoting responsible and sustainable tourism development while safeguarding the unique culture, heritage and biodiversity of the area through co-operation with all stakeholders in the wider community. Ensure leaders, partners and promoters as assigned to deliver each action.

Action 8.2: Employ an experienced marketing professional on a full time or part time role to assist the implementation of the Plan, in particular administration of the website and social media and traditional marketing tasks around brand launch, trade, PR, promotion, awareness, event organisation and more.

Action 8.3: Examine the current training and supports on offer from Failte Ireland through their Learning Hub and determine the required and appropriate training to meet the needs of the community to deliver and implement the proposed Plan. These could include digital marketing, search engine optimisation (SEO) and more.

The proposed museum has the potential to attract and boost the local tourism economy significantly.

Action 8.4: Examine the needs of the group and work with LEADER to plan and roll out community training around community heritage projects, gathering information, writing, marketing, tourism content, SEO and more.

Action 8.5: Gaeltacht Mhúscraí as a destination must begin with a Regional and National Launch. As first impressions matter, particularly online, it is recommended that some core actions be complete/near complete prior to lunch such as the website, map, brochure and tourism content such as professional photography and text.

Action 8.6: Invite a number of key travel journalists from Ireland and possibility the UK to experience Múscraí on a 2-3 day itinerary in return for press coverage and the possible inclusion in travel guides such as Lonely Planet, etc.

Action 8.7: Investigate the creation of a weekend event with the aim to expand over 1 full week over time. Although a single theme event can be more straightforward to organise and promote, it is recommended that the feasibility of a multi themed event be investigated. For example, a walking and cultural event, with walks and cycles and mind & body experiences in the morning followed by cultural experiences later in the day such as music, song and dance. See also Action 6.11.

Action 8.8: Develop and implement a simple marketing plan using this Plan as a platform and market the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí as a major destination.

Action 8.9: Examine the feasibility of creating a consistent programme of village enhancements incorporating key tourism infrastructure such as safe and signed pull in areas with parking, tourist map/information boards, picnic areas, sheltered outdoor eating areas, outdoor heating, coin operated BBQ's, cycle parking, bus stops and more.

Action 8.10: Assess the feasibility of undertaking a development and management plan for Lough Allua and other major waterways in the region to include the lakeside community, fishing organisations, stakeholders to look a wide range of elements such as fishing, Blueway, boat, paddleboard, kayaking hire, bird watching, lakeside walks and heritage such as Cork's only Crannog. Investigate the potential of developing a tourist attraction around this unique pierce of heritage.

Action 8.11: Support the masterplan redevelopment of Coláiste Íosagáin in Baile Mhúirne which is currently underway.

Action 8.12: Look into the feasibility of improving public transport options in the area such as Bus Eireann regional services, Local Link and the provision of a shuttle/tour bus through the region during the summer season. Bus infrastructure should also be investigated including sheltered bus stops and parking, The feasibility of an e-Bus shuttle service should also be looked at which would tie into the provision of e-charging facilities (see Action 7.10 & 7.22).

Action 8.13: The feasibility of a new Glamping site, or a series of Glamping pods, throughout the region should be investigated which would improve the accommodation stock and options but also bring in a new type of tourist. See Also 7.18 re sleeping pods/huts along key walking trails.

Action 8.14: With some businesses in the area attaining eco accreditation, it is recommended to investigate how this could be further developed over the entire region.

Action 8.15: See Action 8.9.

Action 8.16: See Action 8.12.

Action 8.17: Assess the feasibility of increasing accommodation stock and options throughout the region. This may include the use of existing buildings, creating self-catering options or a new camping/glamping business (See Action 8.13).

Action 8.18: Considering the remote nature of the area, investigate the feasibility of seeking Dark Skies status in Gaeltacht Mhúscraí.

Action 8.19: Investigate the feasibility of opening a tourist office in Gaeltacht Mhúscraí.

Action 8.20: The provision of self-service motorhome parking areas within the region which can provide services such as electricity and water for overnight stays. See Bantry Marina Parking.

Action 8.21: Consider the provision of region wide interpretative and artistic measures such as wood/tree sculptures and murals which represent each area and interesting and innovative interpretation such as labelling trees of importance with stone/slate with their name, Irish name and translation.

Action 8.22 to 8.24. Support the deliverable and outputs from the Múscraí Gaeltacht Ecosystem project which is currently ongoing and undertaken as part of the overall Interreg Atlantic Area CultureScape EU project. The project outputs include the following:

- Support the continuing development of a Tourism Cluster in the region.
- A brokerage event and study visit for regional, national and international visitors
- Develop digital content including videos and images for the ICH businesses and this content will be made freely available for use by stakeholders within the region.
- Develop Atlantic Area ICH Experiences route in the region and support promotion.

Action 8.25: Support Coláiste na Mumhan where required in terms of day to day operations, marketing and development.

See additional detail and background information in **Appendix C-E**

5 Visitor & Destination Experiences

5.1 Developing Visiting Experiences

A range suggested visitor or destination experiences should be designed to give an inspiring and authentic experience to the visitor aligning with the vision of Gaeltacht Mhúscraí and linking various locations, activities, experiences, businesses and service providers within the region.

Each tourism experience should embrace the regions natural, tangible and intangible heritage such as the areas language, music, song, remote nature, beauty and outdoor activities.

Ideally, visitor or destination experiences and itineraries should be designed to extend from half a day to 7 days, with the aim to fill the entire day, thereby encourage overnight stays and repeat stays to finish the experience.

The physical area of the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí is over 250km^2 and to put that into perspective, east to west it is approximately 20km wide at its widest point and north to south, again approximately 20km. In terms of size, the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí area is ideal for the creation of accessible visitor experiences as distances are minimal but they must also take into account a variety of key factors.

Some of the critical and key factors taken into account when creating and building experiences.

- Field and desktop research of all available information
- Local businesses, experiences, information, stories and more from the community
- For each experience, consideration must be given to:
    - Time to travel or drive between each stop by car, walk, bike, kayak and more
    - Time to rest and take a break like a cup of coffee
    - Time to savour the views and take photos
    - Time for lunch and evening meals
    - Time for evening entertainment
    - Time for all transfers
    - Separate costs of all elements
    - Potential discount for bundling individual separate costs.
    - Payment logistics and more
    - Potential to incorporate a local event and festival
- Key visitor attractions and existing visitor numbers
- Interesting stories and hidden gems
- Realistic potential for influencing the choice of holiday destination for visitors
- Realistic potential for generating interest, enquiries and sales
- Realistic distances each day: avoid driving past (skipping) smaller areas/villages/towns
- Practical and easy to understand, manage and market
- Potential for easy upselling and increasing the length of stay and spend
- Overarching general theme for each experience
- Experiences should have a good mix of

Mix of Experiences	
Heritage and Culture	Attractions
Irish Language	Family Fun
Music	Guided Tours
Song	Walking
Dance	Cycling
Literature	Fishing
Poetry	Nature
Arts Craft	Watersports
Food, Drink, Café and more	Genealogy
Sports	Bird Watching
Ancient and Natural Heritage	Local Food - Cooking
Archaeology	Golf
Pilgrimage	Equestrian
Events	Festivals
Scenery and Photo Opportunities	Accommodation and other service
Evening entertainment	Local Stories

Where possible, experiences should be aligned and developed taking into account Fáilte Ireland's standard templates and approach which puts local and interesting stories at the core of how suggested experiences and itineraries are presented and sold.

Some suggested names and themes are outlined below which can be further developed by combining a range of hero/signature experiences supported by key businesses and other experiences.

- *'A Taste of Múscraí'* – *this could potentially have a mix of everything*
- *'Room to Breath'*
- *'Source of Inspiration'*
- *'Celtic Spirituality'*
- *'The Roads Less Travelled'*

A Múscraí challenge promotion should be developed to encourage visitors to try one signature experiences such as key attractions (Gougane Barra, Toy Solider Factory, etc), culture (Language, Music, etc), Heritage, hiking, biking, kayaking, food, mind and body each day over a number of days or on a repeat stay.

6   Marketing & Implementation Plan

6.1   Introduction

"Marketing starts on your doorstep" and this is where the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí starts! The recent meetings highlight the importance of knowing what is on our doorstep; the local passion for the region; and the interest and enthusiasm that exists for all to work together under the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí brand and implement the Tourism Development and Implementation Plan. It also shows that with good leadership, guidance, supports, and resources, communities and businesses can come together and create a destination and brand, identify the key experiences and hidden gems in their region and share the great authentic stories and authentic hospitable experiences.

In simple terms, the plan has been written to inspire and assist tourism businesses and stakeholders to establish a destination and deliver new and improve existing visitor experiences. In addition, the Plan also seeks to address the underlying challenges facing the destination and find ways of building on new opportunities. There are interconnecting strands to the implementation of the Plan:

1. Identify 'short list' and hierarchy of key Actions for implementation from the 'long list'.

2. Assign a lead to each action, set a timeline, secure required funding and implement

3. Develop a range of visitor and destination experiences and sell Gaeltacht Mhúscraí

4. The local market and communities – launch and embrace the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí Brand

5. The Domestic Market: Walkers, Cyclists, Over55s, Connected Families & Footloose Socialisers

6. The Overseas Market focussing on Culturally Curious and Great Escapers

Additional detail regarding the overall marketing plan for the region is contained in Appendix G.

6.2   Embedding the Brand

To follow on from the momentum developed with this Plan and other ongoing projects, the rollout of the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí brand to all businesses and community who participated will be critical. This will promote the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí identity across the region and encourage the participants to promote and share it with guests, customers, neighbours, colleagues, staff, etc.

6.3   Regional & National Launch, Awareness and Marketing

Gaeltacht Mhúscraí as a destination must begin with a Regional and National Launch. Once ready, this should be staged as a complete showcase of all the unique elements of the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí. Promote unique experiences presented through visuals, language, culture, story-telling, folklore, food, music, activity, etc. It should be fully reflective of the mountains, valleys, heritage, culture, people, and communities and place and include the following key measures:

1. Build Gaeltacht Mhúscraí awareness with both trade and locals

2. Build Gaeltacht Mhúscraí awareness across the whole domestic market but particularly to key market segments – walkers, cyclists, Over 55's, Connected Families and Footloose Socialisers

3. Find brand ambassadors / influencers – famous Irish speakers, celebrities and sports people who would help promote Gaeltacht Mhúscraí.

4. Get media & press interested in Gaeltacht Mhúscraí at local, regional, national & international level and invite travel journalists to experience the region in return for coverage.

5. Build trade and industry awareness – Fáilte Ireland Departments, Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East Team, Tourism Ireland Departments, Irish Tour Operators, Irish Travel Journalists, Guide Book Editors, Tourism Trade within the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí, etc.

6. It is essential that the Gaeltacht Mhúscraí Tourism Development and Implementation Plan be aligned with and leverage off the marketing and promotional activities of Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland's main markets and specifically, to their key overseas market segments.

6.4   Tourism Development Actions and Implementation Plan

This Plan is created to assist the Múscraí Tourism Development Working Group and other partners to focus their efforts, proceed with an Action, set a timeline, select a lead promoter and working groups, secure funding based on expected cost for required quality/specification (approximate rough costs included), maximise investment and go and get the job done.

This Plan must be read in conjunction with all relevant sections of the report, the legend key (see below) and Appendices in order to understand the scale of work and costs involved with each action.

Implementation Plan Action Legend (short codes)	
Short Term / Year 1 Action / 2022	1
Medium Term / Year 2 Action / 2023	2
Long Term / Year 3 Action / 2024	3
Múscraí Tourism Development Working Group	MTG
Comharchumann Forbartha Mhúscraí	CFM
Munster Institute of Technology (MTU)	MTU
Stór Mhúscraí	SM
Fáilte Ireland	FI
Cork County Council	CCC
Údarás na Gaeltachta	UNG
Mirador Media	MM
Tourism Providers	TP
West Cork Development Partnership / Rural Recreation Officer	WCDP
Coiste Forbartha Béal Átha'n Ghaorthaidh	CFBAG
Local Enterprise Office	LEO
KPI (Key Performance Indicator) – How to Measure Success	Various KPI's
Cost depends entirely on specification detail – approx. cost provided	€ or TBC

6.5 'Short List' of 2022 Key Tourism Development Actions (Year 1)

The following year 1 'short list' of key tourism development actions was identified and agreed with the Tourism Group and other stakeholders. The aim is commence each of these actions in 2022.

#	KEY ACTIONS – 2022 – Short List	Year / Status	Lead / Partners	Cost Est	Refer to
8.2	Tourism Development Officer	2022	CFM/CCC	TBC	Section 4.8 & Appendix K
3.0	Online Presence: Website, Social Media, Content	2022	CFM	€20k+	See 4.6 & Appendix C & D
3.3	Online Tourism Mapping: Digitisation & Content	Ongoing	MTG	€10k+	See 4.6 & Appendix C & D
8.1	Support the Tourism Working Group	Ongoing	CFM	/	See 4.8
6.1	Multi-Theme Trail through Múscraí	2022	CFM	€30k+	See 4.6 and Appendix D & F

Reducing the 'long list' of actions outlined in Section 4 was crucial to focus the groups effort and available funding (especially in Year 1) but also to ensure that the plan is not daunting, and that time and effort is not diluted with too many actions.

6.6 'Short List' of Key Tourism Development Actions (Years 2 and 3)

Other actions for consideration by the group, community, or any individual over the lifetime of the plan (Years 1 to 3) are shown below. The aim is consider and/or commence these actions in 2023-2024.

ACTIONS for 2023-2024 - TBC	Timeframe / Status	Lead / Partners	Cost Estimate	Refer
Action 8.9 - Mhúscraí Village Enhancement	Med/Long	TBC	TBC	Section 8.0
Action 7.2 - Upgrade walk (s) to Sport Ireland standard	Medium	TBC	€20k+	See App J
Action 7.5 - Sli Gaeltacht Mhúscraí Greenway, Loops, Links	Ongoing	TBC	€50k+	See App J
Action 6.2 - An Sugán Museum - Coláiste Na Mumhan	Ongoing	TBC	TBC	See 4.6
Action 7.3 - St. Gobnaits Shrine/Woods & Trail Infrastructure	Short	TBC	€10k+	See App J
Action 7.10 - Bike and e-Bike Hire Co-op and maybe eCar	Short	TBC	TBC	See 4.7
Action 7.4 - Ballingeary Boardwalk & Blueway Trails	Medium	TBC	TBC	See 4.7
Action 7.6 - Mullaghanish Hiking, Mountain Bike Trails	Medium	TBC	€25k+	See 4.7
Action 6.9 - Bilingual Guided Tours / Experiences (walks, etc)	Short	TBC	TBC	See 4.6
Action 8.10 - Lough Allua Management Plan incl Crannog	Medium	TBC	€20k+	See 4.8
Action 7.9 - Gougane Barra Horseshoe Trail Feasibility	Medium	TBC	€5k+	See 4.7
Action 8.19 - Feasibility of opening a Tourism Office	Medium	TBC	TBC	See 4.8
Action 8.6 - Experience Mhúscraí Invite for Travel Journalists	Short	TBC	TBC	See 4.8
Action 8.7 - Mhúscraí Event and Festival Development	Medium	TBC	TBC	See 4.8
Action 6.24 - Ogham Experience – hands on/tactile	Medium	TBC	TBC	See 4.6
Action 6.10 - Development of Coláiste Íosagáin	Med/Long	TBC	TBC	See 4.6

6.7 Fundamental Tourism Development Actions

The Plan also contains fundamental tourism actions which are considered core essential items required to build and grow any tourism destination. Various combinations of these fundamental actions will

support the delivery of key 'short list' actions and catalyst projects which will help grow the region in a sustainable manner and set Gaeltacht Mhúscraí apart from other destinations. Also included are rough costings for each action, noting that these costs would be entirely dependent on exact specifications, quality of output, tender prices received, print costs and more. The key performance indicator (KPI) for each action is also included on this table.

#	Key Fundamental Tourism Actions	Year	Lead	Cost	KPI
1.1	Destination Branding (Complete)	1	MTU	/	Complete
1.2	Embed Branding	1	CFM	/	Design Material and Embed
1.3	Embrace and Promote Brand Locally	1	TP	/	Trade engagement
2.1	N22 Bypass Signs (ongoing)	1	CCC	/	Approval / Installation
2.2	Signage Audit Short	1	CFM	€10k	Report / Costings
2.3	Install Required Signage	1-3		TBC	Design / Installation
2.4	Branded Signs for Gaeltacht Mhúscraí	1-2		€15k+	Design / Installation
2.5	Information Map/Trailhead Boards	1-2		€20k+	Design / Installation
3.1	Online Marketing – Website and SEO	1		€5-25k	Website Live / SEO Ranked search
3.2	Online Marketing - Social Media (SM)	1		€2k+	Yr1: 5,000 likes across platforms
3.3	Online Marketing - Digital Map	1		€5-25k	Design / Print
3.4	Online Marketing – Sharing Platform	1		€2k+	Platform Live and Used
4.1	Tourism Content - Interpretive Text	1		€2-10k	Approved Text Options
4.2	Tourism Content – Photography	1		€3k+	Photos of key items (Phase 1)
4.3	Tourism Content - Video	1		€5k+	Commence Video Stock
4.4	Tourism Content - Aerial and Drone	1		€2k+	Commission key sites (Phase 1)
4.5	Tourism Content - Audio & Interviews	2		TBC	Commission recordings (Phase 1)
4.6	Tourism Content - Suggested Itineraries	1		TBC	Create / Market / Sell
4.7	Tourism Content - SM text & hashtags	1		€1k+	Pre-prepare SM content
5.1	Marketing - Printed Map	1		€3k+	Design / Print / Distribute
5.2	Marketing - Printed Brochure	1		€3K+	Design / Print / Distribute
5.3	Marketing - Digital Magazine	1-2		€3k+	Design and Launch
5.4	Marketing - Video Production	1-2		€5k+	Produce / Live / No. of Views
5.5	Marketing - Irish Phrases	1		€1k+	Design / Encourage Visitors to try
5.6	Marketing - Promo Displays	1		€2k+	Design and place at key locations
5.7	Marketing – SM Campaign & Posts	1		€2k+	Post Online using content
5.8	Marketing - Large Map Boards	1-2		€1K+ ea	Design / Print / Install
5.9	Marketing – Info signs at key sites	1-2		€1k+ ea	Design / Create / Install
5.10	Marketing - Printing/Distribution	1		TBC	Print / Distribute

APPENDICES

Appendices containing additional information and specification detail for a number of key Action will be included on identification of the final 'Short List' and hierarchy of Actions.