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Project Appraisal Guidelines Unit 2.2 – Project/Programme Outline Documents for Active Modes and Greenways

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1. Context & Structure

Guidance on the development of a Project/Programme Outline Document (POD) for TII projects and programmes is currently contained in PAG Unit 2.1 - Project/Programme Outline Documents. PAG Unit 2.1 translates the generic requirements of the POD as outlined in the Transport Appraisal Framework (TAF) into requirements for TII projects and programmes. In PAG Unit 2.1, TII has developed a common structure to standardise the contents and requirements of a POD. PAG Unit 2.2 aims to provide supplementary guidance on the development of PODs for active mode and greenways schemes.

While it is anticipated that the structure and contents of an active mode or greenways POD will be broadly the same as for other TII projects and programmes; the context, rationale, exploring potential solutions and appraisal approach may differ significantly. For instance, the provision of a greenway can form a significant asset to the local community and economy, in addition to forming a transport corridor. As a potential community asset, the rationale and solutions should also place an emphasis on the local communities within close proximity to the greenway corridor.

This Unit should therefore be read in conjunction with PAG Unit 2.1, which will provide guidance on the overall structure and requirements of the POD. It is important that the general principle of keeping the POD a concise document of 30 pages or less is followed. This Unit provides additional guidance, prompts and templates specific to active modes and greenway schemes.

The typical structure of a POD, for which this Unit provides supplementary guidance to PAG Unit 2.1, is shown below:

- Investment Rationale
- Policy and Strategic Alignment
- Objectives
- High Level Demand Assessment
- Exploring Potential Solutions
- Costs and Affordability
- Appraisal Plan
- Outline Governance Plan

2. Contents of the Project/Programme for Greenways and Active Modes

2.1 Investment Rationale

The investment rationale highlights the need for change; describes *why* the Sponsoring Agency is investing in a project or programme and what issues, opportunities, or benefits it aims to address and deliver. This is the first section of the POD, which means that there should be a close relationship between the issues described in the investment rationale, and later sections of the POD (such as objectives and exploring potential solutions).

While investment in active modes and greenways will address a wide range of general policy priorities and benefits - such as: health, climate, accessibility, tourism, economic development, physical activity, biodiversity enhancements, potentially connect ecological corridors, etc. – the investment rationale for greenways and active travel will vary from project-to-project or across programmes. In the POD, there can sometimes be a tendency to reference as many of the general benefits of active travel and greenways as possible, without explaining in detail why *this specific project or programme* is likely to achieve them and is a necessary investment.

The investment rationale should be realistic, focused, and closely linked to local circumstances, issues and data. This section should identify and describe problems/opportunities in the Appraisal Study Area and highlight how investment can realistically help to address them; delivering benefits for users, local communities, and wider society.

To aid in developing the Investment Rationale, the Table 2.2.1 provides examples of common issues Greenways / Active Travel interventions can address; and the type of prompts or supporting evidence that could be used to demonstrate this in this section of the POD. However, the following are examples, and the section should ultimately reflect the local circumstances and benefits of the proposed project or programme.

Table 2.2.1 Examples for Developing the Investment Rationale

Problem / Opportunity Statement	Examples of local supporting evidence and things to consider
How can investment in greenways / active travel improve safety for vulnerable road users?	Is the existing road network safe or attractive for active modes? This could consider collision data; or factors that increase the risk of collisions for vulnerable users, such as traffic speeds, volumes, lack of dedicated facilities, junctions, conflicts with side roads, driveways, etc.
How can investment in greenways / active travel increase tourism and boost the economies of rural areas?	- What are the economic conditions of the towns/communities in the Appraisal Study Area, and is this an area where additional investment would be justified from a policy perspective? (e.g., high rates of unemployment, vacancy, tourism, socio-economic disadvantage)? Could such an investment support the local economy and businesses? - Does the Appraisal Study Area currently attract tourists, or does it offer an attractive and interesting setting that is likely to attract tourists and provide access to attractions/activities?

Problem / Opportunity Statement	Examples of local supporting evidence and things to consider
	- Are there suitable supporting services for tourists within the Appraisal Study Area, such as accommodation, hospitality, rest stops etc., and areas where visitors are likely to spend their money? - Are there examples of other comparable successful projects in Ireland, or abroad, at attracting visitors and encouraging visitor spending? What lessons can be taken away, and how do these apply to the project in question?
How can investment in greenways / active travel improve local accessibility and encourage modal shift and decarbonisation?	- What is the current mode share/split in the Appraisal Study Area? Are there high levels of car dependency that the project could displace? Is rural isolation or access to services/amenities an issue in the area? - Is investment in the Appraisal Study Area likely to encourage people to shift to active modes? i.e. within the Appraisal Study Area, are there key destinations associated with day-to-day trips that could be connected by active travel, such as workplaces, schools, towns centres, or clubs and community destinations? What potential A-B journeys could be accommodated within the Appraisal Study Area? - Are there any other examples of similar investments that have successfully encouraged a shift from cars?
How can investment in greenways / active travel improve physical health and create opportunities for exercise and recreation?	- Do locals in the Appraisal Study Area currently have easy access to safe, high quality recreational facilities (e.g., footpaths, parks etc.)? Is the existing road network safe for exercise? Are there opportunities to link into accessible green spaces? - Is there evidence of low levels of cycling / active travel in different user groups? Is the proposed scheme likely to be attractive and accessible for users of all ages and abilities, and encourage greater levels of physical activity? - Are there other leisure or community facilities, such as sports clubs?
How can investment in greenways / active travel create integrated transport networks?	- Is the scheme identified in major strategy documents or transport plans? - How would it contribute to the development of local, regional or national cycle networks? - Is there potential to integrate with other transport hubs, rail / bus stops, parking facilities in the area, or encourage multi-modal journeys?
How can investment in greenways/ active travel support decarbonisation; and the protection/enhancement of our natural environment?	- Is there a potential to provide natural asset and biodiversity enhancement measures? - Is there potential to utilise existing infrastructure?

2.2 Policy and Strategic Alignment

The alignment of the intervention with government policy should be clearly set out in this section of the POD, including national, regional and local policy. As with the investment rationale, depending on the nature of the scheme, this could include planning/development, transport, climate, tourism or economic/rural development policy.

An initial list of common relevant policies for active modes and greenway investment is shown in Table 2.2.2, although this list is not exhaustive, and some policies may not be relevant to all projects. It should also be noted that transport policy is updated from time to time; therefore, project teams, in assessing alignment with government policy, will need to ensure they are familiar with the latest relevant policies.

When assessing the alignment of the proposal against each policy, this section should generally highlight relevant objectives from these documents, and briefly comment on how the project aims to contribute to the achievement of these policy objective in some way. This section should not form a literature review; but provide a direct summary of how the proposed schemes is likely to support specific policies and strategies.

When conducting a policy review for the Strategic Alignment section, it is important to use concise reporting and focus on the most relevant points to reduce the size of the report. For example, it would be acceptable to create a summary table listing the policy documents reviewed and outline the key aspects of each policy for the project.

Table 2.2.2 Active Modes and Greenway Policy – Relevant Examples

Level	Policy
International Policy	• United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development • EU Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy 2020 • European Green Deal • EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030
National Policy	• Project Ireland: National Planning Framework¹ • Project Ireland: National Development Plan 2021-2030 • Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways² • National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI)³ • National Sustainable Mobility Policy • Road Safety Strategy (latest) • Climate Action Plan 2021 • Healthy Ireland / National Physical Activity Plan • Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025 • Tourism Action Plan (latest) • Shared Island Initiative • National Cycle Network Plan • Connecting Ireland
Regional / local policy	• Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) • City / County Development Plans

¹ PODs should comment on the alignment/contribution to the National Strategic Outcomes (NSO).

² PODs for Greenway projects should comment on how the project aims to align with the '5 S criteria': Strategic, Scenic, Substantially Segregated, Sustainable, things to See and Do.

³ PODs should comment on the alignment with NIFTI's Investment Priorities, the Modal Hierarchy and the Intervention Hierarchy.

Level	Policy
	- Local/regional transport strategies (e.g., GDA Transport Strategy, Metropolitan Area Transport Strategies, local or regional cycle network plans or Greenway strategies, etc.) - Local / regional tourism policy (e.g., Visitor Experience Development Plans etc.)

2.3 High Level Demand Assessment

As noted in PAG Unit 13 - Appraisal of Active Modes, demand is something that project appraisers often find difficult to estimate for active modes. Indeed, the forecasting of walking and cycling demand can be challenging when there is an absence of a network in the base case. In addition, data on walking and cycling demand is often limited, especially in rural areas. Even when available; it can be difficult to accurately forecast how walking and cycling levels might change in the future, due to the wide range of factors that influence active travel demand.

Given this uncertainty, PAG Unit 13 notes that appraisal of active modes and greenway projects should ultimately be based on alternative demand ‘scenarios’ rather than forecasts, which explore the impacts of the scheme based on several alternative levels of walking/cycling uptake.

The POD should contain a high-level demand assessment, which will support the development of demand scenarios in later stages. The high-level demand analysis in the POD does not need to provide formal estimates of future demand at this stage, and the focus of this section is mainly to understand the existing levels of walking/cycling in the Appraisal Study Area (noting the existing infrastructure provision); the main catchments and trip generators in the Appraisal Study Area (i.e., population, jobs, schools etc.); as well as factors that might affect future demand levels. The objective of this section of the POD is to assess – at a high level – the types of users and trips that are realistically likely to use the infrastructure if built, and whether there are opportunities to increase walking and cycling levels.

The section should review and collect any available data, including from the local area and other similar projects.

When carrying out the high-level demand assessment, it is important to distinguish between different users and trip types. These users have different origins, motivations and behaviours when using active mode infrastructure and greenways, meaning that the factors that influence demand will vary. For example, a greenway’s ability to attract ‘utility’ users might depend on its proximity and access to day-to-day trip attractors, such as workplaces, schools, shops, residences.

While its ability to attract tourists might depend on its attractiveness and the wider tourism demand in the area/county. Table 2.2.3 summarises the main user types of active modes and greenway infrastructure; and gives examples of the data or factors that could be considered in the High Level Demand Analysis.

Table 2.2.3 Main Types of Active Mode Users

User / Trip Type	Description	Data / factors to consider in the prelim. demand analysis
Utility and Community	Local (and regional) people using active modes to <u>access specific day-to-day destinations</u> , such as: work, education, shopping, social activities, services etc.	- POWSCAR Data: existing levels/patterns of workplace and education commuting in the Appraisal Study Area - Patterns and mode share for different trip purposes from Household Travel Survey Data (e.g., NTA / CSO Travel Surveys) in similar areas - Identifying the location and population size of key trip attractors in the Appraisal Study Area / along the route, such as workplaces, schools, clubs and community facilities. This should also consider the distances people are likely to travel by active modes to reach destinations
Recreation	Local people using active modes for <u>regular exercise or recreation purposes</u>	- Size of local population within catchment / Appraisal Study Area - Data on local recreation from other Greenway / active mode surveys - Data from comparative existing recreational facilities in the Appraisal Study Area
Visiting / Tourism	People from outside the area (both international and domestic) using the <u>greenway for tourism or visiting purposes</u> . These users may visit as part of a day-trip or may involve an overnight visit	- County / regional tourism statistics - Active travel tourism research, statistics, and case studies (from Ireland or abroad) - Tourism and visitor data from other Greenway / active mode surveys - Presence of local destinations / trip attractors along the route; visitor surveys and statistics - Availability/capacity of accommodation and services

Further guidance on developing demand scenarios for active mode and greenway projects is provided in PAG Unit 13.0.

2.4 Objectives

The POD is required to establish high-level objectives for the project or programme, which describe the types of outcomes and results the project aims to deliver.

After being set initially in the POD, objectives will form the basis on which success or failure of the project are ultimately assessed, and are especially important for the option selection, appraisal and evaluation processes. While objectives will be refined at later stages, it is important to ensure that they capture the main outcomes and results the project aims to achieve at an early stage.

Objectives that are inconsistent with the issues set out in the Investment Rationale and Policy sections should not be presented. The objectives should identify clear outcomes the project aims to achieve; however, objectives should not be prescriptive about the types of infrastructure or solutions that will be delivered (i.e., the project objective should not be 'to deliver a road' or 'to deliver a greenway').

While there are different ways objectives could be developed, it is often useful to use a structure like the one shown below in order to develop objectives for a POD. Beginning with the:

- Issues, opportunities or policies driving the investment
- The 'objective', specifies the general outcome the project aims to achieve
- Sub-objectives could provide examples of the types of design and planning decisions that might be necessary to achieve this

Table 2.2.4 provides generic examples; however, objectives should reflect the circumstances of each project or programme. However, other frameworks such as Logic Path Models can also be used to help develop initial objectives for the proposed project or programme. Further guidance on developing a Logic Path Model is available in PAG Unit 2.3.

Table 2.2.4 Example Framework for Developing Project Objectives

Issue / Opportunity / Policy Driver ‘What issue, opportunity, or policy is driving the proposal?’ (Summarised from the Investment Rationale / Policy sections)	Objective ‘What outcome/results does the proposal aim to achieve?’	Sub-objectives ‘How could this objective be achieved/prioritised through design and planning?’
• High collision rate for cyclists in Appraisal Study Area • High speeds and traffic volumes on existing road network • Frequent conflicts with driveways • Policy: Road Safety Strategy; National Sustainable Mobility Policy; Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways, etc.	To improve safety and security for vulnerable road users and reduce the risk of collisions	• Separate pedestrians/cyclists from fast-moving, high-volume traffic • Minimise conflicts with side roads, driveways etc.
• High vacancy and unemployment in the town • Opportunities to attract visitors and visitor spending to rural areas • Concentration of local tourist attractions and amenities within the Appraisal Study Area • Policy: Rural Development Policy; Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways, etc.	To increase the economic impact of tourism and visitor spending to the local area	• Prioritise attractive and scenic routes • Maximise access to local towns and businesses • Improve accessibility to visitor local attractions and facilities
• Lack of access to urban, amenity and social areas • Opportunities to increase access, including to socially deprived areas • Policy: Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways; Healthy Ireland – A framework for improved health and wellbeing	To improve or provide access to jobs, education, and other social and economic opportunities	• Enhance access, or provision of access to urban centres via active modes • Enhance access, or provision of access to amenity and social facilities via active modes

This section should also comment on the extent to which objectives align with or contribute to the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI) Investment Priorities, which are:

- Mobility of People & Goods in Urban Areas
- Protection & Renewal
- Decarbonisation
- Enhanced Regional and Rural Connectivity

2.5 Exploring Potential Solutions

As the first major deliverable in the transport project lifecycle, the POD should give an initial consideration to potential solutions. Based on the rationale for investment and the objectives established previously, a range of potential solutions to address the objectives should be set out in the POD. There is no requirement to assess these solutions in the POD; this will be undertaken in Phase 1 (Concept and Feasibility) and Phase 2 (Option Selection).

The NIFTI Intervention Hierarchy should be used to consider potential solutions which would aid in achieving the project objectives. This is based on four different 'levels' of investment, with the degree of effort and cost generally increasing with each level. The table below provides examples of typical active mode solutions that could be considered for each level of the NIFTI Hierarchy.

Table 2.2.6 Examples of Active Mode Solutions within the NIFTI Intervention Hierarchy

NIFTI Hierarchy	Examples of Active Mode Solutions to Consider
Maintain	• Maintenance and renewal of existing infrastructure
Optimise	• Signage / wayfinding / branding measures on the existing network • Designation of quiet routes on the existing network (e.g., low speeds, traffic volumes, filtered permeability, etc.) • Urban demand management (e.g., user charging, parking supply, etc.) • Integration with other modes (e.g., integrated ticketing, active mode accessibility at stops/stations, bike spaces on alternative modes, etc.) • Minor accessibility and permeability improvements (e.g., opening new entrances, reducing barriers, etc.)
Improve	• Adding segregated cycling infrastructure to existing roads • Improvement/repurposing of historic infrastructure including the existing stock of structures such as viaducts, bridges and tunnels (e.g., along railways, waterways, bog railways) • Significant upgrades to existing active travel routes (e.g., widening, resurfacing, access) • Junction improvements for active modes • Improvements to existing public transport infrastructure
New	• Development of new greenway / active travel alignments • Major new bridges, underpasses or structures • New ancillary infrastructure such as trail heads, carparks etc.
Blended Approach	• Combined solutions or hierarchies (e.g., a route following a combination of a new green-field route and upgrades of existing routes, etc.).

The POD should not point towards a preferred solution at this stage, but rather demonstrate that a wide range of potential solutions will be considered in the Strategic Options in Phase 1. Potential solutions should not be limited to a specific transport mode at this stage, and the POD should consider whether the objectives can be met by integration of active travel proposals with other modes of transport.

2.6 Costs and Affordability

An indicative forecast cost range for the proposed project or programme is required, with more detailed guidance provided in PAG Unit 2.1.

Given cost uncertainty at the outset of a project, a broad estimate of potential forecast cost ranges should be provided, indicating whether the project budget is likely to be under or over €500 million. Benchmark or reference costs from other projects (e.g., such as greenway costs per km) can be used where available to estimate which forecast cost range the project is likely to fall into, although the uncertainty regarding the route or design at this stage should be emphasised.

The TAF requires an early assessment of affordability and intended sources of funding in the POD. Where the project or programme has specifically been identified as part of any capital investment programmes or budgets, this and the approved funding amount should be referenced in the POD. Any local funding should also be noted at this stage, if known. More commonly, if specific funding sources or amounts have not yet been identified, the section should instead give a high-level overview of the potential funding sources for active travel and greenway projects.

2.7 Appraisal Plan

The POD should include a project appraisal plan. The appraisal plan should draw on the guidance based in PAG Unit 2.1 and PAG Unit 13 - Appraisal of Active Modes and summarise relevant details regarding the intended approach for appraising the scheme.

2.8 Outline Governance Plan

An outline governance plan needs to be included as part of the POD.



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