

Request for Tender

Turas Colmcille Camino Committee



Slí Cholmcille – The Irish Camino

Development, Marketing & Business Plan

7th May 2021

Subject to Leader Funding

Background:

The purpose of the Turas Colmcille Camino Committee (TCCC) is to develop the Slí Cholmcille as a network of walking trails linked to the main Columban Heritage sites across Donegal & Derry. The core of these trails will be a main “Camino” style, continuous walk offering a 12-14 day experience. The TCCC was set up in 2019 from a group set up to look at celebrating the life of Colmcille. The 1500th anniversary of the birth of St Colmcille/Columba in 2021 has brought his legacy into focus. The TCCC now wishes to appoint a Consultancy Practice to lead out on a Development, Marketing & Business Plan for the Slí project. The overall aim of the Slí project is to run as an enterprise that will benefit all aspects of the local and regional communities in the North West of Ireland. Further details on the work to date of this project, especially the Slí Cholmcille Proof of Concept Walk in July 2020, are available on <https://youtu.be/tJ0mk6UkSFo>

Tenders are being sought in relation to the completion of a Development, Marketing & Business Plan for the Slí Cholmcille. Subject to funding, this work will commence in early July, with 1st Draft by Friday, 13th of August and final plan by end of September 2021.

Leader funding is being sought for this work through Donegal Local Development Company under its Rural Development Programme. The expected funding will be between €15,000 and €24,000.

While this document attempts to detail the work required, respondents are encouraged to suggest possible changes to its content.

Development, Marketing & Business Plan:

The overall aim of this Tender process will be to produce a comprehensive and integrated Development, Marketing & Business Plan that will have the buy-in of identified Key Stakeholders for the progression of the Sli Cholmcille.

The tasks associated with the production of this Development, Marketing & Business Plan include:

- **Review Progress;** Review the progress to date on the *Slí Cholmcille* (*Appendix 1 shows the current core Sli Cholmcille as per proposed Ambassadors Walk for 2021*) with a main focus on the core Camino from Gleann Cholm Cille, Donegal Town or Lough Derg and finishing in Derry or Shroove. This review should be supported by consultation with the key stakeholders: TCCC, Donegal County Council, Derry City and Strabane District Council and Fáilte Ireland.
- **Agree Objectives;** Agree clear objectives with the TCCC whilst consulting with the other key Stakeholders.
- **Timeline & Communication;** Set out a clear timeline of Tasks, Responsibilities, Deadlines, Communication/Decision Making and Key Performance Indicators for the completion of the Development, Marketing and Business Plan.
- **Key Developments;** Conduct a Risk Assessment/Health and Safety Audit/Quality Standard Review of the Core Walk to establish the key items that need to be addressed before the walk is promoted to the public. It is necessary to come to final judgement on the best route, bearing in mind visitor experience, route sustainability and environmental impact. This will dictate the Development & Capital Works that are required.
- **Compare & Innovate;** Research comparable Camino type ventures that are successfully operating in other countries/regions and highlight Best Practice Ideas and also new Innovations that can be implemented in the Slí to make this Pilgrims Path the best possible “next generation” trail.
- **Phasing;** An expected output of the Development Plan will be an outline of the Phases that the Sli can develop through with the associated costs and outcomes that can be forecast for each stage.
- **Phase 1;** The current TCCC proposal is that Phase 1 in 2022 will be a Camino that uses existing trails and greenways. The consultants will be expected to explore the extent to which the Sli can be a virtual “Camino” by sign-posting to existing trails/infrastructure and identifying options for where there are gaps. The final report will include a detailed proposal for this Phase.
- **Marketing Plan** A comprehensive, time-lined and costed Marketing Plan combining the most effective “traditional” and new Marketing techniques.
- **Product/Packages;** Included in the Marketing Plan will be the development of ‘Product/Packages’ that will be attractive to the market and identify the key target market segments in terms of geography, age, interests, media usage, preferences etc.

- **Champions & Partners;** Identify the community “champions” and business ‘partners’ needed along the route to enable the ‘packages’ to operate successfully. This will include all those who will provide places to stay, meal/food options, facilities – especially in remote areas - evening entertainment, local heritage expertise as well as tour guides and members of the Christian faiths who will volunteer for and/or profit from the pilgrims/tourists. This will include identifying holders of the “*Slí Cholmcille* Passport Stamps” and may also involve other activities that could be promoted as part of the Slí package. There will be a requirement for identification of these in each proposed Overnight Stop and Rest/Heritage Day along the route.
- **Branding;** There is need for an agreed Branding package for the Slí. This will develop the Identity of the Slí that will include a Trading Name, Logo etc that will be used on all Marketing Materials. Consideration will need to be given to the suitability of key messages and straplines in Gaeilge and Gaidhlic.
- **Capital Expenditure;** There is a need to assess the Capital Expenditure required to bring the existing core Trail up to International Standards approved by Fáilte Ireland, Donegal County Council, National Trails Office/Government Authorities and other relevant stakeholders. While this study will concentrate on ROI bodies it is noted that the Core Trail includes Derry City and NI regulations will also need to be considered. The Slí will require development over different phases. (Phase 1 will stick closely to the ‘Ambassadors Trail’. Subsequent phases will need to see development, for example on the East Coast of Inishowen or from Lough Derg, etc.) Therefore the Plan must include outline costs for each phase of the development. The Plan should recognise the need to align as closely as possible with the existing and future plans for Greenway development in the Council areas.
- **Community Benefits;** The Consultants will be responsible for estimating the level of added value that the Slí will bring to local communities in terms of economic growth, health and well-being, developing civic ownership and identifying opportunities to build new partnerships. This will include identifying community ‘ambassadors’ in each area as potential delivery partners.
- **Enterprise Model & Structure;** There is a need to identify and recommend a suitable Operating Structure/Model for the Project. This could potentially be a Community Led, Income Generating Project that is operating to develop projects and advance causes inspired by the life of Colmcille.
- **Initial & Ongoing Costs & Options;** It is necessary to assess the cost of the Resources required to operate the Slí business model over the next 5 years and beyond. Expected outputs will include a range of potential solutions as to how these resources can be put in place.
- **Income & Expenditure;** It is necessary to complete Income and Expenditure Projections for 3-5 years for the project.
- **Funding “Cocktail” Agreement;** It is necessary to identify the different sources for the Development, Ongoing and Capital costs of the Slí. There is a need to build agreement in principle with the Key Stakeholders and other potential funders for the “mix” of funding and resource supports required going forward.
- **Basis for Major Applications;** It is necessary to complete the Development, Marketing and Business Plans for the Slí for the period September 2021 to December 2026 to the degree

required by key stakeholders and other potential funders to whom applications can be made, for the major funding required for the delivery of the Slí.

The above list is by no means exhaustive and the TCCC are open to ideas and suggestions from stakeholders & tendering organisations. The successful applicant will get confidential access to more detailed Maps that TCCC have developed and other background information.

The successful organisation will be required to show details of the following in their submission:

1. Examples of other Development, Marketing & Business Plans and Tourism related projects that they have completed successfully. Referees for 2 projects must be listed.
2. Details of all staff/experts to be used on the Development Plan and their role, experience and qualifications.
3. Access to Tax Clearance Certification and evidence of Insurance (Professional Indemnity and Public Liability).
4. Costs for each item showing all VAT where appropriate as a separate item. Total costs payable and any phased payments required should be detailed.
5. Name and contact details for the person who will be the main contact for the project.
6. Timeline of activities that would meet the deadlines above.
7. Evidence of capacity to fulfil these activities within the deadlines.
8. Acceptance of any terms and conditions as specified by Donegal Local Development Company under the Rural Development Programme.
9. Methodology proposed to produce a Development, Marketing & Business Plan at the end of the project showing Capital Expenditure, Works Required, Standards, Approvals, Legislation, Marketing Strategy, Resource & Funding Sources, Operating Model as well as Financial Projections for 2021-2026.
10. Suggestions of other activities or ideas that may be relevant but not listed above.

Further enquiries to: brian@turascolmcille.org or 086 812 3107

Closing date for receipt of tenders; *Monday 24th May 2021 5pm*

Appendix 1 – Outline Map of Sli Cholmcille Ambassadors Walk Proposal for 2021



