

# **STRATEGIC**DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2014 - 2017



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# Introduction

### Karl Boyle, CEO Mountaineering Ireland

The contribution of members, volunteers and staff in devising this plan sets our bearing for the next four years. While there are significant challenges to be addressed, there is equally a huge amount of opportunity and enjoyment ahead for Mountaineering Ireland's membership.

Our mission, to represent and support the walkers and climbers of Ireland and to be a voice for the sustainable use of Ireland's mountains and all the places we use, articulates the primary reason for Mountaineering Ireland. It also focuses us on our collective responsibility to sustain this effort. Over the coming years Mountaineering Ireland will work to address threats to Ireland's mountain landscape, to ensure certainty of access and to protect and encourage responsible and sustainable use of the mountain environment; all critical to the objectives of this plan. In order to realise these, we need to support and encourage the continuous development of skills of every age group participating in our sport.

Fundamental to our sport are navigation, judgement and decision making. The freedom manifested by these skills gives us all the opportunity of adventure, whatever its size or place. Supporting the development of leaders, coaches, instructors and all volunteers in our sport is pivotal in attracting and progressing people on our sport's pathway. Mountaineering Ireland will continue to develop strong relationships throughout the island of Ireland to achieve our objectives, to benefit our members and to realise our vision.



We need to support and encourage the continuous development of skills of every age group participating in our sport It is vital that we share our values with new enthusiasts and always encourage and support the development of personal skills and, critically, the acceptance of risk and personal responsibility



### Ross Millar, Chairperson Mountaineering Ireland

This plan, developed through the input of many members and clubs, has set the direction of travel for Mountaineering Ireland for the next four years. Its delivery will require engagement of equal proportion from all members. The primary focus of Mountaineering Ireland will always be to its membership and the mountain environment. It is critical that Mountaineering Ireland continues to be an effective and respected voice for our membership on the many issues we face. Similarly it is vital that we share our values with new enthusiasts and always encourage and support the development of personal skills and, critically, the acceptance of risk and personal responsibility.

The Irish Sports Council and Sport Northern Ireland are strong supporters of Mountaineering Ireland and the impact of these contributions is significant. With such funding so too comes responsibility, especially in the areas of governance and finance. The Board of Mountaineering Ireland continues to ensure that our performance, procedures and structure are fit for purpose. The direct investment by both bodies allows Mountaineering Ireland to have an effective staff team who support and represent members through programmes, services and advocacy. Furthermore, there is the public service that Mountaineering Ireland provides be it in terms of direct and indirect support to youth organisations, the education sector, the tourism sector and other initiatives and projects.

In order to see this plan and its objectives fulfilled Mountaineering Ireland needs to retain a committed, professional and motivated staff team and I want to, on behalf of all members, give them our absolute encouragement. I urge us all to play our part in Mountaineering Ireland's actions and ambitions over the coming years.



# Foreword

### John Treacy, CEO Irish Sports Council

Over the past twelve months Mountaineering Ireland has conducted a process to prepare this Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2014 – 2017. The plan aligns with the Irish Sports Council's strategic priority of pursuing lifelong participation in sport.

Sustaining people's participation in sport is critical not just in terms of improving physical fitness but also in improving people's quality of life and mental well-being; therefore I am delighted to see that Mountaineering Ireland has identified a number of actions to pursue lifelong participation in sport.

Finally, I would like to congratulate all those who were involved in completing this Strategic Development Plan and also the membership of Mountaineering Ireland for embracing an inclusive process to realise this strategy.



Sustaining people's participation in sport is critical not just in terms of improving physical fitness but also in improving people's quality of life and mental well-being

# This Strategic Development Plan reflects a genuine commitment to planning for growth and its focus will help ensure the delivery of targets set in the Strategy for Sport, to which Mountaineering Ireland is making a real contribution

### Antoinette McKeown, CEO Sport Northern Ireland

As a region, Northern Ireland is rich in natural assets that create unique opportunities for accessing the outdoors. Mountaineering Ireland plays a pivotal role in harnessing those opportunities by providing sustainable activities and developing skills in adventure sports.

Sport NI has enjoyed a very positive and long standing relationship with Mountaineering Ireland. We have benefited from the long history of participation and excellence in mountaineering in this region as a result.

We are particularly proud to fund and support the development of Mountaineering Ireland's youth programmes and squads, providing skills and leadership to sustain the excellence already there.

This Strategic Development Plan reflects a genuine commitment to planning for growth and its focus will help ensure the delivery of targets set in the Strategy for Sport, to which Mountaineering Ireland is making a real contribution. It sets out a clear direction for the future delivery of Mountaineering Ireland's vision for adventure sports in NI. It also gives a great opportunity to continue our work together, sharing resources at Sport NI's Tollymore National Outdoor Centre to build skills and leadership in this area.

On behalf of Sport NI, I have pleasure in supporting the work of Mountaineering Ireland and wish every success with delivering this Strategic Development Plan and reaping the rewards it will bring.



# Our Mission

Mountaineering Ireland exists to represent and support the walkers and climbers of Ireland and to be a voice for the sustainable use of Ireland's mountains and hills and all the places (coastline, crags, forests) we use.



# Our Vision

# For all walkers and climbers to:

- Enjoy secure and responsible access to those places we use in Ireland;
- Have the opportunity to improve their skills, to explore, to be adventurous, and to maximise their potential within our sport.

# Our Values

### Responsibility

- > To take personal responsibility for our actions.
- To foster the development of personal skills within clubs, groups and individuals.

### Respect

• To respect the wonderful, but fragile, environment that we enjoy and to be a strong voice for its protection.

## Partnership

To recognise that relationships and trust are vital within our activities and in helping realise to our vision.

### **Recreation and well-being**

To recognise and promote the contribution our sport makes to the physical and mental health of participants.



# Strategic Objectives

Based on our Mission, Values and Vision, we have identified seven Strategic Objectives which form the basis of this Plan:

- A To represent the interests of walkers and climbers
- A To be a voice for Ireland's mountains; to protect and encourage responsible and sustainable use of the mountain environment
- A To improve and secure ongoing access to those places we use in Ireland
- To maintain high standards in mountain training and support skills development
- To support and promote the participation of all age groups, especially youth, in every aspect of mountaineering
- To provide a talent development pathway to high performance
- To promote a spirit of adventure and self-reliance

Each of these Objectives has been assigned key actions, which in turn have been assigned to those deemed most relevant to take responsibility for making them happen. A timeline and associated performance indicators have also been included.



# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ONE

To represent the interests of walkers and climbers

	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
. 1.1	Lobby for the sustainable use of Ireland's mountains and provide information in that regard.	CEO / Hillwalking, Access & Conservation Officer	2014-2017	'Success' stories Submissions made in response to relevant consultation opportunities
1.2	Provide a range of forums (both online and face to face) to support consultation and feedback opportunities for members	CEO / Membership Development Officer	2014-2017	Online forum Biannual member forums - If Membership Development Officer appointed consider four per annum.
1.3	Maintain the high quality of Irish Mountain Log and its content	Editor	Quarterly	Growing readership Increased newsagent sales Number of articles submitted particularly those by clubs
1.4	Continue to develop www.mountaineering.ie, create dedicated websites for specific key initiatives and, where beneficial, partner with other sites.	Programme Co-ordinators	2014-2017	Continuously seek opportunities to improve our online material
1.5	Publish a suite of 'good practice' guides for hillwalking and climbing (leaflet/PDF and video formats)	Respective staff	Annual Review updates	Copies produced and 'page hits' / downloads tabulated Range of visual media produced Demand from Outdoor Education Centres, outdoor shops etc
1.6	Review and ensure appropriate insurance for members and clubs	CEO	Annually	All clubs benefiting from insurance schemes Maintain prompt support from brokers for staff / members
1.7	Develop a club handbook to support good club governance and raise awareness of Mountaineering Ireland policies Deliver governance and club development workshops	CEO / all staff	2014 2014-2017	Club Handbook published Demand for handbook Annual workshop delivered
1.8	Publish regional/area climbing guidebooks and selected Irish hillwalking guides. Assess the potential of digital / 'app' guides. Provide independent guidebook editors with best practice advice and support	CEO / Editors	2014-2017	Donegal app Fair Head guidebook Irish Peaks guidebook South West app/guidebook Irish Peaks app Connemara app/guidebook

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

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To be a voice for Ireland's mountains, to protect and encourage responsible and sustainable use of the mountain environment

	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
2.1	<ul> <li>Building on the Helping the Hills initiative, through an appropriate body:</li> <li>Develop and embed Mountaineering Ireland's upland path principles</li> <li>Support the sharing of best practices</li> <li>Invest in volunteer efforts</li> <li>Maximise the potential of LIFE funding to support the body.</li> </ul>	Hillwalking, Access & Conservation Officer	2014-2017	The establishment of a 'Helping the Hills' alliance as the appropriate body Principles built into all public tender processes Principles built into agri-environment policies, schemes and measures Support an annual Helping the Hills alliance seminar / study visit Upland Path Principles reviewed
2.2	Working with relevant stakeholders, support the development of recreation management frameworks for the main mountain areas	CEO / Hillwalking, Access & Conservation Officer	2014-2017	Contribution to a well-functioning Comhairle na Tuaithe Mountaineering Ireland representatives on all relevant mountain forums or management structures Aim to have the recreation work of mountain forums focused primarily on management rather than development
2.3	Promote, train and support Club Environmental Officers	Hillwalking, Access & Conservation Officer	2014-2017	Club Environmental Officers in all clubs Increased participation in Club Environmental Officer workshops Information published on the mountain environment
2.4	Build political understanding of the true value and fragility of the mountain environment through Oireachtas / Assembly events and lobbying	CEO / Hillwalking, Access & Conservation Officer	2014-2017	Oireachtas events Assembly events Meetings with Ministers and interested politicians
2.5	Recruit a part time Development Assistant (Hillwalking, Access & Conservation)	CEO	2014	Development Assistant appointed
2.6	Review, update and promote Mountaineering Ireland's suite of environmental policies	Development Assistant (Hillwalking, Access & Conservation)	2014-2017	Up-to-date position for Mountaineering Ireland on all relevant policy areas Submissions made regarding planning applications or other developments that could have a negative impact on the mountain environment Increased media coverage of mountain related issues
2.7	Encourage responsible and sustainable use of the mountain environment	Hillwalking, Access & Conservation Officer / Training Officer	2014-2017	Good practice information updated and distributed Clubs promoting responsible use Our policies promoted and their application by others facilitated Leave No Trace ethos infused in everything Mountaineering Ireland does Course providers instilling good practice when delivering leadership / skills courses State tourism bodies promoting responsible use in all marketing Appropriate research undertaken to inform policy debates and decision making

# (3) STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE THREE

To improve and secure ongoing access to those places we use in Ireland

	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
, 3.1	Secure a right of Public Access to Publicly Owned Lands for responsible recreation	CEO / Hillwalking, Access & Conservation Officer	2014-2017	Access by right to publicly owned lands in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland
3.2	Secure an indemnity arrangement for private landowners against injury claims by recreational users	CEO / Hillwalking, Access & Conservation Officer	2017	Indemnity in place Landowners less concerned about liability
3.3	Secure access to lands through agreement, leasing (in exceptional cases) or through supporting appropriate State access schemes	CEO / Hillwalking, Access & Conservation Officer	2014 onwards	Access achieved to currently 'closed' mountain land and crags Information on access issues available to members Continued good relations with landowners and their representative bodies Greater access to lands at lower levels and the coast Comhairle na Tuaithe's pilot Mountain Access Project completed and lessons captured
,3.4	Work to ensure agricultural policy has positive impacts on recreational access and Ireland's mountain environment	CEO / Hillwalking, Access & Conservation Officer	2014-2017	Submissions made regarding policy Good working relations with relevant stakeholders

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE FOUR

To maintain high standards in mountain training and support skills development

	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
, 4.1	Develop a long term participation development model for hillwalking	Training Officer / Hillwalking, Access & Conservation Officer	2015	A holistic approach to the long term development of skills and training
4.2	Develop a long term participation development model for climbing	Training Officer	2015	A holistic approach to the long term development of skills and training
4.3	Establish a single all-island mountain training board as a sub-committee of Mountaineering Ireland	CEO / Training Officer	2014	Establishment by 2014 Increase in awards / award scheme candidates Improved opportunities for Continuing Professional Development
4.4	Assess and introduce coaching awards Climbing (Level 1 and Level 2) – Level 1 will be a basic coaching Level while Level 2 will focus more on developing specific skills Hillwalking (Level 1 and Level 2) - Level 1 will be a basic coaching level while Level 2 will focus more on developing specific skills	Training Officer / Talent Development Officer / Youth Development Officer / Hillwalking, Access & Conservation Officer	Level 1 by 2014 Level 2 by 2016	Awards in place by end 2014 and end 2016 respectively. Increasing demand for coaching awards Promoting mentoring within clubs
4.5	Introduce a Lowland Leader Award	Training Officer	2014	Award in place by 2014 Wide promotion of the award by holders
4.6	Plan for the development and introduction of a Rock Climbing Skills training scheme	Training Officer	2016	Rock Climbing Skills 1 (A Competent Second) scheme in place by 2014 Rock Climbing Skills 2 (A Competent Lead) scheme in place by 2015
4.7	Provide an annual suite of skills workshops for clubs	Training Officer / Talent Development Officer / Youth Officer	Annually	Continuing demand and wider variety of workshops Progression from workshops to formal training Workshops delivered on a regional basis
4.8	International Mountain Training Conference to upskill course providers, award holders and profile Mountaineering Ireland	Training Officer	2014	Conference delivered by 2014

To support and promote the participation of all age groups, especially youth, in every aspect of mountaineering

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	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
5.1	Build awareness, motivate and sustain responsible participation by people at all stages of life	Membership Development Officer	From appointment - 2017	Increase in membership Increased participation in skills courses
5.2	Conduct research: • On how to secure long-term participation in walking and climbing by all ages • To show the economic impact of walking and climbing.	Membership Development Officer	2015-2017	Outcomes and lessons learned applied across the range of our activities
5.3	Reap the potential of co-operation through partnerships with relevant organisations and schools	Youth Development Officer / Membership Development Officer	2014-2017	MOUs with all relevant bodies Pathway for primary and secondary school students developed and promoted
5.4	Support the development of youth mountaineering clubs and invest in youth volunteers	Youth Development Officer	2014-2017	Increase in the number of youth members and the number of clubs with youth members Increase in participation of third level students in skills training/workshops
5.5	Promote National Indoor Climbing Achievement Scheme awards	Youth Development Officer	Annually	Increased number of climbing centres / walls delivering the awards Increased participation in youth climbing series
5.6	Investigate and, if feasible, develop the potential of mountaineering 'hubs' in association with Outdoor Education Centres	Membership/ Youth Development Officer	2017	If feasible, a number of hubs developed providing an alternative starting point in our sport
5.7	Provide opportunities for all age groups to experience every type of mountaineering and progress their skills	Membership Development Officer / Youth Development Officer / Training Officer	2014-2017	An annual summer Alpine meet An annual winter meet A programme of summer camps A biennial ski mountaineering meet Spring and autumn gatherings An annual Fair Head meet
5.8	Maximise the potential of all indoor climbing facilities through developing networks of coaches and programmes	Training Officer / Talent Development Officer / Youth Development Officer	2014-2017	Improved access to publicly funded climbing walls Increase in the number of coaches Continuing demand for Climbing Wall Award Increasing demand for Coaching Awards
5.9	Work with appropriate authorities / agencies to support greater participation of para-athletes in our sport	Membership Development Officer	When appointed	Increase in the number of para-athletes participating in our sport Increase in the number of para-athletes participating in training schemes / awards
, 5.10	Deliver a mountaineering programme for women, building on the Women with Altitude and Girls Outside initiatives.	Membership Development Officer / Youth Development Officer	2014-2017	Increase in women participating in training schemes and awards Increase in teenage girls and young women participating in our sport

# 6 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE SIX

To provide a talent development pathway to high performance

	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
6.1	Sustainable competition structure maintained to include national championships in lead climbing and bouldering, an appropriate youth climbing series and competitions focused on participation	Talent Development Officer	2014-2017	Increased numbers participating in competitions Potential of sponsorship realised
6.2	Develop and implement a Talent System to identify and support talented young climbers	Talent Development Officer	2014-2017	Information on squads and coaching available to talented climbers Increased support for talented climbers Establish university scholarship opportunities for talented climbers
6.3	Deliver Talent Development Workshops to provide intensive or specialised training opportunities and support services for participants and coaches, including diet, psychology and prevention of injury.	Talent Development Officer	2014-2017	Four workshops delivered annually
6.4	Consider national representation structures for youth and senior high performing competitors	Talent Development Officer	2014 2015 2017	Irish Youth Team established Options paper on an Irish Senior Team Dependent on above, Irish Senior Team established
6.5	Promote drug-free sport and develop a targeted anti- doping education programme for members of the Talent Development Programme	Anti-Doping Officer / Talent Development Officer	2014-2017	Drug-free sport promoted Anti-doping policy reviewed Anti-doping educational programme developed for the Talent Development Programme
6.6	Support the Olympic Movement of the International Federation of Sport Climbing	CEO / Talent Development Officer	2014-2017	Sport Councils and Olympic Council of Ireland's supportive of the inclusion of climbing in the Olympic Games

To promote a spirit of adventure and self-reliance

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	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
7.1	Promote personal responsibility and self-reliance as core values that members should aspire to	All staff	2014-2017	These values reflected in all publications and events Increased participation in skills courses Enhanced support for clubs to support members' development
7.2	Raise awareness of opportunities for all ages, especially young people, to be introduced to exploration	Training Officer / Youth Development Officer / Membership Development Officer	Annually 2015	Members encouraged to explore new routes and regions Assessment of the potential for a Mountaineering Ireland youth expedition
7.3	Promote opportunities for the exploration of remote areas	Training Officer / Membership Development Officer	2014-2017	Increase in number of all types of expeditions

# ENABLING THE STRATEGY



# Governance

Governance refers to how an organisation is run, directed and controlled. The established governance codes are almost identical in both jurisdictions. In a nutshell, good governance means an organisation will design and put in place policies and procedures that will make sure the organisation runs effectively and lawfully. All community, voluntary and charitable organisations have a responsibility to provide and follow good practice when it comes to how their organisations are run. It is the responsibility of the Board of such bodies to make sure this happens and Board members are accountable for the actions of their organisation. Poor governance is a threat to any organisation.

The Board of Mountaineering Ireland has already established policies and procedures which satisfy these requirements. Ongoing monitoring of policies and procedures and associated regular training of Board members is required. This will be especially important for new members.



	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
	Review Memorandum and Articles of Association	Board / CEO	2017
	Seek members with necessary skill-sets for Board and sub-committees	Board / CEO / sub-committee Chairs	Biennial
	Review and renew Governance Policy	Board / CEO	2015
Contraction of the	Review Children's Policy	Board / CEO	Annually

# RESOURCES



# Volunteers

From the foundation of the Federation of Mountaineering Clubs in Ireland (FMCI) in 1971, members have shaped the direction of our representative organisation. In addition to a strong professional staff team, volunteers continue to play key roles through Mountaineering Ireland's Board and sub-committees, and in the roles that members continue to volunteer for. These roles are many and varied: Editor of the Irish Mountain Log, representatives to organisations and forums, guidebook editors and contributors, Anti-doping Officer, Safeguarding Officer, Spring and Autumn Gathering organisers, etc. This contribution, and the contribution of the volunteers within our clubs, is of great importance, delivering enormously for all of us. This must be maintained, supported and recognised appropriately.



Mountaineering Ireland has a small but very dedicated staff team. The employment of the staff team has been sustained by members' affiliation fees and targeted investments of the Sports Councils. Ongoing investment by both Sports Councils will only be successful if Mountaineering Ireland maintains appropriate financial and programme management, and good governance.

Mountaineering Ireland's staff members have defined roles and responsibilities, with one core outlook, that they are employed to represent and support the membership.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
Recruit a Membership Development Officer	CEO	2014
Retain Youth Development Officer in Northern Ireland	CEO	2014 – 2018 (Sport NI Active Clubs Programme)
Recruit a Development Assistant (Hillwalking, Access & Conservation)	CEO	2014
Recruit Youth Development Officer for Republic of Ireland	Board / CEO	Requires support (from Irish Sports Council)
Review requirements for a Communications & Marketing Officer (incorporating fundraising and sponsorship management)	Board	2017





# Financial Resources

Mountaineering Ireland has managed its finances cautiously, increasing overall revenue, realising modest annual surpluses, building reserves to a responsible level and ensuring value for money throughout all programmes.

Approximately 41% of Mountaineering Ireland's revenue comes from membership affiliations, 37% from Sports Council investment and the balance of 22% from programme activities. The Irish Sports Council's support has decreased by approximately 5% per annum over the past four years. Sport Northern Ireland's commitment is based on four-year programme cycles of which Mountaineering Ireland is in year one of four in the Performance Focus programme, and in 2014 will be applying for funding under the Active Clubs programme commencing in September 2014.





# Financial Management and Capital Projects

## MOUNTAINEERING IRELAND BUDGET 2013-2017

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Income	€	€	€	€	€
Irish Sports Council Core Grant	118,940	186,000	180,420	198,462	218,308
Irish Sports Council Women in Sport Grant	9,500	12,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Irish Sports Council Get Ireland Walking Grant	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000
Sport Northern Ireland	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000
Membership Fees	320,000	336,000	352,800	370,440	388,962
Sponsorship	5,000	10,000	12,000	15,000	20,000
Training	35,000	38,500	42,350	46,585	48,914
Youth	24,000	26,400	29,040	31,944	32,743
Talent	13,000	15,600	18,720	20,592	21,622
Events	28,000	30,800	33,880	37,268	37,268
Miscellaneous Income	53,000	55,650	58,433	61,354	64,422
Total Income	811,500	845,950	872,643	926,645	977,238
Expenditure					
Employment Costs	325,000	345,000	370,000	400,000	400,000
Member Services	210,000	220,000	220,000	230,000	240,000
Programme Costs	218,000	225,000	225,000	240,000	280,000
Cost of MI Offices	45,000	45,000	45,000	45,000	45,000
Financial and Professional Costs	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Total Expenditure	808,000	845,000	870,000	925,000	975,000

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
Maintain appropriate financial policies and procedures to ensure ongoing prudent management and, unless strategically planned, never run a deficit.	CEO / Treasurer	2014-2017
Maintain appropriate reserves to sustain the organisation through any shocks	CEO / Treasurer	2014-2017
Develop Mountaineering Ireland's sponsorship offering and realise sponsorship across all programmes	Dependent on staff recruitment	2017
Support capital projects that will provide a benefit to our members and our sport	CEO	2017
Maintain Hot Rock Climbing Wall and the service agreement with Tollymore National Outdoor Centre	Directors MCI Climbing Walls Ltd.	2014-2017

# **Communications & Marketing**

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
Internal membership communications <ul> <li>Irish Mountain Log</li> <li>Newsletters &amp; club communications</li> <li>Online members' services</li> <li>Social media</li> </ul>	Current staff & volunteers	2014-2017
<ul> <li>External communications</li> <li>Continue to develop Mountaineering Ireland's web presence and online services for the general public</li> <li>Maintain positive relationships with national media contacts</li> <li>Develop better relationships with local media</li> </ul>	Current staff	2014-2017
<ul> <li>Membership Marketing Plan</li> <li>Grow Mountaineering Ireland's membership, both club and individual, through the promotion of positive communications and advancing the values and vision of Mountaineering Ireland</li> </ul>	Membership Development Officer	2014 - 2017





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