

# The Valleys Regional Park / WECAN Project: Blue Green Gym Briefing Note 01

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The Valleys Regional Park (VRP) is an exciting and dynamic initiative to drive and promote activities related to the environment, tourism and heritage across the south Wales valleys. Over forty partners are involved to deliver these activities in a more effective, collaborative approach, both cross-sector and cross-boundary, towards a regional vision. This vision is to enhance and promote the Valleys' outstanding environmental and cultural assets thereby helping to regenerate the area and change the reality and perceptions of the Valleys as a highly-desirable place to live, work and visit.
- 1.2 Groundwork Wales and the Welsh Government, on behalf of Valleys Regional Park, working with regions in France and Belgium, have secured European funding to develop links between business and the natural environment through a project called WECAN (Working together for Economically Prosperous Communities through Assets of Natural Heritage). WECAN is a component of the wider VRP initiative. Funding is available within the WECAN Project to develop and test a memorable outdoor experience, called the 'Blue Green Gym' concept, to encourage social and economic regeneration.
- 1.3 A pilot to test the concept will run from December 2011 to June 2012, delivered by a combined consortium comprising: BTCV Cymru (lead partner), Groundwork, Keep Wales Tidy, Landsker Business Consultancy and tyf Group.

## 2. Blue Green Gym

- 2.1 The 'Blue Green Gym' (BGG) concept is focused on creating a memorable outdoor experience, within the natural environment of the south Wales valleys, in the area bounded by the VRP (see [www.thevalleys.org.uk](http://www.thevalleys.org.uk)).
- 2.2 The vision for BGG is two-fold. Firstly, that BGG becomes the product / investment of choice for those organisations looking to deliver on their corporate social responsibility and gain access to high quality personal development training. Secondly, that BGG is a service that can be tailored to disadvantaged community sectors to provide a range of benefits including: health and well-being, environmental awareness and economic opportunities.
- 2.3 BGG aims to:
- Create opportunities for business to utilise opportunities and undertake activities within the natural environment to support their **business aims and increase their knowledge and appreciation of the outdoors.**
  - Provide opportunities for communities and individuals to have memorable outdoor experiences that will **stimulate behavioural change and lead to an overall improvement in quality of life.**
  - Work with, support, and enable the outdoor provider sector in the region to deliver positive memorable outdoor experiences that complement existing provision and utilises existing providers skills, experience and facilities i.e. **BGG will involve as many existing providers as is practicable, is not a competitor product and will only be piloted if market research demonstrates a clear need.**



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- 2.4 BGG is an opportunity to 'Reconnect people & business back with their natural environment'. Key to this is the creation and evaluation of two products: one aimed at the corporate sector and the other targeted at communities.
- 2.5 BGG could be constituted as a social enterprise business that offers first class memorable outdoor experiences to both sectors. The aspiration is that profit from this enterprise, especially the corporate product, will fund the community product and potentially any similar community focused projects in the VRP.
- 2.6 Activities will represent the best of the best the area has to offer in terms of the natural, social and economic resources. The emphasis on high quality experiences is paramount for both corporate clients and community projects. All projects and activities will be designed and delivered with the principles of sustainable development at their core, ensuring positive outcomes for the people, places, and the wider environment of the Valleys.

### 3. BGG Pilot Next Steps

- 3.1 The consortium will approach as many existing outdoor activity providers in the region as is practicable. This will be complemented by market research focused on both the corporate and community sectors.
- 3.2 The key tasks, from December 2011 to June 2012, are as follows:
- Provide evidence to support whether there is a market for the products.
  - Involve existing outdoor activity providers to design, test and refine two products (i.e. corporate and community-based).
  - Finalise and package two products that are fit to taking to the marketplace including: branding, pricing, materials for service delivery, venues and providers.
  - Produce a business plan including a 3 year cash flow, resource and operational model, marketing plan and two immediate quantified business leads as a minimum.
  - A business model that addresses all stakeholder benefits (e.g. including how the providers will be paid and any additional resources they can provide).
- 3.3 An interim & final report will be circulated to stakeholders who participate in the pilot.

### 4. Contact Details

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- 4.4 BGG Steering Group: Andrew Osborne (WG), David Llewellyn (VRP Co-ordinator), Phil Burkhard (WECAN), Luke Maggs (CCW) and Gary Evans (Chair, SWOAPG)

