

Investment / Sponsorship Opportunity Title	Cognition Mountain Bike Trails	Number	25
Originator's name	Lisa Jenkins	Validated	23 April 2013
Originator's organisation	Neath Port Talbot	Date	23 April 2013
Email Id	l.jenkins4@npt.gov.uk	Tel. No.	01639 686 044

1. WHAT IS THE OPPORTUNITY (e.g. wildlife, plant life, site, attraction, facility or role etc. in the Valleys Regional Park)? Please also provide a jpeg quality photo if applicable / possible.

Mountain biking has been a key tourism product in the Valleys for over 10 years and attracts thousands of visitors to the area year after year; bring vital benefits to the local economy. Trail centres were developed in Afan Forest Park, Neath Port Talbot and Cwmcarn, Caerphilly and have provided visitors with world class mountain bike trails and all the facilities to go with them.

Following the success of the initial phase of investment Cognition mtb trails South Wales was established in January 2010 to take South Wales to the next level in the development of mountain biking.

Cognition is a strategic project that is investing in mountain biking on a regional basis. The project is a partnership project between Neath Port Talbot CBC, Merthyr Tydfil CBC, Caerphilly CBC, Natural Resources Wales and BikePark Wales and is currently funded through Convergence ERDF funding with match funding coming from the Welsh Government Strategic Regeneration Area fund. There are also a number of other organisations involved within the wider partnership including, Capital Region Tourism, South West Wales Tourism Partnership, to name a few.

The project aims to create the most accessible mountain bike trail network in the UK in South Wales by creating new trails in Afan Forest Park and Cwmcarn, creating a mountain bike specific events trail in Margam Park and also building a Commercial Bike Park in Gethin Woods, Merthyr Tydfil. As well as a number of capital works taking place there is an integrated marketing strategy that promotes all the trails centres as one destination for mountain biking in South Wales.

All capital works have to be complete by December 2013 and the current funding stream will come to an end at this time. The partnership are very much aware of the importance of sustainability of the mountain bike trails, the importance of continued maintenance and making further improvements in the future to ensure that the high quality of these trails is sustained.

To ensure that there is future investment in the trails; Cognition Ltd has been set up as a company limited by guarantee to investigate possible revenue sources for future investment in the trails.

Cognition Ltd will have six primary objectives:

- a) Creating new sources of revenue to sustain the mountain bike trails of South Wales (in current Cognition area)
- b) Creating a wider community of individuals, businesses and organisations who have a sense of ownership of the future management of the trails
- c) To widen the socio- economic benefit of the mountain bike trails in the local communities by using them to create learning and participation opportunities
- d) To widen the environmental benefits of mountain bike trails by contributing to conservation in the forest parks close to mountain bike trails



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Investment / Sponsorship Opportunity Title	Cognition Mountain Bike Trails	Number	25
Originator's name	Lisa Jenkins	Validated	23 April 2013
Originator's organisation	Neath Port Talbot	Date	23 April 2013
Email Id	l.jenkins4@npt.gov.uk	Tel. No.	01639 686 044

- e) If sufficient income is generated to sustain the mountain bike trails in the future, to use any surplus income generated to invest in wider tourism development and community regeneration activities that complement the mountain bike product.
- f) To undertake wider tourism development and community regeneration activities as and when they arise if they complement the above and are deemed appropriate by the directors of the company.

Currently all trails (apart from Gethin) are free to use and the only charges that apply are car parking charges; however, the income does not always go back to the source that has responsibility of maintaining the trails as the profit is often allocated to existing maintenance commitments which exist aside from the trails themselves. Research also shows that a high percentage of mountain bikers have high disposable incomes and are willing to donate something back to the sport that they love.

Cognition Ltd will look at five ways of raising revenue for future investment; these are visitor giving, donation boxes, membership scheme, merchandise and corporate giving.

2. WHERE IS THE LOCATION?

Afan Forest Park and Margam Park, Neath Port Talbot

Cwmcarn, Caerphilly

BikePark Wales, Gethin Woods, Merthyr Tydfil

3. PLEASE INDICATE WHAT TYPE OF SUPPORT IS REQUIRED:

In-kind support required?

YES / NO

If YES, please indicate what type of support is required and the benefits this will provide

- Merchandise scheme – expert advice on establishing a merchandise scheme and looking into the logistics of setting up the scheme. Research has shown that mountain bikers like the Cognition brand and have expressed an interest in purchasing branded clothing. The benefits of this to Cognition Ltd that the profit from selling the merchandise would go back into trail development.

- Volunteer dig days for staff to help maintaining the trails

Financial support required?

YES / NO



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Investment / Sponsorship Opportunity Title	Cognition Mountain Bike Trails	Number	25
Originator's name	Lisa Jenkins	Validated	23 April 2013
Originator's organisation	Neath Port Talbot	Date	23 April 2013
Email Id	l.jenkins4@npt.gov.uk	Tel. No.	01639 686 044

Future investment in mountain bike trails will ensure that the quality of the trails is maintained. Maintenance on average costs £160,000 over three years; this is just to keep the trails to a standard that complies with health and safety legislation. When further new sections of trail are required the cost increases, and on average a new trail costs between £200,000- £250,000 to build.

Contributions to meet at least some of this cost will not only help to maintain the trails themselves but will help to maintain the contribution that the visitors make to the local economy during their stay.

4. HOW WILL THE INVESTOR / SPONSOR BENEFIT?

- PR opportunities, the mountain bike trail centres have regular publicity in the national mountain bike magazines including MBR, MBUK, What Mountain Bike and Dirt. As an investor the company would be mentioned when discussing the work undertaken through the investment. Also would be included in regular press releases to national and local press
- Publicity at the trail centres, plaques on certain sections of trails improved through the investment
- Publicity on www.cognition.co.uk and on social media channels including Facebook, Twitter and You tube.
- Possible opportunity to arrange volunteer dig days for staff to help with maintaining the trails.
- Opportunities to arrange networking events with local businesses within the area.
- Corporate hospitality opportunities.
- Project has in the past received TV coverage from Welsh TV Channel S4C and also radio coverage from the BBC.

The above benefits would be valid for a set period of time, the time period will be agreed with the investor prior to any contributions being received.

5. WHY SHOULD THIS INVESTMENT / SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY BE A HIGH PRIORITY?



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Investment / Sponsorship Opportunity Title	Cognition Mountain Bike Trails	Number	25
Originator's name	Lisa Jenkins	Validated	23 April 2013
Originator's organisation	Neath Port Talbot	Date	23 April 2013
Email Id	l.jenkins4@npt.gov.uk	Tel. No.	01639 686 044

Mountain biking is one of the main tourism products in The Valleys and as a result contributes substantially to the economic prosperity of the area. The area is known world wide for being one of the best places in the world to mountain bike and Afan Forest Park was once voted in the top ten of places to 'ride before you die'. With a reputation like that we must ensure that there is future for the industry and that it continues to grow.

The economic benefit that the sport brings to the area is vital and a large number of businesses have established as a result of the mountain bike trails being developed. This shows the success of the investment to date. An example of this is that in 2002 Afan Forest Park only had 12 (approx) graded accommodation bed spaces, in 2012 this figures has risen to over 300.

Visitor numbers to the existing trails centres in 2012 was 120,000 and we expect this to grow in 2014 once all the developments through Cognition are completed.

The trail centres in South Wales bring visitors in from all over the UK and even the world, with our main target market coming from the M4 corridor, especially Swindon, Reading and London.

6. ANY OTHER COMMENTS?

7. PLEASE PROVIDE A LOCAL NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS FOR MORE INFORMATION

Lisa Jenkins

Cognition Project Manager

01639 686044

l.jenkins4@npt.gov.uk



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government