



Ireland

# Bealach

## co-ordination of new flexible local bus services

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BEALACH is a network of flexible demand responsive services, co-ordinated through a bilingual Travel Demand Centre, in Conamara, an agricultural area of small towns and communities within a landscape of hills and lakes. The area covered has an average population density of 8 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. It is one of 34 projects funded under the national Rural Transport Initiative.

Services are operated under contract by voluntary organisations and private operators in 6 areas and on 4 offshore islands at a frequency of once or twice per week. The vehicles used are accessible minibuses that follow a scheduled route but can deviate on request to provide a door to door service. Some routes include timed stops to interchange with regional bus services. Reservations are made in advance by phone. The demonstration started in February 2003 and aims to connect people and places by improving access to local shops and facilities, limit the isolation of older people and provide mobility to people with disabilities, young people and people without a car.

Holders (people aged over 65 and disabled people) of the national Free Travel Pass have free travel and under 16's travel at half fare. All seats must be pre-booked and tickets are on sale in Post Offices and local shops or from the TDC.

