



**An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail**  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development

# **2020 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme**

## **Scheme Outline for all Measures**

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**Fáilte Ireland**

National Tourism Development Authority



Tionscadal Éireann  
Project Ireland  
**2040**

# Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme



**Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure  
Scheme  
2020**

**Department of Rural and Community  
Development**

in partnership with

**Fáilte Ireland**

**29<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

Any queries and completed application forms should be  
addressed to [ORIS@DRCD.gov.ie](mailto:ORIS@DRCD.gov.ie)

or

Rural Programmes and Policy Unit  
Department of Rural and Community Development  
Government Buildings  
Brook Street  
Ballina  
Co. Mayo  
F26 E8N6

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# 1. Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) contributes to the strategic objective of strengthened rural economies and communities as set out in the Project Ireland 2040 strategy. The objective of the Scheme is to provide funding for the development of new outdoor recreational infrastructure and for the necessary repair, enhancement or promotion of existing outdoor recreational infrastructure in countryside areas across Ireland.

The scheme invests in the physical infrastructure that underpins sporting and recreational activities based on the use of the resources of the countryside; these contribute to healthy active lifestyles while building on the economic and tourism potential of the area, and so are to the benefit of both local communities and tourist visitors alike. The scheme may also provide some limited funding for the marketing and promotion of such infrastructure, typically as part of a wider project involving capital supports.

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## 2. ORIS 2020 Scheme Focus

The focus of the scheme will be to support outdoor recreational infrastructure in countryside areas across Ireland. The 2020 scheme will, in particular, support recreational infrastructure that not only provides an outlet for the communities in which they are situated but that also delivers added value from a tourism perspective, positioning rural areas to respond to the post-COVID-19 economic environment.

Outdoor recreation refers to those sporting, recreational and holiday pursuits based on use of the resources of the countryside and which contribute to healthy active lifestyles. “Countryside” includes land, water and air. The term “recreation” in this context applies to sporting and recreational activities which operate in the countryside. It does not include sporting activities which take place in the countryside on confined courses or pitches specifically designed and constructed for those sports, e.g. golf, football, show jumping, etc. Projects approved under the ORIS will be in keeping with this definition.

### **Project type**

The scheme supports the provision of outdoor infrastructure that is, in the main, freely available to the public. The type of projects typically funded by the Scheme include trails, walkways, cycleways, greenways, blueways and mountain access routes. This is not a definitive list and other innovative projects that provide outdoor infrastructure are encouraged, including those that result in improved access to recreational facilities for older people and those with disabilities. Given the potential impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the Irish economy and the tourism sector in particular, projects that can display a specific tourism or other sectoral impact that may aid economic recovery are encouraged.

The lists of projects funded previously are available at [Gov.ie](http://Gov.ie)<sup>1</sup>.

Greenway projects funded under ORIS will be those of a local nature. The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport’s Greenways Strategy<sup>2</sup>, published in July 2018, sets out the Government’s priorities in relation to the funding of greenways in Ireland over a 10 year period, with a dedicated funding stream to achieve this. It is not the intention of ORIS to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/90a66b-approved-funding-for-outdoor-recreation-projects/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ed5d17-strategy-for-the-future-development-of-national-and-regional-greenwa/>

supplement or supplant this strategy by funding regional or national greenways i.e. those greenways that are over 20km in length. However necessary repair or small improvement works on those greenways (which are older than 3 years), local extensions of those greenways, local spurs off those greenways, and the development of infrastructure to link a rural town or village to such greenways may be considered under ORIS.

Blueway projects funded under ORIS must be in line with the Blueway Management and Development Guide published by The Blueway Partnership<sup>3</sup>.

Trail projects funded under the ORIS should be developed in line with Sport Ireland advice, including their Trail Criteria Guidelines<sup>4</sup>.

### **Project Location**

Projects located within any of the five main city boundaries (Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford) are not eligible under the scheme.

Projects should, in the main, be located in the countryside (i.e. not within the environs of towns or villages). Funding is available separately for walkways, cycleways and other outdoor infrastructure located in towns and villages under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme.

ORIS may fund recreational infrastructure linking a town or village into the countryside, and particularly linking towns or villages to other outdoor recreation facilities located in the countryside.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/2019-10/blueway-management-development-guide\\_0.pdf](https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/2019-10/blueway-management-development-guide_0.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Useful resources can be found at <https://www.sportireland.ie/outdoors/resources-development>

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## 3. Funding and Timelines

An indicative budget of €10 million is available for successful projects under the 2020 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme. This funding is provided jointly by the Department of Rural & Community Development and Fáilte Ireland. As in previous years, this funding will be provided under three different categories of projects (Measures) based on the size of the investment requirement. Details of the three Measures are outlined in Section 4. The number of projects approved for funding under each Measure will be limited by the total amount of funding available.

All proposed projects must be in a position to commence at the end of 2020 for Measure 1 or early in 2021 for Measures 2 & 3, and must be capable of being delivered in a realistic timeframe i.e. within a 12 month timeframe for Measure 1 projects, or 18 month timeframe for Measure 2 & 3 projects. Therefore it is advisable that feasibility studies and planning permissions (if required) are in place or substantially progressed prior to the submission of a project application.

Eligible applicants are requested to submit applications under the various Measures referred to in Section 4. The applications must only be submitted using the template application forms provided by the Department of Rural & Community Development. Completed applications must be submitted via email to [ORIS@drcd.gov.ie](mailto:ORIS@drcd.gov.ie) by:

- **5.15pm on Wednesday 30th September 2020 for Measure 1**
  
- **5.15pm on Monday 30th November 2020 for Measures 2 & Measures 3.**

Applicants may, if they wish, submit bulky applications by post to Rural Programmes and Policy Unit, Department of Rural and Community Development, Government Buildings, Brook Street, Ballina, Co. Mayo, F26 E8N6, to arrive not later than the above dates for each respective Measure.



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## 4. Scheme Measures

The Scheme is delivered under three Measures as outlined below. The level of funding, project scale, and eligible applicants vary under each Measure.

### Measure 1: Small Scale Repair/Promotion and Marketing

**Grant Amounts:** Up to €20,000.

**Eligible Activities:** Small scale projects that are in line with the objectives and focus of the Scheme. This includes, but is not limited to, the upkeep and repair of already established trails, walkways, cycleways greenways and blueways, improved access to leisure or recreational facilities, and the promotion and marketing of such infrastructure.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Local Authorities and Local Development Companies<sup>5</sup>

**Maximum Number of Projects:**

A maximum of 7 applications may be submitted per Local Authority.

A maximum of 2 applications may be submitted per Local Development Company.

**Indicative Project Completion Date:** All projects must be finished and drawdown of funding completed by 30th of November 2021. The completion date may be revised in the Funding Agreement based on the date of project approval.

### Measure 2: Medium Scale Repair/Upgrade and New Trail/Amenity Development

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<sup>5</sup> Local Development Companies as referenced under Section 128f(1)(d) of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014) are designated eligible applicants under Measure 1 for this Scheme.

**Grant Amounts:** Up to €200,000.

**Eligible Activity:** Medium sized projects that are in line with the objectives and focus of the Scheme. This includes, but is not limited to, the development of new trails, walkways, cycleways, local greenways, blueways or other recreational facilities, or extensions to already established trails, walkways, cycleways, greenways and blueways. Projects can also include works for the enhancement, repair or promotion of such infrastructure, or for improved access to recreational infrastructure.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Local Authorities.

**Maximum Number of Projects:** A maximum of 3 proposals may be submitted by each Local Authority.

**Indicative Project Completion Date:** All projects must be finished and drawdown of funding completed by 31st of July 2022. The completion date may be revised in the Funding Agreement based on the date of project approval

### **Measure 3: Large Scale Repair/Upgrade and New Strategic Trail/Amenity Development**

**Grant amounts:** Up to €500,000.

**Eligible Activity:** Large sized projects that are in line with the objectives and focus of the Scheme. This could include projects such as the development of new larger-scale recreational infrastructure, or resources to complete larger scale/longer term developments, as well as significant repair and maintenance on already established trails, walkways, cycleways, greenways or blueways.

**Eligible Applicants:**

Local Authorities and State Agencies

**Maximum Number of Projects:** Local Authorities and State Agencies will be confined to 1 application each under this Measure.

**Indicative Project Completion Date:** All projects must be finished and drawdown of funding completed before 31st July 2022. The completion date may be revised in the Funding Agreement based on the date of project approval.

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## 5. Ineligible Project Types

The following types of projects and activities, in particular, will not be supported by the scheme:

- Purchase of land.
- Refurbishment and construction of buildings<sup>6</sup> (except in very exceptional and limited circumstances for projects under Measure 2 where this would substantially improve access to, and the utilisation of, recreational resources by the wider public).
- Sports grounds, playgrounds and Multi-Use Gaming Areas (MUGAs).
- Walking or running tracks located in a confined space, e.g. around sports pitches or playgrounds, or within other sports grounds.
- Marked street trails, walkways and cycleways within towns and villages (funding available through Town & Village Renewal Scheme for such infrastructure).
- Maintenance works on elements of trails which form a normal part of the work undertaken as part of the Walks Scheme.
- Activities which do not comply with the definition of countryside/outdoor recreation as set out above and as defined in the National Countryside Recreation Strategy<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> The relevant Local Authority should discuss any potential projects in this category with the Department of Rural & Community Development before submitting an application.

<sup>7</sup> [www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/127c4b-national-countryside-recreation-strategy/](http://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/127c4b-national-countryside-recreation-strategy/)

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## 6. Application Format

Applicants must submit the following documents:

- Local Authorities and Local Development Companies must submit an “Application Overview” (MS Excel) document indicating that the applicant undertakes to ensure that all required permissions, match-funding, etc. are in place or in train, and are in line with requirements outlined in this document. Proof of such is not required at the time of application but must be available to the Department or its agents on request.
- A “Project Application Form” (MS Word) which provides details in respect of each individual project.

For Measure 1, each Local Authority and Local Development Company should provide an indicative prioritisation of projects and provide a short rationale for that prioritisation.

Applicants are encouraged to supplement the applications with maps and/or photographs showing the location of the projects and linkages with other infrastructure in the area.

Applicants are advised to take note of the relevant Assessment Criteria (given in the appendices to this document) when completing applications.

The Department may exclude applications that do not include all relevant documentation or assurances at the time of submission. The Department may not be in a position to follow up regarding missing documentation or incomplete application forms.

It should be noted that projects applications that were previously unsuccessful under ORIS may be eligible under the 2020 scheme. New additional phases of projects previously granted funding under ORIS will also be eligible provided that there has been satisfactory progress with the phases previously funded.

Local Authority applications must be signed by the relevant Director of Service. Local Development Company applications must be signed by the CEO. State Body applications must be signed at Director level or equivalent.

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## 7. Grant Level

Up to 90% of the total cost of a project under the Scheme will be provided for any individual project. The remaining 10% match funding must be contributed by the successful applicant and/or the community group and/or philanthropic contributions.

You will note that for the 2020 scheme, the rate of aid available from the Department has increased to 90%. This is in recognition of the challenging environment for local fundraising and other finance-raising in light of the COVID crisis. This rate of funding is not indicative of requirements under future iterations of the scheme.

The requirement that a minimum of 5% of the project costs must be funded through cash contributions remains under the 2020 scheme. A maximum of 5% of the total cost may be provided in the form of “contributions-in-kind”.

Administration and professional costs, are permitted, as outlined in the Common Funding Conditions (Point 8.III).

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## 8. Funding Conditions for Rural Schemes funded under the Department of Rural and Community Development.

All expenditure registered through the Department's Rural Schemes i.e. Town and Village Renewal Scheme, CLÁR, Outdoor Recreation and Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) will be subject to the terms of the Public Spending Code which can be found at <http://publicspendingcode.per.gov.ie/>.

In addition to this, the requirements outlined below will apply to all funding approved through those schemes. The need for adherence to all of the requirements will be reflected in the contractual agreement between the Department of Rural and Community Development and the grantee approved for funding under the scheme.

- I. Projects will be expected to commence and be completed in line with the timelines set out in the relevant Scheme Outline.
- II. The Department may de-commit funding allocated to projects under the Scheme where the project is not completed within the time specified, and where the express agreement of the Department to extend the funding arrangement has not been agreed in advance.
- III. The grant funding for the approved project will be provided from the Department of Rural and Community Development's capital budget. Administration and/or professional costs associated with the proposed project, where allowed for in the Scheme Outline, should be kept to a minimum. These costs must be clearly documented in the application and are only permitted up to a maximum of 10% of the overall project costs.
- IV. Where allowed in the relevant Scheme Outline, in-kind contributions, up to the maximum set out in relevant Scheme Outline, can be provided in the form of voluntary labour (i.e. unpaid work) which must be based on the verified time spent on the project.
  - a. The rate applied should be for remuneration of equivalent work, up to a maximum rate of €14 per hour. The grantee must ensure that the rate per hour applied is properly justified according to the work undertaken.
  - b. Where Voluntary Labour forms part of a project, the grantee is advised that the requirements of all relevant Health and Safety legislation apply.
  - c. Project administration e.g. attendance at meetings, preparation of grant application form, funding drawdown claims and management costs are not eligible as voluntary labour.

- d. Labour provided by a participant on an RSS/TUS/other exchequer funded schemes are not eligible for use as an in-kind contribution.
  - e. Voluntary labour must be completed prior to submitting the final drawdown claim to the Department. It may be included in phased payments, provided the work in question has been completed at the time the claim is submitted.
  - f. Details of all voluntary labour claimed must be maintained on a timesheet (1 timesheet per person) which will be provided by the Department. The time sheet will capture the following details;
    - i. The name of the person undertaking the work
    - ii. The nature, time, dates of the works, quantity, hours worked and rate per hour,
    - iii. The signature of the person who provided the in-kind work,
    - iv. The timesheet must be signed off by the appointed project co-ordinator over the project.
- V. A cash contribution as set out in the relevant Scheme Outline is required. The grantee will be required to provide confirmation that the cash contribution is in place and retain a record of the source of the cash contribution.
- VI. Projects must be completed in full in order to drawdown the full grant amount. Where it is established that a project has not been completed, the Department may request the grantee to repay any funding received on the project. Any changes to the proposed project must be advised and agreed with the Department in advance of the change being implemented.
- VII. Where an element of the approved project is not carried out as per the project application, grant funding may be reduced to reflect the amended project.
- VIII. If the project involves works on buildings or lands that are not in the ownership of the grantee, a minimum 5 year lease must be in place from date of project completion.
- IX. In the case of funding allocated to enterprises or facilities (i.e. community centre, hubs, vehicles under CLÁR etc.), it is a requirement that they must operate as funded for a minimum of 5 years following release of the final stage of funding, otherwise funding may have to be repaid. Where they do not operate as funded this must be advised and agreed with the Department in advance.
- X. All appropriate financial, Public Procurement and accounting rules and regulations must be complied with and each grantee will fully account for the funding received in a timely manner.
- XI. Full and accurate documentation to support all expenditure should be maintained and accessible by Department officials for audit purposes at all times and for a period of six years from the date of completion of the project.



- XII. Grantees will acknowledge the support of Project 2040 / Department of Rural and Community Development/ Government of Ireland, and any other applicable sources of funding (as identified in the relevant Funding Agreement) in all public announcements, advertising and signage, as appropriate, relating to the project. In addition, the Department may seek to use the project in the broader promotion of its policies.
- XIII. Grantees will provide any reports and information relating to the project as may reasonably be requested by the Department of Rural and Community Development from time to time.
- XIV. On-going monitoring and evaluation of the project outputs and outcomes should take place in the context of assessing the impact of the project. Grantees will be expected to collect appropriate data to facilitate this learning on an on-going basis. On request, a brief report (1-2 pages) on the outputs and outcomes of the project funded should be completed and made available to the Department.
- XV. Each grantee, will provide a contact point/points to the Department to facilitate payment and information requests. The Department should be updated on any changes to contact personnel in a timely manner.
- XVI. A checklist confirming compliance with funding conditions relating to the grant aid will be required upon project completion.

Non-Compliance with the conditions as outlined or any additional stipulations agreed during contract negotiations may result in the requirement to refund part or all of the grant aid awarded.

**ORIS Specific Conditions:**

- Particular care should be taken with proposed works in designated areas, such as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), etc. Any necessary appropriate assessments/approvals/planning permissions etc. that may need to be obtained must be in place prior to any works commencing.
- Applicants should ensure that all necessary consents are forthcoming from all relevant landowners (Private and Public) for the proposed works, and that works, where applicable, comply with relevant standards set by Sport Ireland Trails, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) or other relevant bodies.
- In the context of repair work on trails, the applicants must provide extracts from Sport Ireland Trails Inspection reports which confirm the need for such repairs. In the absence of a recent Sport Ireland Trails report, photographic evidence of the area requiring repairs may suffice.

- Completed projects must acknowledge in their publicity material, including press releases, the support provided by the Government of Ireland under Project Ireland 2040, the Department of Rural and Community Development and Fáilte Ireland.

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## 9. Assessment Criteria

Selection of projects under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme for 2020 will be by means of a competitive process. Final project selection will be made by the Department of Rural and Community Development, in consultation with Fáilte Ireland as appropriate, on the basis of proposals submitted by the eligible applicants. Fáilte Ireland will also review all applications to assess their tourism benefit.

In assessing applications, a number of factors will be considered by the Department, including the information supplied in the Application Overview and Application Form; the range, mix, quality and impact of proposed projects; previous funding provided; any prioritisation of projects indicated by the applicants; and other relevant considerations.

Guidance on the criteria that the Department may refer to during the ORIS assessment process are provided in Appendix 1 to this document. The level of response deemed necessary to address these criteria will increase in line with the amount of funding sought.

It should be noted that the number of projects approved for a particular body may be reduced in the event that there are excessive delays in the projects approved for that body under previous iterations of this Scheme.

The provision of funding will be dependent on works having not commenced prior to Department approval of the project.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1 – Indicative Assessment Considerations

Measure 1 Information Required	Evidence Provided	Max. Score Available
Does the application offer a clear description of the project?	Yes/No	50
Does the project support and/or enhance the existing recreation offering in the area?	Yes/No	50
Does the project clearly support countryside recreation?	Yes/No	100
Is the application collaborative in nature?	Yes/No	75
Does the proposed project address the identified need?	Yes/No	75
Are the timelines for the project clearly set out in the application and realistically achievable?	Yes/No	75
Are the costings for the project clearly set out in the application?	Yes/No	75
Does the project deliver an impact for the local area which warrants support?	Yes/No	100

### Measure 2 & 3 Assessment Considerations:

<b>Value of the project for the local area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the project clearly support Countryside Recreation?</li> <li>Does the project outcomes have clear positive health impacts?</li> <li>Does the project outcomes have clear economic and/or tourism impacts?</li> <li>Does the proposal add value to current infrastructure or address an existing deficit?</li> <li>Do the outcomes of the project demonstrate a sustainable and positive impact on the local area?</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic and collaborative nature of the project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the application collaborative in nature?</li> <li>Is there evidence that the project complements or leverages other State-backed programmes or objectives?</li> <li>Is there letter(s) of support provided (M2 and M3) from local tourism/businesses/activity providers?</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstration of need and potential</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the application set out a clear need for a project of this type?</li> <li>Does the proposed project address the needs identified in the application?</li> <li>Does the application demonstrate, or consider, any additional value-added that might arise from completion of this project?</li> </ul>
<b>Realistic nature of the proposal?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there evidence of any permissions and approvals needed, in place or likely to be granted?</li> <li>Are the timelines for the project clearly set out in the application?</li> <li>Are the costings for the project clearly set out in the application?</li> </ul>
<b>Value for Money</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there evidence that funding this project will have an impact at regional or greater level?</li> <li>Is there evidence that the developer will seek to ensure good value for money.</li> </ul>

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