



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

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme



2018 Scheme Outline

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2018

Scheme Outline

Department of Rural and Community Development

June 2018

Any queries and completed application forms should be
addressed to CnaT@DRCD.gov.ie

Or

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

1. Introduction

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme is part of the Government's Action Plan for Rural Development and provides funding for the development of new outdoor recreational infrastructure or the necessary maintenance, enhancement or promotion of existing outdoor recreational infrastructure in Ireland. The scheme seeks to support those sporting and recreational pursuits based on use of the resources of the countryside that contribute to healthy active lifestyles and the economic and tourism potential of the area for both local communities and tourist visitors alike.

2. 2018 Scheme

The Scheme makes a call for projects of differing sizes to be put forward by interested parties and partnerships, with small and smaller to medium sized projects to be completed in 2018 and scope for the effective implementation of larger, strategic projects up to the end of October 2019. Projects supported under the scheme in 2018 should be in line with the Local Economic and Community Plan for the county.

A total fund of €12 million is available to successful projects approved under the 2018 scheme.

It should be noted that the number of projects approved for funding will be limited by the amount of funding available in each measure.

It should also be noted that there are different closing dates for Measure 1 and Measures 2 and 3.

Eligible applicants under Measure 1 will be Local Development Companies with partnership/collaboration with Local Authorities/other bodies and communities strongly encouraged.

Eligible applicants under Measures 2 and 3 will be Local Authorities and State Bodies with partnership/collaboration with Local Development Companies/other bodies and communities strongly encouraged.

Applicants are strongly advised to take note of the relevant Scoring Framework provided in the Application Form when completing applications.

The Department may exclude applications that do not include all relevant documentation at the time of submission. **All** necessary information/documentation required by the scheme should be supplied at the time of application as the Department may not be in a position to follow up regarding missing documentation or other queries.

3. Categories of Projects

Under the 2018 scheme, applications will be accepted under three measures:

- small maintenance/promotion of existing infrastructure (up to €20,000)
- medium scale repair/upgrade and development of new small/medium infrastructure (up to €200,000)
- repair/upgrade and development of larger, more strategic projects (up to €500,000).

Measure 1: Small Scale Maintenance/Promotion and Marketing

Projects to include grant aid amounts of up to €20,000 (€4 million available).

Eligible Activities: Resources to support countryside recreation¹, including for the upkeep and maintenance of already established trails/walkways/cycleways/blueways, improved access to leisure or recreational facilities, and the promotion and marketing of such infrastructure.

Eligible Applicants: Local Development Companies (LDCs)² in cooperation with Local Authorities, local communities and/or other local stakeholders.

Maximum Number of Projects: A maximum of 10 projects may be submitted per LDC, either as individual applications, or as part of one overall application. The number of projects approved for funding will be limited by the overall funding available.

Expected Project Completion Date: All projects must be completed during 2018.

¹ Countryside recreation applies to those sporting, recreational and holiday pursuits based on use of the resources of the countryside and which contribute to healthy active lifestyles. The term “countryside” includes land, water and air. The term “recreation” in this context applies to sporting and recreational activities, which operate in the countryside as defined above. 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.

² 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.

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

Grant Amounts: Grant amounts of between €20,000 and up to €200,000 (€4 million available).

Eligible Activity: These projects could include the development of new trails/walkways/cycleways/blueways, or other recreational facilities, or extensions to already established trails/walkways/cycleways/blueways. Projects can also include works for the enhancement, maintenance or promotion of such infrastructure.

Eligible Applicants: Local Authorities individually, or working collaboratively with Local Development Companies, other Local Authorities and/or other local stakeholders.

Maximum Number of Projects: A maximum of 4 proposals may be submitted by each Local Authority. The number of projects approved for funding will be limited by the overall funding available.

Expected Project Completion Date: All projects must be completed by 31st October 2019.

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

Grant amounts: Grant amounts of over €200,000 and up to €500,000 (€4 million available).

Eligible Activity: These projects could include 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/blueways.

Eligible Applicants: State Agencies acting either individually or collaboratively and/or Local Authorities acting either individually or collaboratively. Projects involving State Agencies and Local Authorities working in partnership will also be accepted.

Max Number of Projects: Applicants under this measure will be confined to one application in this category.

Expected Project Completion Date: Proposed projects are expected to be completed by the end of October 2019.

4. Eligible Applicants and Closing Dates

Applications will be accepted from the following entities on the application form attached at Appendix 1:

1. Measure 1: Local Development Companies in cooperation with Local Authorities/community groups or other local stakeholders. All applications for these measures must be submitted by email to CnaT@drzd.gov.ie by **5 pm on Friday 6th July 2018**.
2. Measures 2 and 3: Local Authorities and/or State Agencies individually or in cooperation with other stakeholders such as other Local Authorities/Agencies/Local Development Companies/community groups or other local stakeholders. All applications for these measures must be submitted by email to CnaT@drzd.gov.ie by **5 pm on Friday 27th July 2018**.

Please note the different closing dates in respect of Measure 1 and Measures 2 and 3.

5. Selection/Eligibility Criteria

Selection of projects under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme for 2018 will be by means of a **competitive process**. Final project selection will be made by the Department of Rural and Community Development on the basis of proposals submitted by the Local Development Companies and Local Authorities/State Agencies.

The primary aim of the scheme is to provide outdoor recreational infrastructure in rural areas across Ireland. In that regard it should be noted that proposed projects located within any of the 5 main city boundaries will **not be** eligible under the 2018 scheme.

The Scheme **does not** support 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.

The following will **not** be supported by the scheme:

- Sports grounds, play grounds and MUGAs,
- Marked street trails within towns,
- Maintenance works on elements of trails which form a normal part of the Walks Scheme , and
- Activities which do not comply with the definition of countryside/outdoor recreation as defined in the National Countryside Recreation Strategy:

‘Countryside recreation applies to those sporting, recreational and holiday pursuits based on use of the resources of the countryside and which contribute to healthy active lifestyles. The term countryside includes land, water and air. The term recreation in this context applies to sporting and

recreational activities, which operate in the countryside as defined above. It does not refer to 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.’

6. Types of Projects that May be Supported

It is envisaged that the types projects that may be supported will fall broadly in to the following categories, although these are not exhaustive:

The types of activities to be supported under measure 1 include those that support countryside recreation, including for the upkeep and maintenance of already established trails/walkways/cycleways/blueways, that may improve access to leisure or recreational facilities, and the promotion and marketing of such infrastructure.

Medium sized projects could include the development of new trails/walkways/cycleways/blueways, or other recreational facilities, or extensions to already established trails/walkways/cycleways/blueways. Projects can also include works for the enhancement, maintenance or promotion of such infrastructure.

Larger projects could include 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/blueways.

It should be noted that, projects put forward under previous schemes but not approved, or subsequent phases of projects previously granted funding may be eligible under the 2018 scheme. However, any funding approved under the Scheme in 2018 will be conditional, where appropriate, on satisfactory progress with regard to any funding approved in 2017 or previous years.

7. Funding Arrangements

Applicants should note that the number of projects approved for funding will be limited by the amount of funding available in each category.

Funding will only be provided where works have not commenced prior to Department approval of the project and will be released to successful applicants in tranches based on a specified level of works being completed.

The Department will fund up to 80% of approved project costs with the additional 20% to be provided from other sources including Local Authority funds or labour and/or other resources.

Match funding for projects undertaken must be evidenced in the application form, with a clear commitment from the organisation providing the match funding and setting out in what form the contribution is being made, i.e. cash and/or manual labour etc.

Of the 20% to be funded from other sources, a minimum of 5% of approved project costs must be funded through cash contribution by the group, the Local Authority or another body. Evidence relating to the origin of cash contribution must be provided to the Department as part of the application process.

Labour or other verifiable and apportionable costs can be counted towards match funding, but should not exceed 15% of the overall cost.

A maximum limit of 12.5% of the overall project costs is allowable for associated administration costs, professional fees and similar, where relevant, for a proposed project. Applicants are encouraged to keep the level of such costs to a minimum and should note that the level of such costs will be a factor in the assessment of value for money as part of the application assessment process.

Works must be completed within the terms of the timelines set out in this document.

The Department may decommit funding allocated to projects under the Scheme where the works are not carried out within the time specified and where the express agreement of the Department to extend the funding arrangement has not been agreed in advance.

8. Timeline for Completion of Works and Payment Schedule

For the most part, projects under Measure 1 will be required to be completed by the end of 2018, except with the express permission of the Department. Larger scale projects (Measure 2 and 3) will be expected to be completed by the end of October 2019.

Subject to the grant levels outlined above, the payment schedule will be as follows:

- 50% of the total allocation will be paid when the lead partner confirms in writing that 50% of the project expenditure has been incurred by the applicant body, and
- 50% payment on completion, based on expenditure actually incurred by the applicant body.

Applications should include realistic estimates regarding the time frame for the delivery of the proposed works to include commencement dates and completion dates for the various elements of the project.

9. Scheme Requirements

The Scheme is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development, and may be administered through a Local Development Company, a Local Authority and/or a State Agency, in accordance with the Measures as outlined above.

Successful applicants will be required to acknowledge the support of the Department of Rural and Community Development in all public announcements and advertising relating to the project, and the Department may seek to use the project in the broader promotion of its policies.

Applicants must take note of the following terms and conditions and ensure they are compliant with each before submitting an application for assessment.

- Applicants must outline how the project complies with the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for the area.
- Evidence of Tax Compliance or Charitable Status (Tax Clearance Certificate/eTC or proof of CHY number must be attached to all applications).
- A clear statement detailing how the match funding requirement of the scheme will be met, including evidence of cash and/or labour /other contributions committed to the project, must be attached to all applications.
- A maximum limit of 12.5% of the overall project costs is allowable for associated administration costs, professional fees and similar, where relevant, for a proposed project. A detailed breakdown of any such fees must be supplied.
- Applicants must provide a detailed description of proposed works including locations, materials to be used, breakdown of costs, personnel or resources to be utilised. Particular emphasis should be placed on proposed works in designated areas, such as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), etc. bearing in mind any necessary appropriate assessments/approvals/planning permissions etc. that may need to be obtained, together with permission from the relevant agencies/landowners, are in place prior to any works commencing.
- Applicants must confirm that all necessary consents have been obtained from all relevant landowners (Private and Public) for the proposed works, and that works, where applicable, will comply with National Trails Office (NTO)/Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) /other relevant standards.
- Applicants must ensure, where applicable, that all planning permissions, appropriate assessments etc., are in place to enable works to commence as soon as possible in the event of funding being approved.

- Applicants must commit to complete projects before 31st of December 2018 in the case of Measure 1, and 31st October 2019 in the case of Measures 2 and 3. Failure to complete works by these dates may result in all or part of the funds not being released or any funds already released becoming repayable to the Department in full.
- Applicants will be required to maintain records of all expenditure and provide same to the Department or its agents or acting on its behalf, in a timely manner if required to do so, including invoices, receipts, bank statements, etc.
- In the context of maintenance work on trails, evidence of the necessity of the relevant works must be provided at the time of application. This evidence may be extracts from NTO Inspection reports, to support particular elements of the proposal. In the absence of a recent NTO report, photographic evidence to the nature of the required works may suffice.
- Applicants must set out how the ongoing maintenance of the project will be carried out.
- Completed projects should acknowledge in their publicity material, including press releases, the support provided by the Department (all Measures) and Fáilte Ireland (in the case of Measures 1&2) and display the Department's logo and use the strapline: "This project received funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Irish Government under the Outdoor Recreation Scheme".

10. Scoring Framework

Copies of the Scoring Frameworks to be used have been provided with the Application Form to assist applicants with their submission.

Applicants are advised that all applications will be assessed in line with scheme requirements including the following;

- Eligibility.
- Collaborative application which is in line with the LECP/other relevant plans.
- Detailed costings of all elements of the project/value for money.
- Quality of the proposal.
- Evidence of match funding committed.
- Detailed timelines for completion of the project.
- Business case / added recreational value of the project – community, regional or national, tourist or economic.
- Evidence of all necessary permissions in place.