

Press release

Our Rural Future: Minister Humphreys launches €16 million Fund to support Outdoor Adventure activities

From [Department of Rural and Community Development \(/en/organisation/department-of-rural-and-community-development/\)](/en/organisation/department-of-rural-and-community-development/).

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- **Outdoor Recreation and Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) to provide major boost to rural and adventure tourism**
- **€16 million fund to develop our mountains, lakes, rivers, beaches, blue-ways, bogs, forest walks and uplands**
- **focus on supporting outdoor activities such as walking, hiking, cycling, swimming, kayaking, sailing, paragliding and kite-surfing**
- **additional project applications allowed for counties with inhabited off-shore islands to enhance their tourism potential**

Minister for Rural and Community Development Heather Humphreys has announced a major €16 million fund which will support hundreds of outdoor recreation projects across the country.

The 2023 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) will see the development of our natural amenities such as our mountains, lakes, rivers, beaches, blue-ways, bogs, forest walks and uplands.

The Scheme, which saw its funding increased by €1 million this year, will place a particular focus on developing amenities for adventure tourism in rural Ireland.

Among the activities that will be invested in include walking, hiking, cycling, swimming, kayaking, sailing, paragliding and kite-surfing.

The announcement builds on the commitment under “Our Rural Future” and “Embracing Ireland’s Outdoors”, the government’s ambitious outdoor recreation strategy.

Launching the 2023 scheme, Minister Humphreys said:

“I’m delighted today to launch the 2023 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme.

“To date, the scheme has provided funding of over €106 million for more than 1,500 projects nationwide and today’s announcement will build further on that.

“The facilities and amenities that we are delivering under this scheme make a real difference in communities right across rural Ireland.

“They hugely benefit the health and well-being of people of all ages and are so important in terms of attracting visitors to our rural towns and villages.”

Minister Humphreys added:

“When I launched ‘Embracing Ireland’s Outdoors’, I said I wanted to transform the outdoor recreation sector in Ireland. Today’s announcement is putting that commitment into action.

“Earlier this year, I also announced an expansion of the Walks Scheme to 150 trails. And just this week, I launched a new partnership with Bord na Móna, designed to develop recreation activities on the country’s bog-lands.

“The funding that I am announcing today really will deliver tremendous long-term assets for rural communities and is a clear demonstration of the huge impact that ‘Our Rural Future’ is having in every county in Ireland.

“And so, I would urge everyone to explore and experience the great outdoors and what our beautiful country has to offer.”

The announcement is a key strand to the implementation of Embracing Ireland’s Outdoors, the National Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2023 - 2027 which is set to shape the future of outdoor recreation over the next five years.

The Strategy aims to increase the number of people active in the outdoors, especially young people and under-represented groups, and to foster a greater understanding of how to enjoy the outdoors responsibly.

Building on this, the projects that will be supported under ORIS are designed to benefit the health and wellbeing of the communities in which they are located. The funding will provide not only an outlet for the communities in which they are situated but will also deliver added value from a tourism perspective.

The scheme is administered at a local level by local authorities and local development companies. The scheme will prioritise projects which have evidence of strong community engagement.

ORIS provides funding for the development of new and existing outdoor recreational infrastructure in rural areas. It funds trails, cycleways, blueways, bridleways, as well as outdoor amenities located near rivers, lakes, beaches and on the uplands.

[Full details on the Outdoor Recreation and Infrastructure Scheme.](#)
[\(/en/collection/181e2-outdoor-recreation-infrastructure-scheme/\)](#)

Notes

2023 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

The Scheme is administered at a local level by local authorities and local development companies. It will prioritise projects which have evidence of strong community engagement. Examples of activities which applicants should have in mind when submitting applications for the 2023 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) include:

Land-based	Water-based	Air-based
Walking	Canoeing/ Kayaking/SUP	Paragliding
Hillwalking/Hiking	Rowing	Hang-gliding
Leisure Cycling	Open Water Swimming including Tidal Pools	-
Mountain Biking	Surfing	-
Equestrian Trails	Coasteering	-
Trail/Off-road Running	Wind surfing/Kite Surfing/SUP	-
Orienteering	Sailing	-
Bouldering, Scrambling, Rock Climbing, Mountaineering	Diving	-

ORIS 2023 provides funding as follows:

Measure 1 –

- small scale repair/development/promotion and marketing
- funding of up to €30,000 at a 90% rate of aid
- maximum of 7 applications can be submitted by each Local Authority

Measure 2 –

- maximum of 3 applications can be submitted by each Local Development Company
 - maximum of 2 applications per State body
-
- medium scale repair/upgrade and new trail/amenity development
 - funding of up to €200,000 at a 90% rate of aid
 - maximum of 3 applications can be submitted by each local authority
 - maximum of 1 application may be submitted per State body
-
- large scale repair/upgrade and new strategic trail/amenity development
 - funding of up to €500,000 at a 90% rate of aid
 - local authorities and State bodies can submit 1 application each under this Measure
-
- detailed development of projects which would enable them to reach a standard for application under Measure 2 or Measure 3 of ORIS
 - funding of up to €50,000 at a 90% rate of aid
 - local authorities and State bodies can each submit two applications under this Measure
 - local authorities with inhabited off-shore islands may submit one additional application under this Measure (max. 3 applications) which relates directly to a project on one of the inhabited off-shore islands

Details of previous successful projects under the ORIS.

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

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