

ORIS Scheme 2026/2027

Dates & Advisory Notice

This document sets out the key application deadlines, measures, advisory requirements, and planning guidance for the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) 2026/2027.

Application Deadlines and Measures

Scheme Measures	Deadline for application to Carlow County Council	Expression of Interest Form
<p>Measure 1 – €40,000</p> <p>Small scale repair/development/promotion and marketing</p>	5.00 p.m. 14 th August 2026	
<p>Measure 2 – €200,000</p> <p>Medium scale repair/upgrade and new trail/amenity development</p>	5.00 p.m. 25 th September 2026	
<p>Measure 3 – €500,000</p> <p>Large scale repair/upgrade and new strategic trail/amenity development</p>	5.00 p.m. 25 th September 2026	
<p>Project Development Measure</p> <p>Development costs for outdoor recreation projects, including detailed design, screenings, preparation for planning and/or procurement, appropriate assessment, and ecological surveys. Up to 4 prioritised applications allowed per Local Authority, with a combined total not exceeding €100,000.</p> <p>One additional application for equestrian trails/bridleways up to €50,000 may be allowed and, for local authorities with inhabited offshore islands or Gaeltacht areas, one additional application up to €50,000 may be allowed.</p>	5.00 p.m. Friday 14 th August 2026	

Important Advisory Notice

- All projects must be **shovel ready** with all permissions in place and match funding confirmed.

2. Applications will **not** be accepted unless planning permission is already in place and a copy of the Grant of Permission is submitted with the application. If planning permission is not in place, applicants must submit a **Section 5 Declaration of Exempted Development** from the Planning Authority with the ORIS application. This cannot be accepted at a later date.
3. **Activities Requiring Consent (ARC):** Proposals affecting a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Area (SPA) may require consent from the National Parks and Wildlife Service.
4. Applications must align with **Embracing Ireland's Outdoors, Ireland's National Outdoor Recreation Strategy and Carlow County Council's Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2025 - 2030**.
5. Applicants must provide evidence of adequate public liability insurance (€6.5 million), employers' liability insurance (€13 million), and indemnification for Carlow County Council against any claims arising.
6. **Match funding:** a minimum cash contribution of **10%** of the total project cost is required.
7. **Benefit in kind is not permitted** for 2026/2027 ORIS applications.

Ineligible Projects and Activities

- Greenways in excess of 20km
- Infrastructure for commercial activities
- Purchase or lease of land
- Legal fees
- Sport Ireland inspection fees
- Standalone outdoor gym or calisthenics projects
- Sculptures
- Motorised vehicles
- Sports grounds, traditional playgrounds, and Multi-Use Gaming Areas (MUGAs)
- Works within town parks, marked street trails, walkways and cycleways within towns and villages, except where specifically permitted in the guidance
- Surfacing works to public roads, including tarring roads
- Refurbishment or construction of buildings except in very exceptional and limited circumstances where this would substantially improve public access
- Walking or running tracks in confined spaces such as around sports pitches or playgrounds
- Maintenance works already covered by the Walks Scheme
- Activities that do not comply with the definition of countryside or outdoor recreation
- Capacity building or training
- Ongoing operational costs
- Costs not directly related to the project
- Indirect administrative costs or organisation core costs
- Retrospective costs incurred before project approval
- VAT where applicants are registered for VAT
- Bank interest, fines, financial penalties, and legal dispute costs
- Sponsorship and charitable donations
- Depreciation and notional costs

Maintenance, Management and Insurance

Trails must be maintained once complete. The project proposer is responsible for all aspects of the project and should only proceed if fully committed to the long-term management, maintenance, and funding needs of the trail.

- Groups should liaise with Sport Ireland regarding registration on the National Trails Register.
- Trail registration provides access to the national trails insurance policy.
- Registration helps ensure that trails meet the required criteria and gives assurance to the public on trail quality.
- Registration can support marketing and inclusion on Sport Ireland trails listings and Ordnance Survey maps.
- Project developers are advised to attend Sport Ireland trail development courses and review relevant planning and trail development resources.
- Disability and age-friendly measures should be incorporated in line with Universal Design Principles wherever practicable.