

Site Visit principles

The site visit principles document is to ensure transparency, consistency, and quality in the selection and facilitation of site visits.

The principles provide a clear, structured, and fair framework for selecting the locations for the annual site visits to highlight the achievements and innovations within the outdoor recreation sector.

1. Purpose and Scope

The site visits are delivered as part of the National Outdoor Recreation Strategy, "Embracing Ireland's Outdoors." They focus on the theme of the Environment, specifically aligning with Objective 2.3: "To enhance project management skills and approaches in outdoor recreation development, aiming to consistently deliver higher quality and more sustainable outdoor recreation infrastructure, including, where appropriate, the restoration of the surrounding environment".

By conducting these site visits, our goal is to improve planning, development, and delivery practices in outdoor recreation. This will ensure that future projects achieve higher quality and sustainability, contributing to the overall enhancement of outdoor recreation infrastructure across Ireland. The site visits will identify best practices and offer insights that can be replicated to foster more effective and environmentally responsible outdoor recreation initiatives. Through these visits, and the report developed from the visits, we aim to build a repository of knowledge and examples that will guide and inspire stakeholders in the outdoor recreation sector.

Site visits will be conducted on sites that show best practice on infrastructure development, participation initiatives, environmental issues and responsible behaviour. Site visits will be conducted across Ireland and in different environments throughout the year.

2. Criteria and process

Selection Criteria

All site visit locations must align with one or more of the strategic objectives outlined in "Embracing Ireland's Outdoors." Projects submitted for consideration as case studies should demonstrate the following:

- **Impact:** Clear evidence of the project's positive impact on the community, environment, and/or industry.
- **Sustainability:** Adoption of environmental, economic, and social sustainability practices.
- **Innovation:** Introduction of innovative approaches in project manager and outdoor recreation development
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Significant involvement and engagement with local communities and other stakeholders.
- **Location Suitability:** site visit location will be taken into account as there will be a spread of locations across the year.

Application Process:

1. **Submission:** Applications will be submitted through an online survey available on Sport Ireland's website. Applications will be open once a year, with approvals conducted by the Comhairle na Tuaithe Guidance Subgroup. Additional questions or clarification will be sought if required.
2. **Screening:** Submissions will first be screened by Sport Ireland for completeness and alignment with the strategic objectives.
3. **Evaluation:** The Guidance Subgroup will evaluate the screened applications based on the criteria outlined above. Projects with the highest scores and those offering unique learning opportunities will be prioritised for site visits. A minimum of 4 site visits will take place in each calendar year.
4. **Notification:** Applicants will be notified of the decision following the subgroup meeting.

Site Visit Preparation:

Sport Ireland will coordinate with selected sites to arrange visit dates, agendas, and registration. **The submitting organisation must arrange all additional logistics.** The submitting organisations must also ensure that all necessary consents and permissions are obtained from the project site and relevant stakeholders. A small amount of funding will be provided to cover the cost of refreshments.

Conducting the Site Visit:

Sites visits will be attended by members of the guidance subgroup, members of Comhairle and other relevant stakeholders in the sector. The target audience and number of attendees will be decided in collaboration with the submitting organisation. The site visit will be conducted by site representatives and industry experts. Site visit representative and attendees will be encouraged to provide a comprehensive and transparent account their experience, including any challenges or errors encountered. While not every project is flawless, our goal is for others to learn from these site visits and improve their practices.

Post-Visit Reporting:

A brief report will be developed after each site visit. The report will be completed by the site visit representatives outlining the details of the visit. A report template will be provided by Sport Ireland for representatives to complete. The final report will be published on the Sport Ireland website and other relevant platforms.

4. Continuous Improvement

These principles will be reviewed annually by the Guidance Subgroup to ensure they remain relevant and effective. This review process is crucial to adapt to any changes in the outdoor recreation sector and to incorporate lessons learned from previous site visits.

Sport Ireland is committed to ongoing engagement with stakeholders to refine the selection process and criteria. This will be done by actively seeking feedback and staying informed about evolving industry trends. By doing so, we aim to continuously improve the quality and impact of the site visits, ensuring they serve as valuable resources for the outdoor recreation community.