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Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán**
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

REVIEW OF SPORTS CAPITAL AND EQUIPMENT PROGRAMME 2020

SPORTS CAPITAL PROGRAMMES DIVISION
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INTRODUCTION

After every recent round of the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme (SCEP), a review is undertaken by the Sports Capital Programmes Division of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media with a view to making recommendations on how to improve the programme and process for future calls.

The 2020 round of the SCEP was unique in that it was opened for applications in the middle of the Covid 19 pandemic. Despite this, the Department received the highest number of applications (3,106) ever by the deadline date (1 March 2021). The final total allocation amount (€166.6m) was also the highest amount ever distributed under the Programme.

This review of the 2020 SCEP has been prepared to identify aspects of the 2020 round that worked well and those that can be further improved. It provides details of the applications received, the range of sports covered and how decisions on allocations were made. A number of changes to the application process were introduced in 2020 and the effectiveness of such measures is examined. A revised appeal process for invalid capital applications was also introduced for the 2020 round and an assessment of this new approach is also included.

Challenges that arose for the Division in relation to the treatment of some categories of applications during the assessment and appeals stage are also addressed. Such cases highlight the need to constantly review and amend the Department's own guidelines for making an application to improve the process for future rounds. In this regard, it is anticipated that a new round of the SCEP will open for applications in the first half of 2023. This review identifies a number of issues that require consideration and amendment before the new round is launched.

The *National Sports Policy 2018-2027* continues to provide the strategic direction for the provision of sporting infrastructure into the future, including through the SCEP. The Review was undertaken following consultation with staff of the SCEP division, the Federation of Irish Sport, Sport Ireland, Cara and other stakeholders.

BACKGROUND TO THE SCEP

The SCEP is the primary means of providing Government funding to sport and community organisations at local, regional and national level throughout the country. The Programme aims to foster an integrated and planned approach to the development of sports and physical recreation facilities and assists the purchase of non- personal sports equipment.

The Programme operated on an annual basis from 1998 up to, and including, 2008. It subsequently resumed in 2012 with rounds in 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018, and 2020 (the subject of this Review). The Programme for Government commits to continuing the SCEP and to directing SCEP funding to disadvantaged areas and groups that are currently under-represented in terms of participation.

The stated goals of the SCEP are to:

- Assist voluntary and community organisations, National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of sport, Local Authorities, Education and Training Boards, and schools to develop high quality, accessible, safe, well-designed, sustainable facilities in appropriate locations and to provide appropriate equipment to help maximise participation in sport and physical recreation.
- Prioritise the needs of disadvantaged areas and groups (such as people with disabilities) in the provision of sports facilities.
- Encourage the sharing of local, regional and national sports facilities by clubs, community organisations and national governing bodies of sport.

Grants are available to sports clubs, voluntary and community groups, NGBs and Local Authorities. Third level colleges, Education and Training Boards (ETBs), and schools may only apply for funding jointly with sports clubs or sporting organisations. The facilities that have been funded range from the smallest clubs to national centres of sporting excellence.

The programme funds:

- Natural grass sports pitches, tracks and courts (including pitch drainage)
- Floodlighting
- Artificial¹ sports pitches, tracks, courts and multi-use games areas

¹ An EU Regulation concerning micro plastics used in artificial playing surfaces is to be finalised in 2023 and will have implications for the ongoing use of granular rubber infill. As the estimated typical lifetime of artificial playing surfaces of 10-12 years exceeds the proposed 8-year transition period, state funding in respect of new pitches that incorporate such infill would be contrary to the aims of the Regulation and would represent a less than optimal return on investment. Accordingly, any application under the next round of the SCEP should be fully compliant with the proposed new standards.

- Security fencing, ball stop netting and goal posts
- Hurling walls / handball alleys
- Building or refurbishment of dressing rooms, showers and toilets
- Building or refurbishment of sports halls and gyms
- Any other capital projects that are clearly sporting in nature and that will increase participation in sport or improve performance

More than 13,000 projects have benefited from sports capital funding since 1998, bringing the total allocations in that time to approx. €1.15 billion. It is generally accepted that the Programme has transformed the sporting landscape of Ireland with improvements in the quality and quantity of sporting facilities in virtually every village, town and city.

In addition to the €166.6m sourced by Ministers under the 2020 round, a further support for the sport sector, in the form of a €35 million fund to subsidise energy bills, was secured in 2022. The fund has been allocated to sports clubs and organisations to help them meet energy costs over the 2022/2023 winter period. It helped clubs with the cost of floodlights, heating gyms and sports halls, as well as other energy costs which was of enormous benefit to the entire sporting system.

2020 ROUND OF THE SCEP

Overview

In November 2020, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform sanctioned the opening of a new round of the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme. At the time of the announcement of the new round a commitment was made that at least €40m would be available to allocate.

A Press Release issued on 30th November 2020 stating that a new round of the SCEP would be open for applications from 11 December 2020 to 12 February 2021. Subsequently, in view of the difficulties some applicants were encountering as a result of COVID restrictions, the deadline was extended to 1 March 2021. This advance notice and relatively long application window was intended to give organisations every opportunity to get the necessary documentation in place by the deadline date. Direct emails issued to all registered organisations on the Department's OSCAR system, Chief Executives of local authorities, National Governing Bodies of Sport, and Local Sports Partnerships. The opening of the new round, and associated deadlines, were also publicised on the Department's social media platforms.

By 1st March deadline, a record 3,106 applications were received; a 33% increase on the 2018 round. These applications sought over €200 million in total; a 23% increase on the 2018 round. The record level of applications indicates a high level of awareness of the programme.

With a total of over €200 million sought, making total allocations of just €40m would have presented significant challenges for the Department and resulted in many worthwhile projects not receiving a grant offer. Furthermore, it was acknowledged that the Covid crisis gave rise to significant difficulties for many sports clubs with particular impacts on clubs' ability to raise funding during the pandemic. Accordingly, following discussions with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, sanction was received to allocate a total of €166.6 million. This represented a 197% increase on the funding allocated under the 2018 round.

In the case of local applications, the total amount of money available (€145 million in respect of the February 2022 allocations) was distributed on a per capita/demand basis and every valid local application received a grant offer. As a number of counties had insufficient valid applications to use all of their per capita/demand funding, every valid application in those counties received the maximum valid grant possible bar those whose score placed them in the bottom 5% by score in their county. In these cases, applicants received no more than 75% of

the maximum valid grant. This was implemented with a view to retaining some competitive element to the marking.

For those counties where the funding available exceeded the amount sought, any funds remaining were redistributed amongst the remaining counties. In all other counties, the exact amount allocated to each project was based on the assessment score obtained, the amount of funding sought, and the total amount of funding available for that county. Allocations were made to 59 different sports and to many multi use sports halls and community centres. In the case of regional applications, €21.5 million was allocated with all valid applications receiving a grant offer. Almost 2,900 different applicants received a grant. Full details of the allocation methodology are set out later in this report.

The total funding allocated was considerably higher than under any previous round, and a 197% increase on the 2018 round. Unsurprisingly, this meant that general feedback to the Department following the announcement of the grants was overwhelmingly positive with the vast majority of applicants satisfied with their grant offer. A statistical summary of the allocations by sport and by county is contained in Appendix 1.

In relation to invalid applications, the improvements introduced for the 2017 and 2018 rounds aimed at reducing the proportion of applications deemed invalid continue to be effective as the invalid rate for the 2020 round remained low at 6%. These improvements included:

- A detailed guide to making an application for the Programme, including a YouTube guide to the application process and a sample application form, was posted on the Department's website.
- Users were able to print a copy of their application for checking prior to submitting it.
- More online validation of application information to prompt users to provide the correct information and to prevent them from submitting incomplete or invalid applications.

Furthermore, officials were available to take telephone enquiries right up to the closing date for applications. There was also a dedicated facility to direct email queries without delay to the relevant officer.

Despite these improvements and resources, the number of applications requiring a second chance was disappointing. In this regard, 823 required revised documents/the 2nd chance facility (26%). Despite the application of a 2nd chance, 267 applications were deemed invalid (9%). All invalid applicants were entitled to appeal their result. Following appeal, the number of invalid applications was reduced to 176 (6%).

It is proposed that further measures be undertaken for a future round to reduce the number of applications requiring revised documents/the 2nd chance facility. In order to ensure cleaner applications, and a quicker assessment process, it is proposed that significantly more points be provided for applications that do not require a 2nd chance under the next round. Applicants who submitted correct applications at the outset did receive some recognition under the scoring system for the 2020 round but it is recommended that this be increased. It was felt that an increasing number of applicants submitted applications under the 2020 round knowing they would have the opportunity to correct matters and thus may have adopted a casual approach to getting the correct documentation in place by the closing date. It is also recommended that further prompts and integration of the guide to the programme be incorporated into the application form for future rounds, subject to the capability of the existing ICT infrastructure.

In relation to the assessment and scoring system, the Department continued to implement a system that was as fair and transparent as possible. In this regard, the complete assessment procedures and scoring system for the 2020 SCEP was published on the Department's website prior to any assessment commencing. This avoided any suggestion that the scoring system was amended in any way following initial assessments to favour any particular application or type of applications. Accordingly, it is recommended that the scoring system continues to be published in advance of assessment work for future rounds.

The full scoring system for the 2020 Round is shown at Appendix II.
All applications were assessed according to these published criteria:

- Likelihood of increasing participation/improving performance
- Sharing of facilities
- Level of socio-economic disadvantage in the area of the project (based on the Pobal Index of deprivation catchment score)
- Technical merits of the project
- Level of own funding available
- Level of Sports capital funding allocated in the past 10 years

How Were Individual Grant Amounts Decided?

Following the conclusion of the assessment work, Ministers were presented with the final list of valid and invalid applications and a proposed monetary allocation for each valid application.

In relation to how individual grant amounts were decided, the overall amount for allocation was first distributed by county on a per capita/demand split basis. If a county was not able to absorb its per capita/demand allocation, the surplus was also redistributed on a per capita/demand basis to those counties with a shortfall. For “equipment-only” local applications a pass rate was applied which eliminated the bottom 5% of applications by score. For capital applications a pass rate was not applied, however valid applications in the bottom 5% by score received no more than 75% of the maximum valid grant. This was implemented with a view to retaining some competitive element to the marking.

The following formula was used to determine allocations: -

- The Maximum Grant for each valid application was multiplied by the Assessment Score for that application producing a weighted score (A).
- The total weighted scores (As) for all applications in a county were added together to give a total (T).
- This total figure (T) was divided into the Per Capita/Demand County Funding (C) giving a Ratio of total weighted score to the available funding (T to C).
- The Ratio was then multiplied by A for each application to give the draft recommended allocation to each application.

Full details of all allocations were published on the Department's website:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/471ed5-sports-capital-allocations/>

In view of the extra resources secured, it is felt that the method outlined above represented a reasonable and transparent way of deciding grant amounts under the 2020 round. The system does raise some issues however as set out below:

- The scoring system rewards applications that seek higher amounts of funding and this could be seen to discriminate against clubs/organisations in disadvantaged areas and applications for equipment only grants.
- It should be noted also that applying a similar system of allocating grants under future rounds may not be appropriate, as clubs are now aware that all valid capital applications under the 2020 round got a grant offer and applicants seeking higher grants were awarded more funding.

- It must also be noted that the significantly increased amount allocated under the 2020 round is very likely to encourage an even greater number of applications under a future round. Applicants may submit applications purely on the basis that they will receive some funding. Accordingly, it is recommended that when the next round is open for applications, it is made clear at the outset that not all applications will be offered a grant (this point is expanded upon in the later section of the review dealing with the next round of the SCEP) and a truly competitive programme will be delivered. It is key for the effective and timely draw down of grants, and the delivery of projects, that meaningful allocations are awarded to the most worthy of the valid submissions.

New Appeals Process – broader parameters for capital appeals

Equipment-only tranche

Similarly to previous rounds, unsuccessful applicants were afforded the opportunity to appeal the Department's decision. Under previous rounds of the programme, appeals were only considered if unsuccessful applicants could show that the Department had made a mistake in the assessment process or if the Department's own "Guide to Making an Application" was not sufficiently clear in terms of what would be considered a valid application.

All grants were awarded on the basis of a pre-agreed methodology, approved by Ministers. This approved methodology agreed that the bottom scoring 5% of applications in each county would not receive a grant and high-fee clubs would be excluded. As with previous rounds, it was recommended that all unsuccessful applicants (invalid or high fees/restrictive membership) be given the opportunity to appeal and appeals would be upheld if any of these appellants could show a mistake was made in the assessment of their application. Following the allocation of €16.6 million to the 922 successful equipment-only applications on 6th August 2021, an appeal process was launched. Each appeal submitted was assessed by an official not involved in the original assessment of that application. All decisions on appeal were also reviewed by at least two more senior officials.

Of the four equipment-only appeals submitted, none were upheld.

Two of the cases related to applications in the bottom 5% by score for that county. While a minor alteration to the score was recommended for one of the applications, this alteration was not sufficient to move it out of the bottom 5% by score for that county (Dublin).

One of the other appeals related to an invalid item. There is a considerable list of invalid items published in the "Guide to Making an Application" prior to the deadline for submission. While the list cannot be exhaustive, applicants are advised to consult with the Department in advance if they are uncertain whether their project is covered.

A further appeal related to the high fees provision. In this regard, while the club referenced average fees for the club, the appeal did not dispute the fact that the annual adult membership fee (as provided by the club) exceeds the €1,500 threshold previously agreed by Ministers (which also applied to previous rounds of the SCEP). Accordingly, the appeal was not upheld.

Capital tranche

Correspondence received from DPER dated 28th January 2022 authorised the allocation of grants of up to €150 million for capital projects. Allocations totalling €143.8m were announced on 11th February 2022 meaning that just over €6 million was potentially available for any successful appeals.

In view of the funding available and the challenges faced by clubs as a result of the Covid pandemic (specifically the additional challenges completing application forms or responding to requests for revised documentation), Ministers requested that invalid applicants should also be given a final opportunity to submit corrected documentation.

Many applications had an element of their application deemed invalid (e.g. an application for a new clubhouse and car park – in such a case, the car park element would not be covered). The most common reasons for applications being deemed invalid related to problems with applicants satisfying the title/access requirements. Some of these applicants may also have applied for equipment elements in their applications. This resulted in some applicants being awarded grants for the equipment element but not for the more significant capital elements. While such applicants were not deemed “invalid”, many such applicants were disappointed with the level of grant awarded. In order to be as reasonable to all applicants as possible, it was agreed that any applicants that were awarded less than half of the amount applied for, should also be given the opportunity to appeal.

Ultimately, capital applicants could appeal if they were eligible under one of the following criteria:

- Applicants assessed as invalid or deemed to charge excessive fees
- Applicants provisionally awarded a grant of less than 50% of the amount applied for

All unsuccessful applicants in this tranche were given a three-week period to appeal the Department’s decision. All appellants were also given a final opportunity to submit corrected documentation within that period. Each appeal submitted was assessed by an official not involved in the original assessment of that application. All decisions on appeal were also reviewed by at least two more senior officials.

A total of 146 capital appeals were submitted by the deadline date of 4th April 2022. Following review of the appeals, it was recommended that allocations should be made to 108 of the appellants. These 108 cases included a limited number of cases where it was accepted there was some ambiguity in the published “Guide to Making an Application” or where there may have been inconsistency in terms of the type of works that were considered eligible for funding. It is recommended that the next “Guide to Making an Application” is amended to try to remove any possible ambiguity around eligible/ineligible projects.

Amongst the 108 appeal cases where grants were recommended, 5 appeals related to applications where, on balance, it was felt that a grant should have been awarded in the original allocations as announced in February 2022. It is recognised though that these appeals contained explanations and clarifications that assisted in the evaluation of the original material. For these 5 cases it was recommended that the applicants receive the same level of funding they would have been allocated in the original February announcement.

Of the remaining 103 upheld appeals, 89 had submitted corrected documentation as part of the appeal process thus validating their applications. A further 14 cases had some mitigating circumstances and on balance, it was agreed that a grant should be awarded. Four of the successful appeals related to “regional” applications.

For these 103 cases, the Department calculated the grant that would have been awarded using the same methodology as applied in February. This involved distributing the total funding on a county basis using the agreed 50% per capita/50% demand ratio. In counties where there was an excess of funding available, all valid applications above the bottom 5% were allocated their Maximum Valid Grant amount. As previously approved by Ministers, the grant allocations in respect of the bottom 5% of applications by score in these counties were not to exceed 75% of the Maximum Valid Grant Amount. For the other counties (i.e. those where demand exceeded amount available to allocate), the formula as set out earlier in this report was applied.

Once this formula was applied, the total recommended grant allocation amount for the 103 cases was €7,222,314. The total available funding retained for successful appeals was €6.14m. An amount of €393,978 was required for the 5 cases which should have been awarded grants in February. This meant that a total amount of €5.746m was available for the 103 cases. Accordingly, the recommended allocation amount was reduced slightly on a proportionate basis to ensure that the overall €6.14m was not exceeded.

In 38 cases, there were no grounds for any further consideration as the applicants failed to provide correct documentation and/or the application could not be considered to fall under the terms and conditions of the SCEP and/or the high fees /restrictive membership requirements were not met.

Regarding applications from clubs charging high fees, the Guide to the 2020 round stated that when making allocations, priority would be given to organisations that charge modest annual membership fees and that do not charge significant once-off entrance fees. It is proposed that the Guide for the next round will state categorically the threshold of fees which will preclude applications from consideration.

Full details of all appeals received and those who received a grant offer are published on the Department's website:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/471ed5-sports-capital-allocations/>

Overall the appeals system was generally well received and in the interests of equity and fairness it is recommended that it should be maintained for all future rounds. It is however, strongly recommended that the previous parameters for appeal be applied for any future round i.e. appeals should only be upheld if unsuccessful applicants show that the Department had made a mistake in the assessment process or acted unreasonably. Providing applicants with a “3rd chance” is likely to reduce the care given at application stage and also significantly delay the overall grants cycle. It is hoped that the proposed addition of prompts integrating elements of the Guide to the online application process, and simplification of title documents, will further reduce the number of invalid applications.

Revised legal arrangements regarding Charges and Declarations

As raised in the 2018 Review, the Department's policy of continuing to impose a charge in favour of the Minister on the grantee's property once the grantee entered into a deed of covenant has a disproportionately negative effect on grantees who have received modest grants in the past or for whom the depreciated balance of the grant is below the previous threshold for charges (€300,000). As part of a review of the legal arrangements for the SCEP and a review of the Department's risk appetite for the programme, the application of charges and top ups of charges was re-examined and the threshold raised to €400,000 with effect for all grants awarded under the 2020 round. Given that the threshold had not been amended since 2008, the increase was deemed timely and has already led to a reduction in processing requirements.

It had been the Department's policy that once a grantee has a deed in place, all future grants are placed on the deed. This putting in place of the first legal charge involves grantees' solicitors providing the CSSO with, inter alia, a financial contribution towards the Minister's legal costs at the CSSO, searches of the Land Registry, and certain undertakings. Thereafter, further advances (i.e. new grants), any changes in trustees or cases where the grantee has obtained new lands,

create a requirement to complete a deed of novation or completely new deeds of covenant and charge along with all the associated processing periods and costs. It is now the case that unless the depreciated value of an organisation's total grants over the preceding 15 years exceeds €400,000, no legal formalities are required for any size of allocation. Instead, the Declaration which is required to be signed by the grantee before any grant payment is made has been amended to ask grantees to confirm that previous charges have been registered.

Furthermore, it is also now the position that grantees are not asked to carry out any searches or to complete any legal documents for further advances of €50,000 or below.

Another recommendation of the 2018 Review was to analyse the requirements to impose charges where the owner of the land, or the applicant's landlord is a state authority. That recommendation was implemented and a further significant change under the 2020 round is that where the landlord is a "State Authority", as defined by the State Property Act, a tripartite agreement between the applicants, the State Authority and the Department (D/TCAGSM), with the consent of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER), will suffice in place of a charge.

These revisions to the Department's legal arrangements have reduced considerably the administrative burden for many grantees and shortened the timeframe for grant drawdown while still safeguarding the Minister's interests, proportionally to any risk. To date, the new procedures are working well although the changes are still at a relatively early stage of implementation. The new thresholds and operational procedures will be kept under ongoing review in consultation with the Chief State Solicitor's Office.

INCONSISTENCIES IDENTIFIED

Due to the broad gamut of sectors and sports served by the SCEP and the continual advancement in technology, inevitably some grey areas arise in terms of what should be eligible for funding under the scheme or who is the appropriate applicant. Four such areas which arose under the 2020 round are detailed below.

Irrigation systems

In carrying out the original assessments some applications for water sprinkler irrigation systems were deemed invalid. For other applications, irrigation systems were allowed. The inconsistency was identified at appeal stage. Drainage works for sports facilities have regularly been funded under the Programme under previous rounds and appeals from applicants seeking to undertake irrigation works were upheld.

Timing Equipment and Other Technology

In general, all grants under the Programme need to have a specific sporting element. In relation to timing equipment, some applicants argued that this equipment was necessary for organising sporting competitions which is an essential part of the club's activities. In some cases, this argument was accepted, while in others such equipment was deemed to be lacking sufficient sporting content and those items were made ineligible. It is proposed that in the Guide for the next round the list of eligible and ineligible items (which it is recognised cannot be exhaustive), be expanded further to list these items.

Various Specific Equipment Asks

A number of other specific technological asks were included in the "equipment –only" applications including IT equipment, certain classes of motorised vehicles and other high-tech specialised equipment. As above, it is recommended that the section of the "Guide to Making an Application" which lists what is valid and invalid be expanded further for the next round to list as many of these items as is feasible.

Requirement for eligible owners to apply

Inconsistencies arose in the assessment process in relation to projects where the owner was eligible to apply but did not in some cases. While the *Guide* is clear in this matter:

“If the property owner is entitled to apply for an SCEP grant in their own right then they must make the application e.g. a club that has access to school facilities cannot make an application as the school should be making the application”

a number of cases arose where clubs applied for projects on local authority land (although in some cases, consent from the local authority was included as part of the application).

Accordingly, direct engagement with the relevant stakeholders e.g. Local Authorities, schools, and clubs, in advance of the next round of the programme should also be considered to draw their attention to this requirement. More generally, it is also recommended that DTCAGSM liaise with Dept. of Education to explore how sports facilities at schools can be made more available to the wider community.

CHALLENGES OF THE 2020 ROUND

ICT infrastructure

The constraints of the front-end online portal, OSCAR, which was introduced in 2012, and the back-end case management system, CRM, proved problematic throughout the operation of the 2020 round. There were a number of IT challenges throughout the assessment and allocation processes.

While a new case management system is a priority for the Department as a whole, and SCP Division in particular, it is unlikely there will be a replacement before the end of 2023. Resources will also have to be redeployed to thoroughly test a new system prior to migrating to it. As it is proposed to launch a new round of the SCEP in the first half of 2023, the new Programme will be done on the present, end-of-life ICT infrastructure. While the challenges under the 2020 round were relatively low-risk (workflows not executing properly caused issues such as delays in issuing bulk emails), as the caseload and demands on the system grow, as evidenced by the addition of over 3,000 cases under the 2020 round (almost 2,900 of which were successful and require ongoing management), the risk to the Department's reputation and customer information will increase. Given the scale of the allocation under the 2020 round, an even higher volume of applications is envisaged for a future round, using ICT infrastructure that is less than optimal. This is likely to impact the timeline for delivery of various stages for the next round. Accordingly, it is recommended that a quality assurance check be carried out of the current infrastructure to confirm if it can meet the demands of a new round. Work is underway within the Department to minimise the risk and to ensure a contingency plan is in place for the next round. The development of a new online case management system is a concurrent priority for the Department.

Impacts of COVID-19

The 2020 SCEP was announced in November 2020 and the deadline for applications was 1 March 2021. The bulk of the assessment and delivery of the existing grant caseload took place in an environment of working from home due to the restrictions then in place. The Sports Capital Programme Division adapted to the new working environment and met the rising demand and associated pressures with professionalism, dedication and exactness.

The fact that the 2020 round was delivered in the same time frame as the 2018 round despite a 33% increase in applications; a 23% increase in the amount sought and; a 197% increase in the amount awarded is to be commended.

SUCCESSSES OF THE 2020 ROUND

Overall, it is felt that the 2020 round achieved the objectives of the programme. Despite an extremely challenging environment, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department managed to deliver the programme in a shorter timeframe than the 2018 round. This is despite a 33% increase in the volume of applications; a 75% increase in the volume of grants deemed successful and; a 197% increase in the amount of funding awarded. The programme was also delivered despite the constraints of working with end-of-life ICT infrastructure.

Furthermore, the whole application and assessment process was undertaken while staff in the Department worked remotely due to the Covid 19 Pandemic. The high level of funding for the 2020 round (€166.6 million) allowed a significantly greater number of projects to receive a grant offer and a wide range of sports received funding. The allocation of €166.6 million is a 197% increase on the 2018 allocation of €56 million. Of the 3,106 applications submitted under the 2020 round, 2,878 were successful and 59 sport types were represented in the successful cohort.

Other aspects of the 2020 SCEP which it is considered worked well include: -

1. The 2nd chance facility which was introduced under the 2018 round, and retained for the 2020 round, continued to contribute to the sustained low invalidity rate (6%).
2. Similarly to the previous rounds, publication of the scoring system in advance of the assessment process beginning was welcomed and provided a greater level of transparency around the process.
3. The methods used to decide individual grant amounts for the 2020 round, for the equipment tranche initially, and then the capital tranche, worked consistently and accurately.
4. The opportunity for applicants to appeal decisions was retained, and the grounds under which applicants could appeal expanded. In the interests of equity and fairness, an opportunity to appeal decisions should be available for all future rounds of the SCEP but the parameters may need to be constrained, particularly as funds may be more straitened and to ensure the programme is competitive.

5. The method to determine levels of disadvantage amongst applicants was modified under the 2020 round. Previously the Pobal Index Score was based on the address of the applicant organisation at the time of submission. Under the 2020 round, the programme sought to address disadvantage in a more nuanced way so the Pobal score was amended to take in the catchment area of the applicant. Overall this worked well and it is recommended that it should be retained for future rounds.
6. The particular criteria scores added to the 2020 round scoring matrix helped ensure overall goals of increased female participation, increased participation for people with disabilities, and increased participation for users from disadvantaged areas were met. By way of example, it is interesting to note that the total funding allocated to Ladies Gaelic Football projects in 2020 was €488,680 compared to €24,970 in 2018 (a 1,857% increase).
7. Despite the end-of-life status of the case management system, and the increased demand on the system in light of the dramatic increase in applications, applications were assessed accurately, allocations communicated and day-to-day management of grants sustained despite the significant amount of micro editing required.
8. During the course of the year, the ongoing work processes of the Department in respect of Formal Approval and payment requests were subject to external independent audit. The outcome of the audit was particularly positive.

TO CONSIDER BEFORE NEW ROUND

Amendments to the Guide

Having reviewed the 2020 round of the programme, the following section outlines a number of areas for consideration prior to the opening of a new round of the SCEP. Obviously any significant changes to the terms and conditions of the programme will require formal approval by Ministers before introduction. It is already clear however, that some updates and changes will be required to the Department's own "Guide to making an Application" to address issues identified in the latest round and previously outlined in this report. In this regard though, it must be accepted that it is not feasible to 'legislate' for every complex eventuality and unfortunately, it is not evident that every applicant consults the Guide in advance of submitting an application.

Spending Review 2022

A full Spending Review of the SCEP was undertaken by the Strategic Policy Division of the Department in 2022 and was published in August (<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/32ecd-spending-review-2022/>). It found, inter alia, that:

- the selection criteria for the SCEP has proven to be transparent and largely efficient
- SCEP funding and grants have been distributed efficiently in order to achieve the Programme's aims of supporting sporting bodies to maximise participation in sport, prioritising the needs of disadvantaged areas and groups traditionally underrepresented in sport.

The Spending Review recommended:

the implementation of an evaluation framework to further evaluate and monitor the SCEP objectives and provide a systematic framework for data collection in order to enhance future research in the areas of SCEP efficiency and effectiveness

and

a demand analysis to ascertain the level of funding required to meet current and future levels of demand from sporting organisations, sport types and cohorts of the population that have traditionally been unrepresented in sport

and

consideration of the introduction of more specific rounds of the SCEP, which focus on specific objectives of the programme, for example, increasing female participation.

The SCP team will continue to engage with the Strategic Policy Division of the Department in relation to these recommendations and work is ongoing in this regard, including the development of an evaluation framework as outlined above.

Virtual Workshops

Unlike the 2018 and 2017 rounds, in light of the restrictions imposed by COVID-19, it was not possible to hold regional seminars and workshops for potential applicants. Awareness of the programme, however, is well-established as evidenced by the 33% increase in applications under the 2020 round when compared to the 2018 round. The possibility of virtual workshops should be considered in the lead up to a future round or perhaps virtual workshops/webinars aimed specifically at NGBs and local authorities.

Invalid Applications/Second Chance/Appeal procedure

In relation to SCEP applications, invalid applications represent fruitless work for the Department's largely volunteer customer base. It must also be accepted that it was unfair on invalid applicants to have to wait until the finalisation of the whole process to discover whether an application is invalid. Historically the invalid rate for applications was frequently in the range of 40%, giving rise to frustration for applicants. Furthermore, under older rounds there was no visible link between the scoring of projects and the level of funding awarded.

Innovations to target the invalid rate included: -

- Regional workshops which were held throughout the country for potential applicants.
- A YouTube video guide to completing the form was launched.
- Introduction, after the 2017 round, of an appeal process.
- Introduction, under the 2018 round, of a second chance facility whereby, if a mistake was noted during the assessment process, applicants were allowed to correct their application.
- Publication of the scoring system in advance of assessment work commencing and the development of a formula to provide a direct link between the assessment score and the allocated grant.

- Commencement of the application of the Pobal Deprivation Index when determining how marks were awarded for the disadvantaged status of applications. For the 2020 round, the Department worked with Pobal to agree a new methodology whereby the catchment area of applicants was a factor in the score awarded for disadvantage thereby giving greater nuance to the disadvantage targeted by each application.

The full scoring systems and assessment manuals for the 2017, 2018 and 2020 rounds of the programme were published prior to assessment work commencing. Furthermore, greater weighting was given to objective rather than subjective criteria. Comprehensive reviews of each round were undertaken and published for the first time. These reviews detailed exactly how individual grants were awarded. All applicants were given details of their assessment score and could appeal the Department's decision.

For the 2018 round, applicants were given a "second chance" to correct their application. This resulted in the invalid rate falling to 5%.

A survey of applicants was undertaken in early 2021 with over 1,200 responses. Of the respondents, less than 2% felt the application process was "very difficult" or were unable to complete the application.

Despite a 33% increase in applications under the 2020 round, the invalid rate remained low at 6%.

The table below shows the reasons applications under the 2020 round were deemed to be invalid. In almost every case, applications were found to be invalid due to a problem with the accompanying supporting documentation. As the top three, single factor, reasons for applications being deemed invalid account for 78% of all invalidations these should be the primary focus of efforts to reduce invalid applications for the next round of the Programme. As mentioned previously, the Department's Guide sets out in detail what is required regarding supporting documentation so efforts will focus on guiding applicants further via the application form through data validation and prompts etc.

Reason for invalidity	Number	%
Title/Access requirements of the Sports Capital Programme not satisfied	98	65
Evidence of own funding not provided in prescribed format	12	8
Insufficient quotations/estimates submitted	7	5
Insufficient own funding	7	5

Ineligible item(s)	4	3
Insufficient sporting content	7	5
High fees/restrictive membership	3	2
Multiple reasons for invalidity	12	8
TOTAL	150	

As a first step the Department needs to further examine the necessity of requiring all of the documents currently sought to support an application. Consideration could be given to postponing the requirement for providing supporting documents until after any grant has been allocated. It is felt on balance however, that given the volume of invalid applications that cannot satisfy title requirements it is not considered to be a good use of Departmental resources, nor applicants' time, to work on applications that ultimately cannot result in an allocation. Recent changes in the legal requirements around sports capital grants within the Department, may facilitate the removal of certain title requirements for applicants whose awarded grants remain under a certain, cumulative threshold (€400k). The need for documents to be recently dated should also be examined – as this was the reason many applications required the 2nd chance facility – and should reflect the likely timeline between application deadline and assessment.

Generally, the main issue regarding reasons for invalidity appears to be a lack of engagement with the *Guide to making an Application* and a failure to utilise pre-existing templates. It is hoped that a more interactive application form will go some way to preventing these issues from recurring, subject to the constraints of the existing ICT infrastructure.

Conflicts of interest

A small number of cases have been identified where there may be a conflict of interest for either points of contacts (POC) for certain organisations or trustees.

In the case of point of contacts for grantees, it is recommended that the terms and conditions of a future round detail explicitly the need for points of contacts for grantees to declare themselves to have no outside interest which may unfairly advantage the organisation for which they are operating as POC or administrative support.

Regarding trustees of organisations, a small number of cases have arisen where the solicitor for the organisation was also a trustee. In consultation with the Department's legal advisor (the CSSO), there is a concern that the solicitor in such cases is therefore not able to offer legal advice from a place of impartiality. A case also arose where, upon completing legal searches which form a routine part of the placing of a charge upon a property (required for capital grants of a certain

threshold in order to safeguard the Exchequer's investment), a number of trustees were found to have sizeable judgments registered against them which would raise concerns as to their suitability to act as trustees.

Accordingly, it is recommended that, in future, trustees must declare themselves to be free of any conflicts of interest and judgments as part of the application process.

Climate Action

The Department is committed to reducing emissions and supporting climate action in line with the Government's Climate Action Plan. Improving environmental performance through energy efficiency in its capital schemes is a key cross cutting goal for the coming years. Sport is also uniquely placed to lead and inspire communities towards positive change in the climate crisis.

Currently the SCEP funds a range of sustainability measures including modifications to sports facilities to reduce energy consumption and restricts funding for floodlighting to LED floodlights. Under the 2020 round, €15.4 million was allocated to 166 applications which featured sustainability measures such as LED floodlighting, solar, and PV panels. For future rounds consideration should be given to supporting a broader range of sustainable sports capital projects (e.g. sustainable drainage systems, rainwater harvesting) and sustainable methods/products should be used.

The eligibility of sustainability measures under sports capital should be spotlighted to increase awareness of climate action which can be supported by SCEP, and consideration given to prioritising projects which incorporate climate adaptations. Sporting, community and public organisations should also be aware of a range of funding available from the SEAI for energy improvements and how these might work alongside SCEP funding. It is recommended that the next *Guide to Making an Application* should reference information where guidance can be sought in terms of SEAI adaptation grants available.

The Department is committed to ensuring grantees choose more sustainable products and methods when advancing projects. In this regard, it is planned to incorporate carbon calculations into grant funding applications and reporting as part of the new ICT grant management system. However, this calculator will not be a feature of the forthcoming round given the constraints of the existing ICT system.

In addition, it is recommended that more steps be taken to actively encourage biodiversity by sports clubs/organisations. In this regard it is suggested that future guides to making an application contain links and references to other supports which are available for biodiversity measures. Consideration should be given to the awarding of additional marks to applicants

which already have biodiversity measures in place and provide details of same as part of the application form.

It is recommended that this Department and Sport Ireland work with NGBs to encourage them in developing and publishing climate action strategies. It is also recommended that this Department work with Sport Ireland and NGBs to further raise awareness of all climate action measures and supports which are available to all sports clubs, sporting organisations and community groups.

In this regard, it is recommended that the next *Guide to Making an Application*, which will issue prior to the opening of the next round, will include a specific section highlighting these other supports and initiatives to ensure all sport organisations operate as sustainably as possible.

Inclusion in sport

Under the *Sports Action Plan 2021 to 2023*, NGBs were asked to achieve, by end 2023, the Government's target for State Boards of a minimum of 40% representation of each gender in the membership of their Boards. Achieving the 40% target is one of Sport Ireland's grant funding priorities from 2023 onwards so Sport Ireland funding will be impacted in 2024 for any NGBs which fail to meet the target by the end of this year. Good progress has already been made by many NGBs in achieving the relevant targets. Government has previously made it clear however, that the implications of not achieving the required targets will have to be considered when making decisions on the allocation of all public funding. Accordingly, it is recommended that when the *Guide to Making an Application* for the next round of the Programme is published, it is specifically stated that the adherence or otherwise of the relevant NGB to the gender balance requirement will be a consideration when Ministers are approving individual grant allocations. The scoring system for the next round, which will require Ministerial sign-off, may also have a specific inbuilt mechanism for rewarding those sports in compliance with the Government's State Board targets.

Respect for Match Officials

The abuse of match officials at sports events has been a regular and unwelcome occurrence in recent years. Such incidents have not been confined to any particular sport and relevant sports organisations should do everything in their power to eliminate all such occurrences. Sport Ireland is set to develop a national Code of Conduct template across Irish sport, incorporating respect for, and the elimination of abuse towards referees, officials, coaches and players, which NGBs may use to promote good practice within their sport. Once this template is finalised,

consideration should be given to incorporating penalties within the allocation methodology of future rounds of the SCEP for any sports which fail to implement the new code. Accordingly, it is recommended that when the *Guide to Making an Application* for the next round of the Programme is published, it is specifically stated that the commitment or otherwise of the relevant NGB to the new Code may be a consideration when Ministers are approving the level of individual grant allocations. The scoring system for the next round, which will require Ministerial sign-off, may also have a specific inbuilt mechanism for rewarding those sports committed to the Code.

POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS FOR FUTURE ROUNDS OF SCEP

1. The rules around supporting documentation should be reviewed. While the 2nd chance facility contributed to a reduction in the invalidity rate under previous rounds, it appears to have evolved to encourage some low quality “placeholder” applications under the 2020 round. There may now be an expectation amongst applicants that, provided they submit an application by the deadline, they will have a chance to effectively complete it at a later date by providing corrected documentation, or documentation which had not been previously provided, through the second chance facility. This phenomenon created an undue administrative burden and delays under the latest round, particularly given the increased number of applications. In order to ensure cleaner applications, and a shorter assessment window, it is proposed that significantly more points be provided for applications that do not require a 2nd chance under the next round.

Of the 3,106 applications received, 815 required the 2nd chance i.e. 26%. Of the 2,878 successful applications, 665 required the 2nd chance i.e. 23%.

Sport type where revised documents were required	No. of successful apps requiring revised documents	No. of successful applications within those sport types	No. of applications received overall from those sport types
Angling/Fishing	2	10	10
Archery	4	11	12
Athletics	15	90	98
Badminton	4	10	10
Basketball	6	35	39
Billiards & Snooker	1	3	5
Bowls	2	3	5
Boxing	2	52	55
Camogie	4	28	29
Canoeing / Kayaking	7	43	45
Clay Pigeon Shooting	1	4	4
Community Games	7	14	17
Cricket	2	25	26
Cycling	12	38	40
Equestrian Sports	4	43	50
Gaelic Games	212	837	877
Golf	34	143	161
Handball	2	12	14
Hillwalking	3	15	15
Hockey	9	60	62
Judo	1	4	4
Ladies Gaelic Football	2	19	19
Martial Arts	1	9	9

Motor Sport	2	6	7
Motorcycling	1	1	2
Mountaineering	1	3	3
Multi-sport	88	396	447
Pitch and Putt	2	23	27
Rowing	7	72	75
Rugby	22	113	119
Sailing	7	42	49
Skiing	1	1	1
Skydiving	1	1	1
Soccer	142	469	508
Special Olympics	1	3	4
Squash	1	5	7
Surfing	1	3	3
Swimming	7	41	43
Tennis	17	83	87
Tenpin bowling	1	1	1
Triathlon	4	27	27
Volleyball	2	8	8
Water-skiing & Wakeboarding	1	1	1
Grand Total	665	2,807	3,026

2. Some changes to the application form on the online portal, OSCAR, are also proposed. These changes would comprise mostly prompts to guide more applicants to make error-free applications and to provide more detail on the project proposed. It is hoped that these changes would encourage more applicants to engage with the guidelines of the programme. While guidance has been readily available for past rounds of the programme in the forms of, inter alia, a written guidance document, an online video and the expertise of the SCEP personnel, additional steps are needed to reduce the number of erroneous applications. All ICT changes will be dependent on the feasibility of implementation given the age of both the front end system, OSCAR, and the back end case management system.

3. It is proposed that detailed membership data be a compulsory requirement of the application form for future rounds. This will facilitate tracking of key deliverables under the programme such as enhanced participation for females, people with disabilities and those in areas of socioeconomic disadvantage. Again this recommendation is dependent on the capabilities of the current ICT system.

4. Consideration should be given to awarding scores under an additional criterion or sub criterion that rewards projects aimed at increasing participation for people with disabilities. While the SCEP has always prioritised projects that increase participation in sport by persons with disability, this commitment could be enhanced by having a proportion of marks ring-fenced for projects that are specifically or primarily aimed at persons with disability.

Currently scores are awarded under Criterion 1 **Likelihood of increasing participation and/or improving performance** where up to 3 marks are available to projects which benefit people from a disadvantaged area and/or people with a disability and/or minority groups, however, a distinct sub-marking to increase participation amongst people with disabilities may be more effective. It is also recommended that changes be made to the application form to allow identification of projects which specifically serve people with disabilities and capture their representation amongst the organisation's membership.

5. A review of the scoring criterion 2 "**Sharing of facilities**" along with a review of the requirements of supporting documentation is recommended. Under the 2020 round, sharing of facilities amongst various groups was rewarded. Schools, ETBs, Diocesan Trusts and 3rd Level Colleges could only apply for funding jointly with local sports clubs or community groups. All organisations involved had to be registered on the OSCAR system. Community Centres and sports halls that were not owned by a single sports club gained extra marks for sharing without having to provide licence agreements. Likewise, ETB-run Outdoor Education Centres did not need to provide licence agreements to gain marks for sharing. Applications from clubs/community groups gained additional marks by demonstrating availability of the facility for schools or wider community sports groups.

It is recommended that demonstration of sharing be further promoted through additional scores and robust licence agreements. Point 6 also refers. It is also recommended that additional marks be available for projects which encourage participation amongst the elderly. In the case of joint applications, it should be obvious that both applicants will clearly benefit from the facility/project.

6. A bonus point was introduced under the 2020 round, under criterion 4 "**Technical merits of the project**" whereby an extra point was awarded if the application was complete at the time of submission and the 2nd chance facility not required. It is recommended, in order to ensure cleaner applications, and a shorter assessment window, that significantly more points be provided for applications that do not require a 2nd chance under the next round. It is hoped this measure will nudge applicants into achieving better scores from the outset with a reduction in intervention between officials and the largely time-pressed, volunteer support staff in the sporting organisations.

7. A review of the scoring criterion 5 "**Level of own funding available**" is also recommended. Under the 2020 round, applicants were rewarded for having savings, regardless of how much of those savings were being invested in the proposed project. While it was a requirement under the 2020 round that applicants contribute a minimum of 5% of the project costs (30% for Local Authorities), it is proposed that there be greater interlinkage between the amount of own funding being used for the proposed project and the maximum valid grant amount allocated.

8. A return to the previous grounds for appeal is proposed i.e. an appeal may be submitted if the applicant believes the Department made a mistake in its assessment or has otherwise acted unreasonably in the assessment of the initial application. This should encourage more competition under a future round, ensure the best applications receive funding, and free up Departmental resources to advance payment of eligible grants.
9. D/TCAGSM should engage with the Department of Housing to ensure that Local Authorities are better informed of the requirement for eligible owners to apply for funding. It is also recommended that the *Guide* makes reference to the possibility of LEADER grants being available to sporting organisations.
10. The possibility of further enhanced weighting for disadvantaged areas and greater efforts to raise awareness of the programme in disadvantaged areas should be considered.
11. Greater efforts to promote the programme to sports and sectors that are not well-represented under recent rounds should be considered. The Department should engage with the relevant NGBs in this regard in advance of the closing date for the next round.
12. In relation to the scoring system, a minimum cut-off mark should be applied for both equipment and capital applications. This would contribute to increased competition under the next round and ensure best value for money for the Exchequer.
13. Consideration should be given to rewarding projects with a specific environmental or bio diversification focus under a future round, either through revised scoring criteria and/or revised eligibility requirements.
14. Further explanation of the requirements to demonstrate title for capital applications is proposed for future rounds. While the published guide to the 2020 round gave clear detail on the supporting document required for various scenarios of title, the majority of invalid applications were due to failure to demonstrate title (at least 65%). Accordingly, the wording of this section of the guide needs further consideration. It may also be the case that more communication is needed to make applicants aware of what level of funding they can apply for i.e. those that cannot demonstrate title should apply to the limit of €50k for capital works or confine their application to equipment. This can form part of the webinars already proposed above.
15. Under the 2020 round, the building and maintenance of swimming pools was excluded from consideration. Previously public swimming pools could avail of funding through the Local Authority Swimming Pool Programme (LASSP). Following the establishment of the

Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund, all new swimming pool projects must apply to that fund.

Currently the SCEP provides grants to leisure centres for the 'dry' element of swimming pool upgrades such as dressing rooms. However, given the cessation of the LASPP consideration could be given to expanding the remit of the SCEP to include applications for upgrades to swimming pools under a future round.

16. In light of rising inflation which currently stands at approximately 8.1 per cent^[1], and construction price inflation currently running at approximately 14%^[2], consideration should be given to increasing the existing upper thresholds for both local and regional applications.

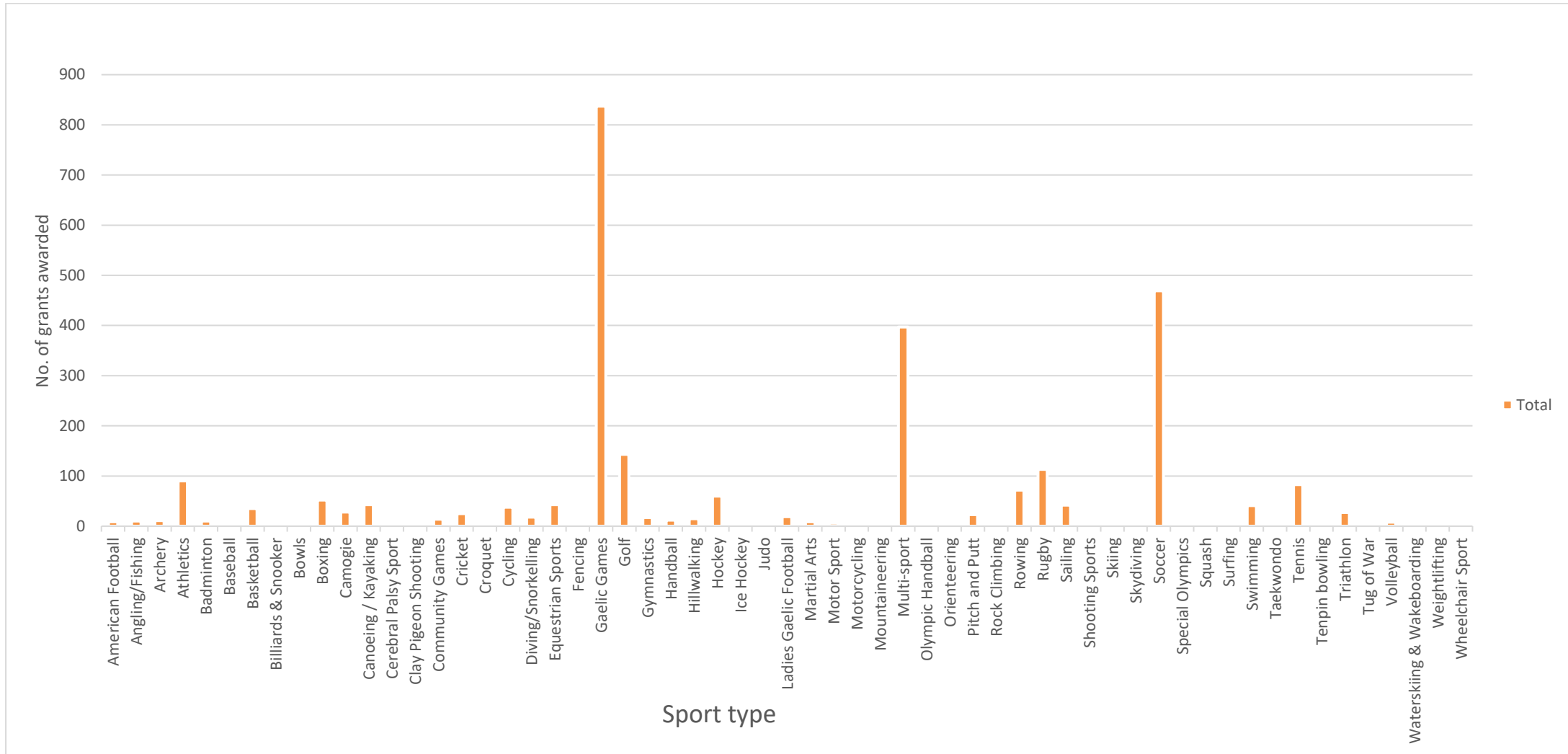
17. Consideration should be given to prioritising applications from areas witnessing significant population growth. While the most recent census figures are already used when deciding the distribution of the overall funding, the Department should liaise with Local Sport Partnerships to encourage more applications from areas witnessing rapid population growth. The level of existing facilities in an area should continue to be a factor when scoring applications under future rounds with areas lacking in sufficient sports facilities being prioritised.

^[1] <https://www.esri.ie/news/despite-significant-headwinds-irish-economy-set-to-perform-in-robust-manner-for-remainder-of#:~:text=We%20now%20forecast%20inflation%20to,UK%20economy%20of%20particular%20concern.>

^[2] <https://scsi.ie/chartered-surveyors-say-national-annual-rate-of-construction-price-inflation-is-now-running-at-14/>

APPENDIX I – BACKGROUND STATISTICS

Sport types awarded grants under the 2020 round



Amount sought and allocated per county 2020 round (local grants including successful appeals)

County	Amt. Allocated	Amt. Sought	% of amt. allocated v amt. sought
Local	145,016,181.98	163,233,067.45	
Carlow	2,380,521.00	2,640,875.97	90
Cavan	2,899,492.00	3,427,215.12	85
Clare	5,343,395.00	6,588,273.68	81
Cork	16,663,250.00	17,986,052.14	93
Donegal	6,427,664.00	7,427,434.13	87
Dublin	18,865,966.00	19,909,001.59	95
Galway	9,932,530.77	11,467,836.51	87
Kerry	6,221,828.00	7,880,513.26	79
Kildare	6,135,312.31	6,433,872.85	95
Kilkenny	3,202,105.00	3,394,190.27	94
Laois	3,803,907.00	4,575,360.47	83
Leitrim	1,216,401.00	1,373,975.95	89
Limerick	7,485,835.00	8,735,758.83	86
Longford	1,262,967.00	1,372,986.37	92
Louth	4,462,718.21	4,615,523.27	97
Mayo	5,068,319.00	5,523,642.07	92
Meath	6,991,258.00	7,536,980.29	93
Monaghan	2,615,899.00	3,135,540.06	83
Offaly	2,989,989.00	3,558,601.33	84
Roscommon	2,512,681.96	3,075,090.28	82
Sligo	2,393,454.00	2,535,143.04	94

Tipperary	6,848,105.61	8,421,975.75	81
Waterford	4,992,225.00	5,573,407.01	90
Westmeath	3,915,171.12	4,754,624.74	82
Wexford	5,723,855.00	6,160,655.36	93
Wicklow	4,661,332.00	5,128,537.11	91
Grand Total	145,016,181.98	163,233,067.45	89

Amount sought and allocated per county 2020 round (regional grants including successful appeals)

County	Amt. Allocated	Amt. Sought	% of amt. allocated v amt. sought
Non-Local	21,588,834.87	26,421,244.37	
Carlow	721,726.00	854,650.00	84
Cavan	216,112.00	234,437.70	92
Clare	133,642.00	211,348.00	63
Cork	1,760,247.00	2,090,082.66	84
Donegal	1,548,472.00	1,630,906.02	95
Dublin	6,471,109.91	8,223,228.21	79
Galway	1,455,576.00	1,778,763.16	82
Kerry	380,792.00	465,230.36	82
Kildare	650,120.00	1,129,659.90	58
Kilkenny	443,042.00	486,704.00	91
Laois	726,708.00	741,264.25	98
Limerick	252,454.00	332,643.14	76
Longford	467,984.00	500,048.98	94
Louth	122,201.00	151,212.49	81
Mayo	1,011,425.55	1,302,079.08	78
Meath	455,968.00	555,620.60	82
Monaghan	217,415.00	283,517.00	77
Offaly	154,245.00	187,000.00	82
Roscommon	327,934.00	538,298.66	61
Sligo	315,872.00	447,620.00	71
Tipperary	950,900.00	1,122,639.94	85
Waterford	367,727.00	405,625.06	91
Westmeath	852,987.00	1,005,120.77	85
Wexford	925,243.00	952,648.45	97
Wicklow	658,932.41	790,895.94	83
Grand Total	21,588,834.87	26,421,244.37	82

Overall allocations for successful applications under 2020 SCEP, by county

County	Amt. Allocated	Amt. Sought	% of amt. allocated v amt. sought
Carlow	3,102,247.00	3,495,525.97	89
Cavan	3,115,604.00	3,661,652.82	85
Clare	5,477,037.00	6,799,621.68	81
Cork	18,423,497.00	20,076,134.80	92
Donegal	7,976,136.00	9,058,340.15	88
Dublin	25,337,075.91	28,132,229.80	90
Galway	11,388,106.77	13,246,599.67	86
Kerry	6,602,620.00	8,345,743.62	79
Kildare	6,785,432.31	7,563,532.75	90
Kilkenny	3,645,147.00	3,880,894.27	94
Laois	4,530,615.00	5,316,624.72	85
Leitrim	1,216,401.00	1,373,975.95	89
Limerick	7,738,289.00	9,068,401.97	85
Longford	1,730,951.00	1,873,035.35	92
Louth	4,584,919.21	4,766,735.76	96
Mayo	6,079,744.55	6,825,721.15	89
Meath	7,447,226.00	8,092,600.89	92
Monaghan	2,833,314.00	3,419,057.06	83
Offaly	3,144,234.00	3,745,601.33	84
Roscommon	2,840,615.96	3,613,388.94	79
Sligo	2,709,326.00	2,982,763.04	91
Tipperary	7,799,005.61	9,544,615.69	82
Waterford	5,359,952.00	5,979,032.07	90
Westmeath	4,768,158.12	5,759,745.51	83
Wexford	6,649,098.00	7,113,303.81	93
Wicklow	5,320,264.41	5,919,433.05	90
Grand Total	166,605,016.85	189,654,311.82	88

Amount sought and allocated per county 2018 round

County	Amt. Sought	Amt. Allocated
Carlow	1,777,048.96	804,461.00
Cavan	2,651,954.97	1,054,422.00
Clare	3,400,294.19	1,628,128.00
Cork	11,711,863.70	6,400,623.00
Donegal	4,392,920.75	2,429,943.00
Dublin	14,424,910.72	10,990,877.00
Galway	7,735,400.69	3,723,410.00
Kerry	6,562,129.85	2,573,454.00
Kildare	5,027,941.45	2,640,615.00
Kilkenny	2,291,623.39	1,226,623.00
Laois	2,469,235.24	1,020,799.00
Leitrim	1,230,392.54	505,613.00
Limerick	4,858,344.59	2,410,595.00
Longford	790,630.55	476,565.00
Louth	2,753,578.60	1,531,622.00
Mayo		
	3,753,369.46	1,979,051.00
Meath	5,729,694.79	2,390,071.00
Monaghan	1,804,400.60	743,959.00
Offaly	2,498,343.90	1,092,382.00
Roscommon	1,962,029.81	891,503.00
Sligo	2,705,202.78	1,282,210.00
Tipperary	4,811,871.76	2,015,229.00
Waterford	3,857,872.57	1,831,041.00
Westmeath	3,179,541.05	1,567,506.00
Wexford	3,991,097.04	1,865,039.00

Wicklow	3,649,805.63	1,849,081.00
Grand Total	110,021,499.58	56,924,822.00

Allocations by sport 2020 round (including successful appeals, local and regional grants)

Sport type	Amount allocated
American Football	91,923.00
Angling/Fishing	228,440.00
Archery	117,632.00
Athletics	3,545,315.00
Badminton	217,280.00
Baseball	13,976.00
Basketball	762,704.00
Billiards & Snooker	71,369.00
Bowls	118,782.00
Boxing	1,317,361.04
Camogie	607,500.00
Canoeing / Kayaking	984,640.00
Cerebral Palsy Sport	7,254.00
Clay Pigeon Shooting	105,309.00
Community Games	1,066,661.05
Cricket	786,415.00
Croquet	15,699.00
Cycling	571,116.21
Diving/Snorkelling	538,625.00
Equestrian Sports	1,187,130.00
Fencing	45,926.00
Gaelic Games	65,518,493.45
Golf	8,809,309.25
Gymnastics	495,145.00
Handball	700,583.00
Hillwalking	388,422.00
Hockey	2,191,513.41
Ice Hockey	19,485.00
Judo	32,735.00
Ladies Gaelic Football	488,680.00
Martial Arts	191,468.00
Motor Sport	68,983.00
Motorcycling	12,000.00
Mountaineering	95,744.00
Multi-sport*	28,988,743.01
Olympic Handball	38,577.00
Orienteering	40,544.00
Pitch and Putt	433,686.00
Rock Climbing	51,210.00
Rowing	2,598,717.00
Rugby	8,737,025.91
Sailing	1,515,466.00
Shooting Sports	38,194.00
Skiing	173,393.91
Skydiving	59,911.00
Soccer	25,140,588.61
Special Olympics	120,978.00

Squash	178,909.00
Surfing	20,129.00
Swimming	997,095.00
Taekwondo	65,398.00
Tennis	5,067,022.00
Tenpin bowling	19,458.00
Triathlon	437,456.00
Tug of War	24,077.00
Volleyball	87,083.00
Water-skiing & Wakeboarding	38,059.00
Weightlifting	61,967.00
Wheelchair Sport	257,711.00
Grand Total	166,605,016.85

* Note Multi-Sport projects are generally submitted by local authorities and tend to be for facilities that can benefit many sports e.g. a multi-use all weather pitch used for training purposes by soccer, GAA, athletics etc.

Allocations by sport 2018 round (including successful appeals, local and regional grants)

2018 - Sports Capital Programme	Amount Allocated
American Football	19,141.00
Angling/Fishing	64,331.00
Archery	49,822.00
Athletics	2,178,635.00
Badminton	55,863.00
Basketball	307,968.00
Billiards & Snooker	51,073.00
Bowls	98,659.00
Boxing	935,034.00
Camogie	225,416.00
Canoeing / Kayaking	611,398.00
Clay Pigeon Shooting	24,631.00
Community Games	359,120.00
Cricket	350,384.00
Cycling	232,539.00
Diving/Snorkeling	414,590.00
Equestrian Sports	288,753.00
Fencing	28,100.00
Gaelic Games	19,266,125.00
Golf	4,637,037.00
Gymnastics	372,824.00
Handball	271,579.00
Hillwalking	145,513.00
Hockey	818,454.00
Ice Hockey	69,060.00
Judo	20,096.00
Ladies Gaelic Football	24,970.00
Martial Arts	55,469.00
Motor Sport	12,440.00
Motorcycling	15,353.00
Mountaineering	53,829.00
Multi-sport**	10,469,342.00
Orienteering	8,200.00
Pitch and Putt	201,222.00
Racquetball	100,276.00
Rock Climbing	10,429.00
Rowing	1,343,655.00
Rugby	2,627,110.00
Sailing	584,817.00
Shooting Sports	2,768.00
Skateboarding	82,956.00
Soccer	6,601,511.00
Squash	115,977.00
Surfing	13,788.00
Swimming	461,869.00

Table Tennis	12,830.00
Tennis	1,984,488.00
Tenpin bowling	11,950.00
Triathlon	119,136.00
Tug of War	13,250.00
Volleyball	38,499.00
Weightlifting	62,150.00
Grand Total	56,924,822.00

** Note Multi-Sport projects are generally submitted by local authorities and tend to be for facilities that can benefit many sports e.g. a multi-use all weather pitch used for training purposes by soccer, GAA, athletics etc.

Comparison of allocations, by sport, between the 2018 and 2020 round

Sport type	Amt. allocated 2018	Sport type	Amt. allocated 2020	Difference	% change
American Football	19,141.00	American Football	91,923.00	72,782.00	380.24
Angling/Fishing	64,331.00	Angling/Fishing	228,440.00	164,109.00	255.10
Archery	49,822.00	Archery	117,632.00	67,810.00	136.10
Athletics	2,178,635.00	Athletics	3,545,315.00	1,366,680.00	62.73
Badminton	55,863.00	Badminton	217,280.00	161,417.00	288.95
		Baseball	13,976.00	13,976.00	
Basketball	307,968.00	Basketball	762,704.00	454,736.00	147.66
Billiards & Snooker	51,073.00	Billiards & Snooker	71,369.00	20,296.00	39.74
Bowls	98,659.00	Bowls	118,782.00	20,123.00	20.40
Boxing	935,034.00	Boxing	1,317,361.04	382,327.04	40.89
Camogie	225,416.00	Camogie	607,500.00	382,084.00	169.50
Canoeing / Kayaking	611,398.00	Canoeing / Kayaking	984,640.00	373,242.00	61.05
		Cerebral Palsy Sport	7,254.00	7,254.00	
Clay Pigeon Shooting	24,631.00	Clay Pigeon Shooting	105,309.00	80,678.00	327.55
Community Games	359,120.00	Community Games	1,066,661.05	707,541.05	197.02

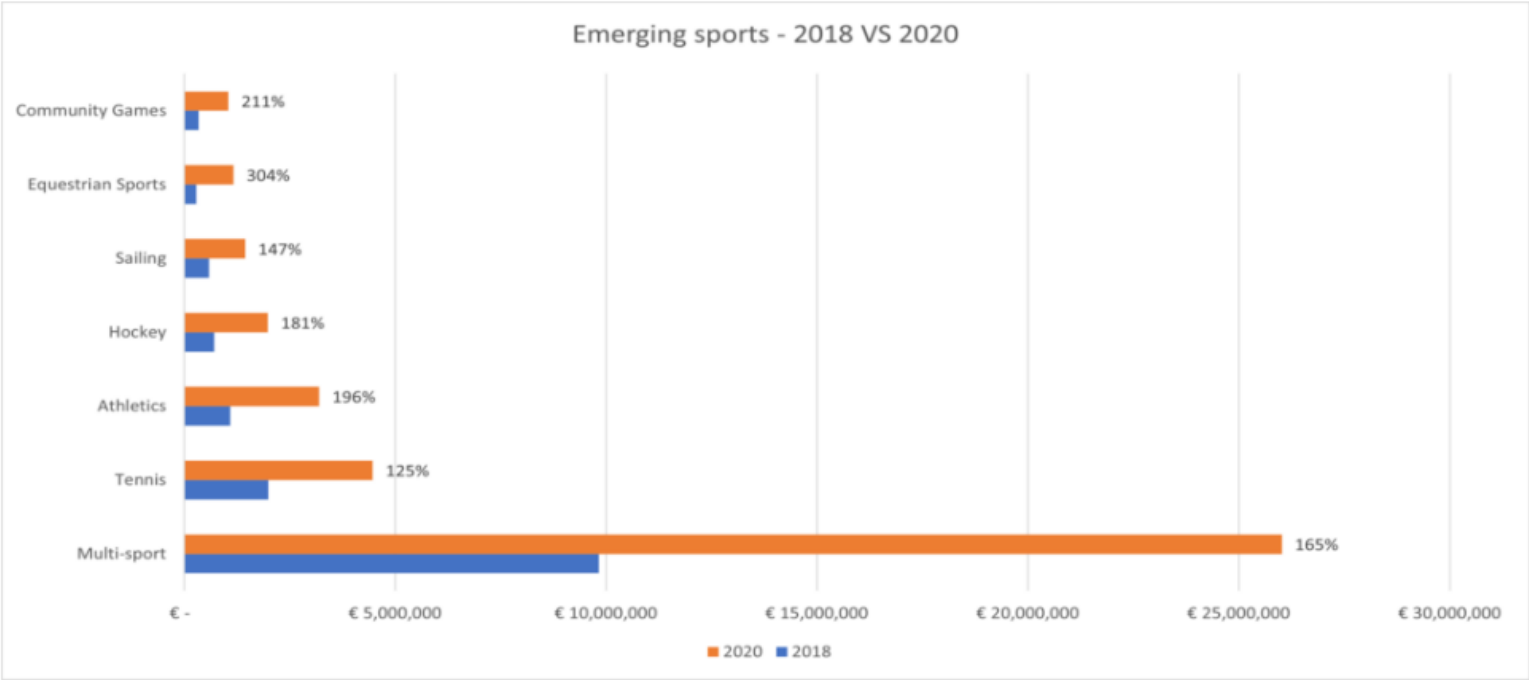
Cricket	350,384.00	Cricket	786,415.00	436,031.00	124.44
		Croquet	15,699.00	15,699.00	
Cycling	232,539.00	Cycling	571,116.21	338,577.21	145.60
Diving/Snorkelling	414,590.00	Diving/Snorkelling	538,625.00	124,035.00	29.92
Equestrian Sports	288,753.00	Equestrian Sports	1,187,130.00	898,377.00	311.12
Fencing	28,100.00	Fencing	45,926.00	17,826.00	63.44
Gaelic Games	19,266,125.00	Gaelic Games	65,518,493.45	46,252,368.45	240.07
Golf	4,637,037.00	Golf	8,809,309.25	4,172,272.25	89.98
Gymnastics	372,824.00	Gymnastics	495,145.00	122,321.00	32.81
Handball	271,579.00	Handball	700,583.00	429,004.00	157.97
Hillwalking	145,513.00	Hillwalking	388,422.00	242,909.00	166.93
Hockey	818,454.00	Hockey	2,191,513.41	1,373,059.41	167.76
Ice Hockey	69,060.00	Ice Hockey	19,485.00	- 49,575.00	- 71.79
Judo	20,096.00	Judo	32,735.00	12,639.00	62.89
Ladies Gaelic Football	24,970.00	Ladies Gaelic Football	488,680.00	463,710.00	1,857.07
Martial Arts	55,469.00	Martial Arts	191,468.00	135,999.00	245.18
Motor Sport	12,440.00	Motor Sport	68,983.00	56,543.00	454.53
Motorcycling	15,353.00	Motorcycling	12,000.00	- 3,353.00	- 21.84

Mountaineering	53,829.00	Mountaineering	95,744.00	41,915.00	77.87
Multi-sport***	10,469,342.00	Multi-sport	28,988,743.01	18,519,401.01	176.89
		Olympic Handball	38,577.00	38,577.00	
Orienteering	8,200.00	Orienteering	40,544.00	32,344.00	394.44
Pitch and Putt	201,222.00	Pitch and Putt	433,686.00	232,464.00	115.53
Racquetball	100,276.00			-	100.00
				100,276.00	-
Rock Climbing	10,429.00	Rock Climbing	51,210.00	40,781.00	391.03
Rowing	1,343,655.00	Rowing	2,598,717.00	1,255,062.00	93.41
Rugby	2,627,110.00	Rugby	8,737,025.91	6,109,915.91	232.57
Sailing	584,817.00	Sailing	1,515,466.00	930,649.00	159.14
Shooting Sports	2,768.00	Shooting Sports	38,194.00	35,426.00	1,279.84
		Skiing	173,393.91	173,393.91	
Skateboarding	82,956.00			-	100.00
				82,956.00	-
		Skydiving	59,911.00	59,911.00	
Soccer	6,601,511.00	Soccer	25,140,588.61	18,539,077.61	280.83
		Special Olympics	120,978.00	120,978.00	
Squash	115,977.00	Squash	178,909.00	62,932.00	54.26
Surfing	13,788.00	Surfing	20,129.00	6,341.00	45.99

Swimming	461,869.00	Swimming	997,095.00	535,226.00	115.88
Table Tennis	12,830.00			- 12,830.00	- 100.00
		Taekwondo	65,398.00	65,398.00	
Tennis	1,984,488.00	Tennis	5,067,022.00	3,082,534.00	155.33
Tenpin bowling	11,950.00	Tenpin bowling	19,458.00	7,508.00	62.83
Triathlon	119,136.00	Triathlon	437,456.00	318,320.00	267.19
Tug of War	13,250.00	Tug of War	24,077.00	10,827.00	81.71
Volleyball	38,499.00	Volleyball	87,083.00	48,584.00	126.20
		Water-skiing & Wakeboarding	38,059.00	38,059.00	
Weightlifting	62,150.00	Weightlifting	61,967.00	- 183.00	- 0.29
		Wheelchair Sport	257,711.00	257,711.00	
Grand Total	56,924,822.00		166,605,016.85	109,680,194.85	192.68

***Certain sports not represented in either year are covered by the "multisport" category, it is not possible to definitively isolate them

Emerging Sports



Appendix II - Scoring System for 2020 Round of the SCEP

Summary of Scoring & Weighting

Criterion 1 Likelihood of increasing participation and/or improving performance (weighting 3)

Score	Comment
0	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	A. Overall Impact on Participation / overall quality of application (out of 8)
6	B. Project will benefit people from a disadvantaged area and/or people with a disability and/or improve female participation and/or minority groups (out of 5)
7	
8	C. Application clearly demonstrates how disadvantaged users, including those from outside the immediate location of the facility, will benefit from the proposal (out of 3)
9	D. Level of membership fees (out of 1)
10	E. Level of facilities in club/area (out of 1)
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	

Criterion 2: Sharing of facilities (weighting 5)

Score	Comment
0	Sharing mentioned in application but no licence agreement provided / licence agreement provided does not meet requirements of the SCEP (see appendix 3 of guide to making an application).
2	Licence agreement(s) provided which shows sharing with at least 1 other group
3	Licence agreement(s) provided which shows sharing with at least 2 other groups

Criterion 3 Level of socio-economic disadvantage in the area or in the area served (weighting 7)

Score	Comments
0	Pobal Catchment Index ² above 10
1	Pobal Catchment Index of deprivation of 1 to 10
2	Pobal Catchment Index of deprivation of 0 to -5
3	Pobal Catchment Index of deprivation of -6 to -10
4	Pobal Catchment Index of deprivation of -11 to -20
5	Pobal Catchment Index of deprivation -21 or below

Criterion 4 Technical merits of the project (weighting 3)

Score	Comments
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² The Pobal Index (<https://www.pobal.ie/launch-of-2016-pobal-hp-deprivation-index/>) has been modified to take account of the catchment area served by a project

0	Quotation(s) is basic or with no breakdown of the elements of the project.
1	Quotation(s) is detailed and clearly sets out cost of each part of project or planning permission has been applied for.
2	Planning permission has been acquired or the template signed by the local authority or technical supervisor to show that it is not needed but quotation(s) is basic with no breakdown of the elements of the project, or good quotations and planning permission has been applied for or the project consists of equipment only with no detailed breakdown of the equipment being sought.
3	Planning permission has been acquired or the template signed by the local authority or technical supervisor to show that it is not needed and quotation(s) is detailed and clearly sets out cost of each part of project or the project consists of equipment only with a detailed breakdown of the equipment being sought.
+1 bonus point	Extra 1 point awarded if the application is complete and the "2 nd chance" facility is not needed.

Criterion 5 Level of own funding available (weighting 1)

Points	Pobal Catchment Index above 10	Pobal Catchment Index 1 – 10	Pobal Catchment Index 0 to -5	Pobal Catchment Index -6 to -10)	Pobal Catchment Index -11 to -20	Pobal Catchment Index below -21
0	<15% or 15%-19% but a high proportion of the own funding is by way of a loan	<10% or 10% - 13% but a high proportion of the own funding is by way of a loan	5%-10% but a high proportion of the own funding is by way of a loan	5%-8% but a high proportion of the own funding is by way of a loan	5%-7% but a high proportion of the own funding is by way of a loan	5%-5.99% but a high proportion of the own funding is by way of a loan
1	15%-19%	10%-15%	5%-10%	5%-8%	5%-7%	5%-5.99%
2	20%-24%	16%-20%	11%-15%	9%-12%	8%-10%	6%-6.99%
3	25% - 29%	21%-25%	16%-20%	13%-16%	11%-13%	7%-7.99%
4	30%-34%	26%-29%	21%-25%	17%-20%	14%-16%	8%-8.99%
5	35%-39%	30%-34%	26%-30%	21%-24%	17%-19%	9%-9.99%
6	40%+	35%+	31%+	25%+	20%+	10%+

Where the own funding is almost entirely (i.e. more than 80%) comprised of a loan the score should be reduced manually by 1 and the following wording can be added – “a high proportion of the own funding is by way of a loan”.

Local Authorities to be scored the same way as all other projects.

Criterion 6 Level of Sports Capital and Equipment Programme funding received in the past 10 years (weighting 2)

Score	Comments (includes grants allocated in or after 2010)
0	More than €250,000 in Sports Capital Programme funding received in the past 10 years
1	€200,000 - €249,999 Sports Capital Programme funding received in the past 10 years
2	€160,000 - €199,999 Sports Capital Programme funding received in the past 10 years
3	€130,000 - €159,999 Sports Capital Programme funding received in the past 10 years
4	€100,000 - €129,999 Sports Capital Programme funding received in the past 10 years
5	€80,000 - €99,999 Sports Capital Programme funding received in the past 10 years
6	€65,000 - €79,999 Sports Capital Programme funding received in the past 10 years
7	€50,000 - €64,999 Sports Capital Programme funding received in the past 10 years
8	€35,000 - €49,999 Sports Capital Programme funding received in the past 10 years
9	€25,000 - €34,999 Sports Capital Programme funding received in the past 10 years
10	€15,000 - €24,999 Sports Capital Programme funding received in the past 10 years
11	€10,000 - €14,999 Sports Capital Programme funding received in the past 10 years
12	€5,000 - €9,999 Sports Capital Programme funding received in the past 10 years
13	€0 - €4,999 Sports Capital Programme funding received in the past 10 years

Score to be halved where applicant has more than €100,000 in outstanding grants dating to four years ago or earlier.

For local authorities, ETBs and Diocesan Trusts scoring is based on funding to individual sites and not total funding.

Comparison of average grants allocated under 2017, 2018, 2020 rounds

Grant Scheme	Amount allocated €	No. of successful grants	Average grant allocated €
2017 SCP	62,168,056.00	1,837	33,842
2018 SCP	56,924,822.00	1,654	34,416
2020 SCEP	166,605,016.00	2,878	57,889