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Government of Ireland

National Swimming Strategy

Policy perspective for Local Authorities

Department of Culture, Communications and Sport

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Why access matters

Participation

Sport and physical activity are important to health and wellbeing and remain a national policy priority.

Access

Ease of access to suitable facilities is an important factor in participation.

Planning

The Sports Action Plan includes a focus on planning future facility needs, including locations and types of facilities.

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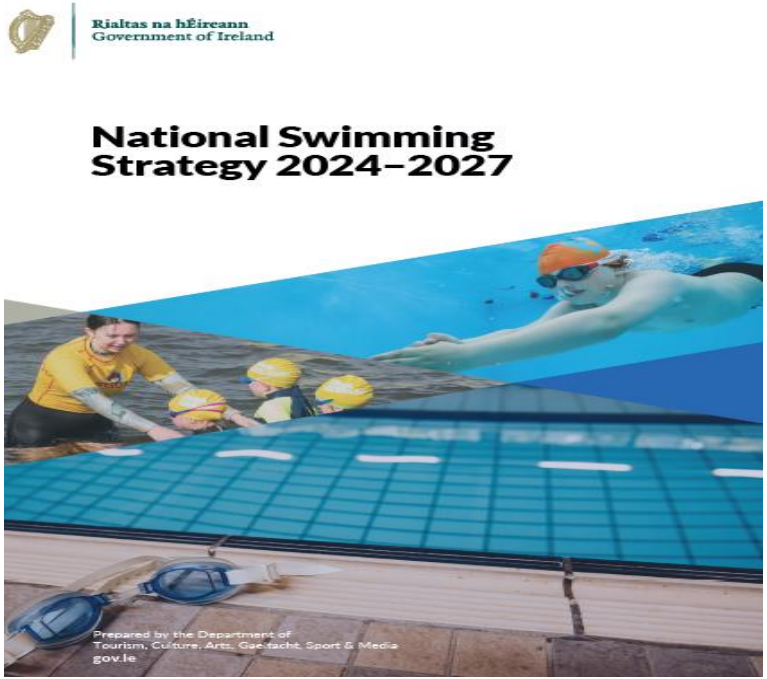
Ireland's National Swimming Strategy

Published in 2024

A national framework for swimming

- Developed following public and stakeholder consultation.
- Vision: everyone should have the opportunity to swim.
- 51 actions across five thematic strands.
- Implementation involves Government Departments, State Agencies and stakeholders.



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Five thematic strands

Access & inclusion

Removing barriers and widening opportunity.

Infrastructure

Facilities and the swimming environment.

Education & coaching

Skills, learning and development.

Open water swimming

Participation, safety and awareness.

Pathways & performance

Progression and performance.

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What the consultation told us

Facilities are one part of a wider participation picture

A key consultation finding

The public consultation suggested that existing swimming pool stock was insufficient.

Infrastructure

One of the Strategy's areas of focus.

Access & inclusion

Availability and accessibility matter for participation.

Participation

Lessons, coaching, safety and opportunities also form part of the picture.

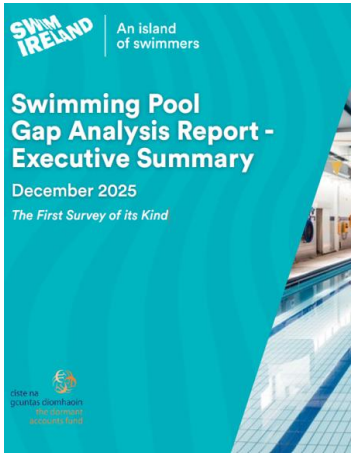
Swimming Pool Gap Analysis

Evidence being examined by the Department

Swim Ireland report

The analysis considers:

- Condition and age of pools
- Community accessibility and lessons
- Energy and sustainability
- Provincial and county distribution



Departmental perspective

The Department is examining the report as an evidence source to inform future consideration.

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Supporting participation locally

Swimming Activators

Support is delivered through swimming activators operating in local authority areas.

Under-represented groups

A focus on increasing participation among groups that are under-represented in swimming.

Participation supports

Supports include coaching and facility-related measures to help participation.

Department support: €1.5 million over three years.

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Outdoor swimming

A strand of the National Swimming Strategy

Outdoor Swimming Infrastructure Fund

Administered by Sport Ireland under Healthy Ireland.

Supports practical measures that improve access and safety at outdoor swimming locations.

Examples of supported measures

- Handrails
- Ladders
- Shelters
- Safety boards
- Showers

2024 & 2025: €830,000 supported 68 outdoor swimming facilities.

The programme continued in 2026.

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Implementation is shared

Government Departments

Policy alignment and delivery

State Agencies

Implementation, coordination and oversight

Local Authorities

Local delivery, partnerships and community context

Stakeholders

Expertise, engagement and participation

Sport Ireland oversight arrangements support coordination, prioritisation and monitoring of implementation.

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What this means for Local Authorities

Policy considerations for implementation

Participation

Creating and supporting opportunities to swim

Access & inclusion

Understanding local barriers and community needs

Collaboration

Working across local and national partners

Evidence

Using available evidence to inform local planning

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National Swimming Strategy

A national policy framework with a strong local dimension.

Local authorities are an important part of implementation.

2026 Community Sport Facilities

Swimming Clubs

Practical guidance for
voluntary, not-for-profit swimming clubs

7 October 2026

What is the CSFF and Its Key Objectives?

Develop or refurbish sports facilities and provide sports equipment

Maximise participation, prioritising disadvantaged areas and minority groups

Facilitate participation for people with disabilities and increase female participation

Encourage facility sharing among clubs, schools, and community groups

Operated by the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport

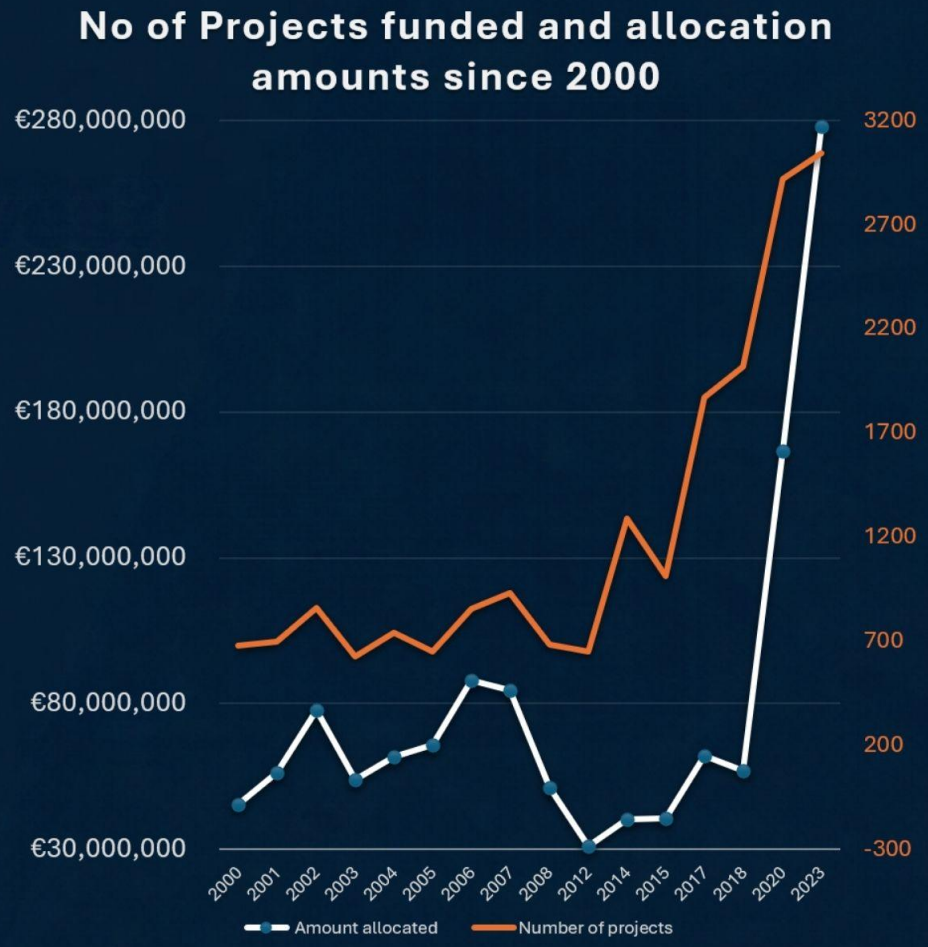
Amount and No of projects Funded

Over €1.4 Billion allocated to over 19,000 projects benefitted since 1998

In 2018 – €57m allocated to 2,017 projects

In 2020 – €166m allocated to 2,922 projects

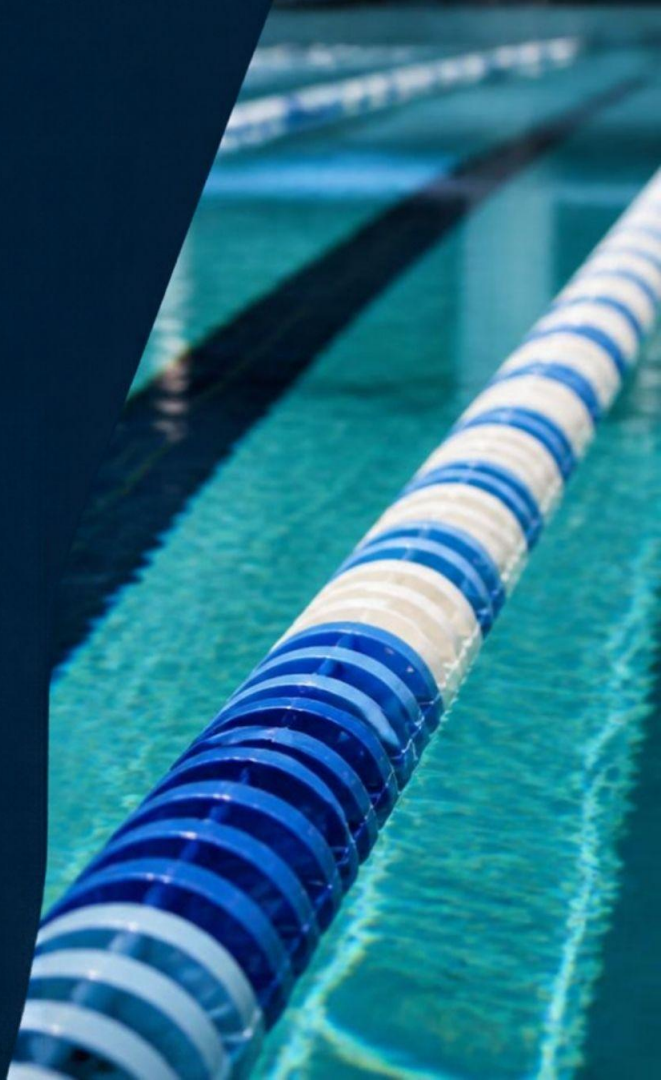
In 2023 - €277m allocated to 3,048 projects



Funding allocated to Swimming Clubs by CSFF

Since 2014 a total of 176 Swimming projects were allocated €5,189.978 from a total max valid grant of €5,356,866.
This means that Swimming clubs got almost 97% of amount applied for.
This compares to :

- GAA at 84%
- Soccer 80%
- Rubgy 80%
- Athletics 80%



Grant Categories & Eligibility for Swimming Clubs

GRANT CATEGORIES

Local Grants
up to €250,000, max 95% of costs, for capital works and/or equipment

Equipment-only Grants
up to €70,000,
no property ownership needed

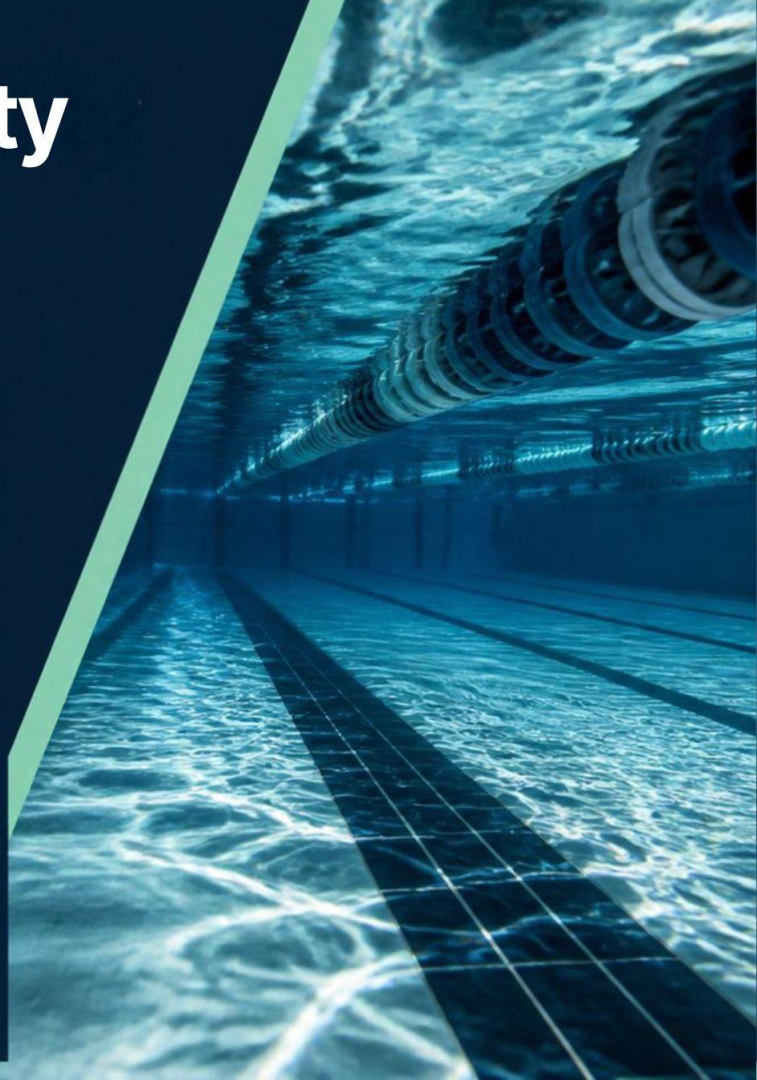
Regional Tier 1 Grants
€250,000–€550,000, max 70%, require multi-club/facility sharing; generally accessed by local authorities, NGBs, or joint applications

Regional Tier 2 Grants
€550,000–€750,000,
capital works only,
restricted to local authorities/NGBs

IN GUIDE

Tier 1
Local authority projects, including contributions towards swimming pool works or other projects in support of the National Swimming Strategy.

Priorty will be given to Applications that support objectives under the National Swimming Strategy



Swimming Club
Relevant Capital Works & Equipment

WHAT YOU CAN APPLY FOR

Enhance and upgrade core facilities

Improve accessibility and inclusion

Invest in safety, storage, and infrastructure

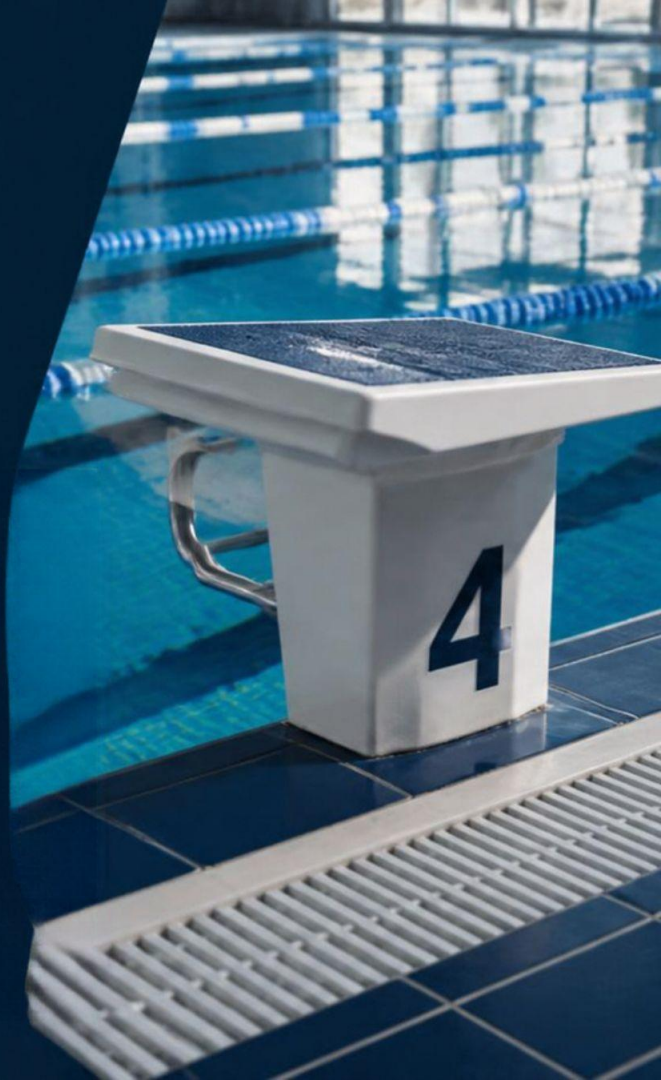
WHAT'S NOT ELIGIBLE

Luxury facilities

High-tech specialised equipment

Routine maintenance

Other non-eligible items per guide



Application Process & Key Deadlines

01 **Registration opened**
28 September 2026

02 **Applications open**
19 October 2026

03 **Application deadline**
26 February 2027
No late or partial applications

04 **Submit via SPRAOI platform only**
No amendments after submission

05 **Conditional offers expected by end 2027**
Not guaranteed

Include dated professional quotations or pre-tender estimates for every element

Do not start works, place orders, or incur costs before formal written approval

Formal approval requires title proof, planning permissions, sharing agreements (if applicable), and three comparable quotes per element

For capital grants over €50,000, final 10% withheld until completion certificate and compliance confirmations are received

Next Steps & Where to Get Help

Simplied Guide and Application is now available on www.gov.ie/sportscapital

Register on time and submit complete applications by **26 Feb 2027**

Clubs previously registered on OSCAR will have data migrated to SPRAOI

Explore partnerships to share facilities and qualify for higher grant tiers

Target areas and sports that have been under-invested in over the years.

Maximise your chance to boost your swimming club's facilities and participation through the CSFF 2026!

Large Scale Infrastructure Fund

Exchequer support for major sports facility projects under the National Sports Policy.

€600k – €30m
funding available

30%
match funding of eligible costs

Must have
legal title

Use it or lose it
clause applies

LSSIF Funding Allocations

Two rounds of LSSIF to Date 2018 and 2024.
In total **68 projects** were awarded funding totaling **€297 million.**

2018

33 projects received allocations totalling **€124 million.**

9 swimming projects were allocated a total of **€20.8 million.**

2024

35 projects received allocations totaling **€173.5 million.**

1 project was allocated funding of **€8.9 million** with a further two allocated up to **€2 million** for design only.