

A man in a dark suit and striped shirt is smiling and leaning forward, holding the handlebars of a large black bicycle. He is assisting two young children who are also on bicycles. The child on the left is wearing a blue helmet and an orange jacket with a green high-visibility vest. The child on the right is wearing a yellow helmet and a grey jacket with a green high-visibility vest. They are all on a paved path with green trees in the background. A red and white striped flag is visible in the top right corner.

Standing Up
for Sport

Our commitments:

- Invest an additional €25m in supporting Irish sport over the next five years.
- Continue to boost sport in local communities through increased funding in the Sports Capital Programme.
- Ensure Sports Capital Funding is prioritised in cases of joint applications between local sports clubs and schools or youth organisations
- Fund more world-class sporting facilities at the National Indoor Arena and the National Sports Campus
- Establish a specific sports bidding entity to facilitate bidding for events across all sporting organisations
- Put a comprehensive sports tourism policy at the heart of national sports policy

Introduction

Sport has hugely positive benefits for individuals and for society as a whole. Labour understands the value of sports to strong communities, and the vital role of State funding in delivering the local facilities needed in every part of the country. We are also passionately committed to supporting excellence in sport, both on the national stage and abroad. We will continue to invest significantly in the world-class sporting facilities Irish athletes need to keep punching above their weight around the world.



Boosting Sports Funding

Labour in Government has funded three Sports Capital Programmes after years of neglect by previous Fianna Fáil administrations. This has provided over €110 million in funding for thousands of local clubs across the country: vital funding that has kept local sporting institutions going. We have also made the capital programme more accessible to clubs and organisations, including those without a clubhouse or land.

Community Sporting clubs have had vital funds freed up through the partial rates exemption under the Valuation Act. We introduced this measure in 2015 so that more sports funding could be directed towards the purchase of equipment, facilities maintenance and other vital expenses.

Our plan for the next five years is to continue to increase both the level of sports funding and the degree of participation in sport and physical activities across the population.

We want to up investment in community sporting organisations through the Sports Capital Programme. To strengthen the link between young people and sporting opportunity, we will ensure a dedicated stream for joint applications made between sports clubs or youth organisations and schools. This will see funding prioritised in cases where facilities that are used by schools during the day remain at the centre of community activity outside school hours.

An Inclusive Sports Culture

We have improved the administration of sport nationally through the establishment of Sport Ireland. The last five years of Government have also overseen participation in sport rise from 44.8% in 2011 to 47.2% according to the most recently available data. If re-elected to Government, Labour is committed to building on these achievements.

We want to continue building a more inclusive sporting culture that reaches as

many people as possible. We will continue to invest in Special Olympics Ireland as a priority throughout the next term of Government. We will also aim to deliver a meaningful increase in the participation of women and girls in sport and sport governance bodies.

We will legislate to require colleges to give proportionate scholarship funding to women and men, in order to increase the number of women in receipt of sporting and scientific scholarships.

Labour will also prioritise the rollout of the new National Physical Activity Plan to encourage a greater number of people to take up some form of physical activity. This will have serious advantages both to individual health and the strength of our communities.

Supporting our Sportspeople on the World Stage

Irish sportsmen and women have always proven themselves able to excel in the global sporting community. Recent years have seen even more examples of how Irish people can compete and succeed at the very highest levels in sports as varied as football, hockey, rugby, horse racing, boxing and mixed martial arts.

These successes are examples of phenomenal team and individual skill and it is essential we continue to fund the efforts and training of our top sportspeople and those that will excel in our future. Labour is determined to fund the construction of further world class facilities at the National Indoor Arena and the National Sports Campus. Three main centres for athletics, training and gymnastics within the Arena are already set to be completed in 2016.

The next Government must also commit to keep up funding to help Irish sporting organisations in their ongoing preparations for Rio 2016 to deliver more moments of sporting excellence to inspire a new generation of top Irish athletes.

Improving Sports Tourism

Ireland has already succeeded in attracting major international sporting events to the country. Recently this has included the Giro d'Italia, the British Open and the Women's Rugby World Cup.

We will continue to support other bids, including the 2023 Men's Rugby World Cup, which will bring significant numbers of visitors to our shores and boost our global standing as a passionate sporting nation.

Labour's plan is to improve the process by which the country bids for international events through the establishment of a specific sports bidding entity. This new entity will facilitate bidding across all sporting organisations and will work in partnership with Fáilte Ireland and Sport Ireland.

We also recognise the need to keep growing the increasingly important role played by sports tourism in our local economies. We now see visitors from at home and abroad travelling to take part in activities as diverse as surfing, triathlons, and walking holidays in so many different parts of the country.

If returned to Government, Labour's plan is to put a comprehensive sports tourism strategy at the heart of national sports policy.

**IF RETURNED TO GOVERNMENT,
LABOUR'S PLAN IS TO PUT A COMPREHENSIVE
SPORTS TOURISM STRATEGY AT THE HEART
OF NATIONAL SPORTS POLICY**



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