

Department of Rural and Community Development Community Enhancement Programme: 2020 fund for Community Centres and Community Buildings

Guidelines

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES CAREFULLY BEFORE COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM.

1. Introduction

The Community Enhancement Programme (CEP) provides capital funding to community groups across Ireland to enhance facilities in disadvantaged areas.

The **CEP** is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development (*the Department*) and administered by the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) in each Local Authority area.

The Department launched the 2020 CEP on 22 June of this year, with funding of €2m¹.

New €5m fund under the CEP

Separate to the €2m programme launched in June, the Department is now launching a new €5m fund, under the CEP, which will provide capital grants towards the maintenance, improvement and upkeep of community centres and community buildings.

This funding is available under the Government's July stimulus package, and is targeted at measures that stimulate local economies, while enhancing facilities in disadvantaged areas.

Consistent with previous iterations of the CEP, the Department provides funding to each Local Authority (LA) area and the LCDCs then administer this funding locally to ensure funding is targeted appropriately towards addressing disadvantage in the areas that need it most.

It is important to note that other agencies and departments also invest in disadvantaged areas². The **CEP** will operate in a complementary manner to add value to other front-line schemes and programmes being operated in communities.

The Department has recommended that LCDCs ring-fence some funding to provide small capital grants of €1,000 or less. This is aimed at assisting small grassroots community projects to get off the ground. Ring-fencing funding at this level will allow a greater number of groups with limited resources to receive some funding. The

¹Further details are available [here](#).

²For example, the Department of Education and Skills in DEIS schools and community liaison officers, HSE in community care services, DSP in Intreo and through the Local Employment Service etc. This Department of Rural and Community Development also operates the SICAP (Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme) to assist individuals and groups from disadvantaged communities.

programme can also fund or partially fund larger scale capital projects to address disadvantage.

Applications should be submitted to the Clare LCDC by October 16th 2020

Capital expenditure on adaptations or equipment needed as a result of COVID-19 may be eligible, depending on the work being completed.

2. Who is eligible to apply?

Any not-for-profit community or voluntary group can apply.

Commercial organisations and individuals are **not** eligible for funding.

The funding is available to community centres and community buildings only.

3. What projects are eligible for funding?

3a. What projects are eligible for funding?

The funding covers capital projects only. In cases where both current and capital works are carried out together, only the capital element can be funded through this programme.

Funding could fill in gaps in Local Authority funding and make particular projects viable or improve them. Funding could be applied to speed up and improve projects already identified i.e. those in planning stage or ready to implement.

The following provides a non-exhaustive list of capital projects that could receive funding under the programme:

- Development / renovation of community centres.
- Once off maintenance of premises. This does not include regular routine maintenance.
- Development of additional meeting spaces for work, schooling, recreation etc.
- Energy efficiency type projects
- Purchase of equipment
- Adaptations or equipment needed as a result of COVID-19
- Equipment required by centres for outreach services.

Target groups

This funding is targeted at measures that stimulate local economies, while enhancing community centre and buildings for individuals and communities that are impacted by disadvantage as identified in the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP).

3b. What is not eligible for funding?

The following expenditure is not eligible for funding:

- Any project not in keeping with the ethos of the Programme
- Any day-to-day expenses (i.e. current or operating costs)
- Employment costs
- Legal fees
- Project management fees
- Purchase of lands or buildings
- Feasibility studies
- Private or commercial operations

4. Requirements of the Programme

The following conditions apply to all projects. Depending on the nature of your project (and the group applying), there may be further requirements that must be met. The LCDC/LA will discuss this with you, if your application is successful.

Tax Requirements

- The applicant group/organisation does not have to be registered for tax purposes.
- Any applicant group/organisation that is registered for tax purposes must be tax compliant. In line with revised tax clearance procedures, which came into effect in January 2016, the Tax Clearance Access Number and Tax Reference number must be submitted for verification purposes.

Statutory Consents -Applicants must ensure that all necessary statutory permissions or consents are in place before any works commence. This includes, but is not confined to, planning permission.

Insurance - Written evidence of a valid insurance policy may be requested by the LCDC, where relevant, during the applications review process.

Acknowledgment of funding -Due to the value of some of these grants, it would not be cost-effective to require signage acknowledging the Department, Local Authority or LCDC funding contribution. Other suitable acknowledgements will suffice e.g. on a group/organisation's website or social media platforms. Where signage is developed it should acknowledge the contribution of the Department.

Match-funding- this is not a requirement under this programme.

5. Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated by the LCDC to ensure eligibility and that they are targeted at addressing disadvantage as identified in its LECP. Projects must be in keeping with the ethos of the programme, which is to provide funding to communities across Ireland to enhance facilities in disadvantaged areas.

Projects may also be judged having regard to how they:

- increase participant or visitor or audience numbers, and improve and extend access to facilities within the catchment area;
- invest to increase or extend the use of the facility, for example, to voluntary and community groups;
- reduce the annual running cost of a facility;
- have a positive impact on the environment, for example, a reduction in energy consumption;
- demonstrate collaboration with relevant public and voluntary bodies in the catchment area;
- address health and safety issues;
- invest in technology which will be accessed by individuals and communities that are impacted by disadvantage.
- will stimulate the local economy.

In light of recent government measures please consider the following with your community building in mind.

- How can members of the community be supported if physical gatherings at the community centre are not possible?
- How can space and equipment be utilised to facilitate students, homework clubs, adult learners etc.?
- Can the community building be enhanced to provide suitable remote working spaces for locals? E.g. furniture, internet boosters.
- Can the building be enhanced so that it is suitable to a wider range of people? Universal design should be considered to ensure access for all.

Project Name & reference Number _____

Funding Programme: _____

Qualification Criteria		
Projects must pass both of the qualification criteria to proceed to the Award Criteria evaluation		
	Description	Pass or Fail
1	Is the proposed project consistent with the LECF?	
2	Does the proposed project meet the eligibility criteria of the scheme?	

	Category	Description	Marks Available	Marks Awarded
1	Location and scale of need	Description of the area or community of interest and the scale of need addressed.	20	
2	Capacity to deliver, leveraging resources, collaboration and additionality.	Skills available to the group, precise costing of the project and funds or benefit in kind to meet these costs. Evidence of collaboration and ability to leverage resources. Additionality: Funding provided is a key enabler to facilitate the project objectives being achieved.	30	
3	Impact of the Project	<i>Outputs:</i> Number of direct and indirect beneficiaries & benefits and how they will be measured. <i>Outcomes:</i> Qualitative benefits and how they will be established.	30	
4	Sustainability	<i>Environmental sustainability & climate action:</i> Evidence of <i>appropriate</i> environmental practice. <i>Longevity:</i> Measure to ensure long-term success/benefit of the project. <i>Universal Design:</i> Evidence of Universal Design practices being adopted where appropriate.	20	
	Total		100	

Comments: Can the project proceed with reduced funding allocation?

Yes No

Notes:

	Category	Guidance Notes
1	Location and scale of need	<p>Is the project located in a deprived area or an area without similar services / initiatives?</p> <p>Is there sufficient population to maintain the service / initiative?</p> <p>Is there an additional need as a result of COVID-19?</p>
2	Capacity to deliver, leveraging resources, collaboration and additionality.	<p>Marks will be awarded based on the capacity of the project promoter, quality of the budgetary proposal, assessment of the development work proposed, size and scope of project and evidence of the successful delivery of past projects. Collaboration with other groups in the community and the ability to leverage further resources will be taken into consideration.</p> <p>Marks will be awarded based on the likelihood of the project proceeding in the absence of this funding, the availability of other funding sources which the project could avail of, the extent to which investment is potentially already provided for under the remit of any Department or agency and the extent to which the project has unlocked funding from other partners.</p>
3	Impact of the Project	<p>Marks will be awarded based on the level of the economic or social targets it will seek to deliver and the relevance of outcomes as defined by the LECP actions.</p> <p>Does the project address issues identified post COVID-19? i.e. provision of safe meeting and activity spaces for members.</p>
4	Sustainability	<p>Marks will be awarded based on the impact of the project in terms of;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Environmental sustainability & climate action e.g. energy efficiencies, biodiversity and waste prevention in line with the strategic actions of the Local Economic and Community Plan. i.e. Under Themes; Quality of Life Health & Well Being and Climate Change and Energy. (ii) Future Proofing of the project will be considered based on the long-term impact of the project and the steps taken to ensure longevity. (iii) Universal Design: Projects, where appropriate will evidence that the end project demonstrates social inclusion and a Universal Design approach by providing mainstream products and services that are easy to access, understand and use. Projects should aim to increase their range of users by; identifying diverse user needs, characteristics, capabilities, and preferences, by directly or indirectly involving users, and by using knowledge about accessibility in its procedures and processes.

6. Corporate Governance

6a. Monitoring:

Grantees will be required to comply with the highest standard of transparency and accountability as documented in Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 13/2014 - Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds <http://circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/per/2014/13.pdf>

The overall principle is that there should be transparency and accountability in the management of public funds, in line with economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The circular outlines, for example, that grant recipients should not dispose of publically funded assets without prior approval.

6b. The Code of Governance for Community and Voluntary organisations

The Department is encouraging funded bodies to adopt the Governance Code, a Code of Practice for Good Governance of Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations, which will assist in achieving excellence in all areas of your work. The Governance Code asks organisations to agree to operate to key principles in order to run their organisation more effectively in areas such as leadership, transparency and accountability and behaving with integrity. Further information on the Code is available at www.governancecode.ie

7. Approval Procedures

All applications for funding under this programme received by each LCDC will be reviewed and assessed to ensure consistency with the relevant Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP).

In deciding the final allocations of funding to projects, the LCDC may take account of a number of factors including geographical balance and the desirability to fund a variety of different projects and the relative disadvantage of the area where the facility is located (or will serve)³.

Following the decision each approved project, subject to the completion of legal formalities and other requirements, will receive an offer in principle of grant-aid. This will be subject to compliance with the relevant conditions and subject to the satisfactory acceptance by the applicant of that offer.

The right is reserved to reassign the funds offered to another approved project if all requirements are not met within a reasonable period.

³This may include cross-referencing the location of the facility (or the area it serves) with the Pobal Hasse deprivation index which is available on www.pobal.ie.

The Department and/or the Local Authority reserve the right to carry out an audit of expenditure or conduct inspections from time to time.

Please Note:

Requests for assistance usually exceed the funds available and it is important therefore that the process of evaluation is rigorous. The purpose of this process is to ensure that the best projects, taking all factors into account, emerge and receive support. It is Departmental policy to ensure that every application is treated fairly and impartially.

Offers of funding may be for a lesser amount than that sought by the applicant. Applicants should be aware that the Programme may be oversubscribed. Therefore, in such circumstances, all applications fulfilling the conditions may not be successful or may be for a lesser amount.

The LCDC in evaluating proposals received may seek advice and consult with other agencies, and may disclose information on projects under consideration to those experts and agencies.

8. General

The information provided in this document is intended to give applicants an understanding of the process by which applications for funding are assessed and approved and does not purport to be a legal interpretation.

Freedom of Information Act 2014

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2014, details contained in applications and supporting documents may, on request, be released to third parties. If there is information contained in your application which is sensitive or confidential in nature, please identify it and provide an explanation as to why it should not be disclosed. If a request to release sensitive information under the legislation is received, you will be consulted before a decision is made whether or not to release the information. However, in the absence of the identification of particular information as sensitive, it could be disclosed without any consultation with you.

Site Visits

The Department, Local Authority or LCDC may carry out unannounced site visits to verify compliance with the Programme's terms and conditions.

Further information may be requested

The LCDC reserves the right to request further information from you in order to assess your application if so required.

Usage of information

The information provided on the form will be utilised for the purposes of evaluating and administering the grant process, and to facilities audits and any site visits. When evaluating the applications received the LCDC may seek advice and consult with other agencies, and may disclose information on projects under consideration to those experts and agencies.

Other

- Under the programme it is intended that 30% of the funding that is allocated to each Local Authority area will be ring-fenced for grants of €1,000 or less.
- Applicant groups shall self-certify that they do not have the funding to undertake the work, without the grant aid, or alternatively that with the grant they will now undertake a larger project which they otherwise would not be able to afford.
- If the funding application is for one element of a project, applicants will be required to provide documentary evidence of the availability of the balance of funding for that particular element of that project.
- There is no limit on the number of applications for different projects from any organisation. However, applicants should be aware that an equity/fairness approach will be taken by the LCDC to ensure an even distribution of funding.
- The Programme is 100% exchequer funded. Applicants are free to leverage other funding/match funding for projects (e.g. with LEADER, Tidy Towns, Town and Village Enhancement funding, etc.) although that is not a requirement of this new programme.
- It is the responsibility of the administrators of/body responsible for any other funding scheme or programme to ensure that using this Programme to co-fund a project does not contradict the rules of that other scheme/programme.
- VAT will only be paid where it is included in the application amount. No further requests for VAT payments or repayments will be accepted.

9. How to Apply

Application Form

The application form is detailed and is designed to ensure that it has the necessary information to evaluate each proposal accurately and fairly. **Please ensure that you complete the application form in full and that any documentation in support of your application is submitted with your application.**

Only projects that meet the criteria outlined above will be considered eligible.

PLEASE NOTE THAT INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS OR LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

Submission of false or misleading information at any stage is treated very seriously. Any organisation that does not comply with the terms and conditions of the Programme may be subject to inspection, have their grant withdrawn, and be required to repay all or part of a grant and/or be barred from making applications for a period of time. All serious breaches of the terms and conditions of the Programme will be notified to An Garda Síochána.

Applications should be forwarded to:

**Chief Officer of Clare LCDC,
Rural Development Department,
Áras Contae an Chláir, New Road,
Ennis, Co Clare,
V95 DXP2.**

For any queries please email: cep@clarecoco.ie or Telephone: 065-6846498