



# GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

## Small Capital Grants Scheme for Social Enterprises

The Department of Rural and Community Development is inviting applications under the Small Capital Grants Scheme for Social Enterprises. The scheme, which is funded by the Dormant Accounts Fund, will provide grants of between €2,000 and €15,000 for equipment, repairs or refurbishments which will enable social enterprises to improve their service delivery.

The scheme is being administered on the Department's behalf by the network of Local Development Companies (LDCs) which are located throughout the country. Final decisions on funding will be made by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Only social enterprises, as defined in the National Social Enterprise Policy (see below), may apply under this scheme. All applicants will be checked and verified to ensure they meet the definition. Applicants who do not meet this definition will not be considered.

A Social Enterprise is an enterprise whose objective is to achieve a social, societal or environmental impact, rather than maximising profit for its owners or shareholders.

It pursues its objectives by trading on an ongoing basis through the provision of goods and/or services, and by reinvesting surpluses into achieving social objectives.

It is governed in a fully accountable and transparent manner and is independent of the public sector. If dissolved, it should transfer its assets to another organisation with a similar mission.

*National Social Enterprise Policy 2019*

## Background

In July 2019, the Department of Rural and Community Development published a National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland. The aim of the policy is to create an enabling environment for social enterprise in Ireland to grow and contribute to Ireland's social and economic progress.

The Small Capital Grants for Social Enterprises is one initiative being taken by the Department of Rural and Community Development under the Policy to support social enterprises and is complementary to other supports provided by the Department.

It is anticipated that the small scale nature of the grants (between €2,000 and €15,000) will particularly benefit smaller or start-up social enterprises which do not necessarily have the capacity to compete for larger grants, but which nonetheless have a need for upgraded/additional equipment to help them to deliver their services. Priority will be given to those social enterprises that have not received previous funding of this nature. Factors such as demonstrable need and the potential impact on the delivery of services will also be considered.

The scheme is being administered on behalf of the Department of Rural and Community Development by Local Development Companies (LDCs) across the country. Applications should be made on the appropriate Application Form and submitted to the relevant LDC in your area. A list of LDCs is available at: [www.gov.ie/drcd](http://www.gov.ie/drcd). In the event of your local LDC not participating in the scheme, you can apply to a neighbouring LDC who will accept and process your application.

## Funding Allocation

Grants of between €2,000 and €15,000 are available to social enterprises under this scheme. Amounts approved will ultimately be subject to the total number of applications received and the overall budget available (€1 million).

Grants will be paid on the basis of vouched invoices for purchases or works completed. If approved under the scheme, applicants must be in a position to cover the up-front costs of purchases or works and claim re-imbusement on completion of those purchases or works.

## Applications

Applications must be made using the Application Form which is available on the Department of Rural and Community Development's [website](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/9c56eb-small-capital-grants-scheme-for-social-enterprises/). <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/9c56eb-small-capital-grants-scheme-for-social-enterprises/>

The deadline for receipt of completed applications is **3pm on Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2019**.

**Applications should be made directly to a participating LDC. Applications sent directly to the Department of Rural and Community Development will not be considered.** Contact details for the LDCs are available [here](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/9c56eb-small-capital-grants-scheme-for-social-enterprises/): <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/9c56eb-small-capital-grants-scheme-for-social-enterprises/>

All applications will be reviewed by the LDCs to verify that the applicant meets the definition of a social enterprise as set out in the National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland. Final decisions on funding approvals will be made by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome via the relevant LDC in early December 2019. Successful applicants will have until 30 April 2020 to draw down the grant, based on evidence of completed purchases or works.

## Assessment Criteria

Applicants will be asked to explain the purpose for which the grant is sought and the need that exists for the proposed purchase/works. Applicants will also be required to confirm that their organisation meets the definition of a social enterprise as set out in the National Policy.

Priority will be given to social enterprises that have not previously received funding for capital purposes, but factors such as demonstrable need and the potential impact of the grant on service delivery will also be taken into account.

## Eligible Costs

Capital costs incurred by social enterprises for the purchase of equipment are eligible. Repairs and refurbishment of existing facilities can also be funded.

The purchase of vehicles is not eligible under this scheme. Similarly, overhead costs, administrative costs or human capital costs for applicants are not eligible.

Only expenditure incurred after the date of grant approval will be eligible.

The grant may cover all, or part of, the purchase or works in question. However, the full cost of the purchase or works must be provided on the Application Form. National public procurement guidelines should be followed where appropriate. The Office of Government *Procurement's Public Procurement Guidelines for Goods and Services* is available at: <https://ogp.gov.ie/public-procurement-guidelines-for-goods-and-services/>. Pages 34-37 of this document may, in particular, be helpful in the context of the scale of this grant scheme. The LDCs can also provide further advice if necessary.

## Grant Payment Arrangements

Grant payments will be made by the LDC directly to successful applicants. Payments will be subject to the applicant providing proof of purchase of the completion of works. Payments will not exceed the amount actually expended or the level of the grant approved, whichever is the lesser.

Successful applicants may be subject to audit by the LDC or the Department of Rural and Community Development. Documentation relating to the purchase of equipment or the completion of works should therefore be maintained for inspection for a period of 7 years.

## Enquiries

All enquiries in relation to the Capital Grants Scheme for Social Enterprises should be directed to your nearest LDC.