

# Community Recognition Fund 2024

## Scheme Outline



An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development

Ár dTodhchaí  
Tuaithe  
Our Rural  
Future



## A. Introduction and Background

The Community Recognition Fund 2024 ('the Fund') aims to support the development of community infrastructure and facilities for the entire community in recognition of the contribution being made by communities across the country in welcoming and hosting significant numbers of arrivals from Ukraine and other countries.

The funding is specifically targeted at projects that are located in communities, towns and villages that are hosting the Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection and/or International Protection Applicants ('new arrivals') including towns identified for the rapid build homes programme. The Fund aims to support the development of facilities that will be used in the future by all members of the community. It is separate in its objectives and scope to any other public funding streams which aim to support the development of public service needs arising from the significant number of arrivals from Ukraine and other countries.

€50 million is available under the Fund, and this is allocated between each local authority based on the number of new arrivals located there. Applications can be submitted by a local authority to DRCD across three application windows, the last of which will close on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025. Projects must be fully delivered by the end of 2026.

## B. Grant Allocations and Rates

The Fund is allocated between each local authority based on the number of new arrivals located there, taking into account both the level of new arrivals and the relative level of new arrivals vis a vis overall population in a local authority area. The amount of funding allocated to each local authority under the Fund is set out in Appendix 1.

Given the nature and objectives of the Fund, the local authority will have discretion to avail of 100% of the costs of the project from the Fund to ensure it is delivered in full. Local authorities should clearly set out in their funding proposal the rate of aid that they wish to avail of for each project, ensuring that the project can be delivered fully based on the funding provided. **Local Authorities must ensure that where rate of aid of less than 100% is sought, the project must be achievable and completed in the timelines given.**

This funding should not be used as a co-funding source for any other scheme operated by the Department of Rural and Community Development or any other Government Department, nor should this funding be used as a co-funding source for any other project funded under CRF 2023.

### **C. Engagement with Communities and identifying locations**

It is **essential** that the funding proposals submitted by each local authority are developed based on direct engagement with impacted communities and in consultation with elected representatives, the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), the local Community Response Fora and Local Development Companies. Proposals should also be consistent with Local Economic and Community Plans.

Local Authorities should create a dedicated space on their website outlining the various ways communities can access Community Recognition Funding and details of any workshop/consultation events. Once created Local Authorities must provide the link to this space to the CRF Unit of DRCD who can publicise the information and direct queries to the page. Local Authorities must clearly outline, in the proposal forms, how this community engagement and collaboration took place, and should also include dates of public events or workshops, and details of how the funding is advertised and promoted locally.

The proposal form must also demonstrate that the funding is targeted at, and specifically invested in, those communities, villages and towns where the **highest level** of new arrivals are located and where there is a **clear need for investment** identified. This must be clearly demonstrated in the proposal form, so that funding is allocated to the most appropriate projects in the specific city areas, towns and villages where significant numbers of new arrivals are located – proposals which spread projects throughout a municipal area or city area without clearly linking the funding to the specific location of new arrivals and their level of need will not be approved.

The proposal must also demonstrate that the local authority has considered the distribution of funding under the 2023 Community Recognition Fund as part of the allocation of funding and selection of projects under this second iteration of the Fund i.e. the distribution of funding across both the 2023 and 2024 funds combined should reflect where new arrivals are located.

Proposals which do not display adequate levels of community engagement and appropriate targeting of support will not be approved. The application form has been amended compared to the 2023 Community Recognition Fund to ensure sufficient information is provided in this regard.

### **D. Eligible Projects**

Projects to be funded will be capital in nature, deliver medium-long term benefits for the communities in which they are located, and be capable of being delivered over the course of 2025 and 2026. A minimum spend of 50% of the allocation must be incurred in 2025. Eligible projects will receive funding for capital costs, but not for any ongoing operational or running costs.

The minimum level of funding for an individual project is €50,000 with a maximum of €500,000 applying. Smaller projects cannot be artificially combined to meet the minimum threshold of €50,000 – while the 2023 scheme provided funding for small scale investment in clubs and communities (e.g. for small scale equipment), the focus of the 2024 scheme is on projects of greater scale and impact.

For projects over €200,000 additional information must be provided at application stage giving further details on the needs identified in the location, the engagement and collaboration that resulted in the selection of the location and specific project and the capacity of the community to progress the proposed project in line with the terms and conditions attached to the funding. Please use Appendix 4 for providing an individual detailed business case to support the investment for each project that exceeds €200,000.

The maximum of €500,000 can be exceeded in very exceptional cases based on the provision of a business case from the relevant local authority. The business case must outline the rationale for higher funding due to factors such as substantial local needs, a particularly strong concentration of arrivals in one location, low levels of previous investment in the impacted area and/or other specificities of the area; the local authority should discuss this with DRCD in advance of making a business case

Local authorities have scope to invest the funding based on their own distinct local needs as identified through a “bottom-up” approach and based on the community engagement referenced above.

However, the type of projects eligible for funding are:

- development, enhancement or refurbishment of community or cultural facilities including play areas, walkways, parks, community/sensory gardens, allotments, and recreational areas;
- development, enhancement or refurbishment of local club and sports facilities including facilities such as community swimming pools, changing rooms, toilets, digital aids such as score / information boards etc.;
- enhancement to school/parish facilities which are open to use by all of the community after school hours;
- purchase of equipment for local clubs, festivals, community events and organisations e.g. music, arts or sports equipment;
- transport infrastructure such as the purchase of community vehicles, bus shelters and attendant information boards; (any vehicle funded must be in good condition and not more than 5 years old)
- projects that help address dereliction and/or wider local economic and community development objectives;
- purchase and refurbishment of vacant or derelict buildings for community use where a clear need is identified.

- Purchase of land and associated works for the development of community facilities such as play areas/ MUGAs or town parks/ community gardens, recreational areas etc. **(purchases must only be administered by the local authority).**

It is intended that this list offers considerable flexibility for local authorities to develop proposals that reflect the needs of their own communities and projects that will deliver real medium-long term benefits to those communities. However, in the course of developing their proposals, it is open to local authorities to discuss with the Department potential funding proposals outside the scope of the above list.

Where the maximum funding levels under this scheme may limit the potential to purchase and renovate a targeted building, the local authority may wish to purchase the vacant building under this fund and its' subsequent renovation can form part of an application under another scheme such as the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

#### Project delivery by community groups

Projects can be delivered directly by the local authority. However, in the interest of ensuring direct community engagement, it is also open to local authorities to deliver these projects via community organisations, in a similar manner to the management of the ORIS and CLÁR programmes. This provision does not apply to the purchase of land and buildings as set out in the final bullet point above.

Where a projects is being delivered via a community organisation, the local authority must satisfy itself that the organisation are fully aware of the terms and conditions associated with the funding. For larger projects, in particular, the local authority should ensure the community organisation has sufficient cash flow to ensure the project is deliverable and that they have capacity to do so. In order to support community organisations with cash flow, interim drawdown requests will be accepted by the Department once all material is submitted by the Local Authority.

**Projects situated in towns, villages or specific city locations that do not have high levels of new arrivals will not be deemed eligible.**

#### **E. Expression of Interest Application Process & Timelines for Delivery**

Interested groups should consider the requirements of the project, possible costs involved and plan their application carefully. The funding allocation will be a competitive process and where numerous applications come from areas that are identified as high need, groups should endeavour to answer all parts of the application form fully. Projects should be specific, time bound, show clear costings and planning throughout, and be achievable within the timeframes involved. Any planning issues should be clearly identified.

The closing date for applications for expressions of interest is **4pm, Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024.**

No works should commence in advance of formal funding approval from the Department. All approved funding proposals will be the subject of a funding agreement between the

applicant and the local authority and Department

Interim claims for expenditure incurred in 2025 should be submitted on or before 10th October 2025.

Final claims should be submitted on or before 9th October 2026. All projects should be fully delivered and funds drawn down by 9th October 2026

## **F. Procurement & Governance**

National Procurement Guidelines and DPENDR [Circular 13/2014](#) this circular must be adhered to in respect of each project funded under the funding proposal, and confirmation of this will form part the Department's control regime for the Fund.

## **G. Existing Schemes**

The funding should not be used to fund or co-fund existing financial commitments from any Government Scheme already approved for delivery by the local authority. However, funding can be used to deliver projects that are complementary to existing projects or to fund a different phase of an existing project. In the context of these types of projects, it is important that appropriate documentation is provided at claim stage to clearly delineate each discreet project showing clear lines of funding/payment etc.

## **H. Publicity**

Local authorities will acknowledge the support of the Department and reference '*Our Rural Future*' in all public announcements, scheme documentation and advertising, as appropriate, relating to projects supported under the Fund. Appropriate signage should be erected at the project location and a template is set out in Appendix 6.

In addition, the Department may seek to use the details of the works funded in each local authority in the broader promotion of its policies. Detailed case studies will support this and should be submitted with all final drawdown claims.

The approved project proposals and details of the specific approved projects will be formally announced and published by the Department.

## **I. Documentation to be Retained**

Each local authority must retain sufficient documentation to demonstrate the delivery of completed projects as set out in the funding proposal. This will include retention of the approved funding proposal and any subsequent approved amendments, documentation to demonstrate compliance with DPENDR [Circular 13/2014](#), National Procurement Guidelines, and evidence of any payments made in respect of completed approved projects.

Full and accurate documentation to support all expenditure should be maintained by the local authority and must be accessible by Department for audit purposes at all times, for a period of six years from the date of completion of the projects.

Local authorities will provide any reports and information relating to approved projects as may reasonably be requested by the Department from time to time.

## **J. Funding Conditions**

Non-Compliance with the conditions as outlined herein or in the funding agreement or non-compliance with any additional stipulations agreed during contract negotiations may result in the requirement to refund part or all of the funding awarded by the Department.

All expenditure under the Fund is also subject to the terms of the [Public spending code](#) and [DPENDR Circular 13/2014](#).

All appropriate financial, public procurement and accounting rules and regulations must be complied with, and each local authority will fully account for the funding received in a timely manner.

All the requirements set out in this document must be adhered to in order to qualify for the drawdown on funding.

A separate funding agreement will issue following approval of each project proposal.

## **K. Monitoring of Funding**

The Department may carry out appropriate pre or post-payment checks of project payment claims to verify compliance with funding conditions, project delivery and the reality of expenditure where appropriate.

The checks may include an examination of the file maintained in respect of approved projects together with any other relevant documentation identified during the course of the on-the-spot check.

The local authority will make books and accounts available to the Comptroller and Auditor General as required.

**L. Queries**

Any queries regarding the Fund should be sent to [crf@clarecoco.ie](mailto:crf@clarecoco.ie)