

Limerick's Community Climate Action Programme

Briefing Note and Guidelines for Applicants

Darren Barry Community Climate Action Officer Email:communityclimatefund@limerick.ie

The Community Climate Action Programme has been developed by the Department of Climate, Energy and Environment (DCEE) to support small and large, rural and urban communities to take climate action at a local level. Under the Community Climate Action Programme, €60m from the Climate Action Fund is being invested in localised community climate action projects and initiatives, and capacity building over the next three years. Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) will administer strand 1 and 1a of this Programme for communities within its areas of operation. Ireland has committed to reducing its carbon emissions by 51% by 2030 and becoming a net zero and climate neutral economy by no later than 2050. This guide has been prepared for groups in the operational area of LCCC to learn more about the Community Climate Action Programme and it may be subject to change. Groups are advised to contact the Community Climate Action Officer to discuss the Programme.

The Community Climate Action Programme has been developed under two strands addressing both direct climate action, and climate education and capacity building. An initial €24 million is being allocated over an 18-month period for strand 1 with a focus on direct climate action.

Strand 1: Building Low Carbon Communities

A total of €811,000 has been allocated to Limerick City and County Council to work in partnership with communities, large and small, rural, and urban, within the borders of Limerick to build low carbon communities in a considered and structured way.

Projects/initiatives eligible for funding:

The types of projects/initiatives, within communities, which are eligible for funding under the Programme, should seek to demonstrate the delivery of national climate action at local level by:

- Reducing or supporting the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
- Increasing the production, or use, of renewable energy
- Improving energy efficiency
- Increasing climate resilience
- Identifying nature-based projects that enhance biodiversity and seek to reduce, or increase the removal of greenhouse gas emissions or support climate resilience in the State
- Assisting regions in the State (including communities in those regions) and within sectors of the economy impacted by the transition to a low carbon economy
- Involving potentially innovative solutions to address the above asks.

Funding available:

<i>Small Scale Projects</i>	<i>Medium Scale Projects</i>	<i>Large Scale Projects</i>
Projects Valued at less than €20,000	Projects Valued in the range of €20,000 to €50,000	Projects Valued in the range of €51,000 to €100,000
10% of projects funded will in this bracket	40% of projects funded will in this bracket	50% of projects funded will in this bracket

Eligible Communities

Community groups are required to self-certify that they do not have the funding available to undertake the work without support, OR alternatively that the support will enable them to undertake more work which they otherwise would not be able to afford. Groups must be able to demonstrate their ability to carry out the proposed works.

Communities eligible for strand 1

- Must be a not-for-profit organisation
- Must be located in the operational area of Limerick City and County Council
- Must submit a completed application form on or before 16th December 2025 at 5pm.
- Must be registered with a PPN or connected with other collectives such as the Wheel, Tidy Towns and /or a community group with Articles of Association or a Constitution, which hold an AGM, and for which approved minutes are available
- The project applied for must be in line with the aim/purpose of the funding.
- Only one application per organisation may be submitted for consideration – projects proposed could cut across several of the themes and be bundled together as part of a single application.

In developing projects, communities should also consider how their projects contribute to progress in relation to relevant Sustainable Development Goals.

The following are not eligible to apply:

- Private individuals
- Commercial undertakings (including sole traders)
- National community and environmental organisations
- Schools, third level institutions.

Communities eligible for strand 1a (Shared Island Project)

- Must be a not-for-profit organisation. (National community and environmental organisations are eligible to apply under strand 1a due the scope for all-island projects)
- Must be located in the operational area of Limerick City and County Council

- Must be registered with a PPN or connected with other collectives such as the Wheel, Tidy Towns and /or a community group with Articles of Association or a Constitution, which hold an AGM, and for which approved minutes are available
- Must have at least one partner organisation in Northern Ireland. Partner organisations must be either a:
 - Not-for-profit organisation
 - Local Authority
 - Local/National community and environmental organisation registered in Northern Ireland

The following types of organisations are not eligible to apply for strand 1a:

- Private individuals
- Commercial undertakings (including sole traders)
- Schools, third levels institutions etc.
- Financial institutions

Programme Themes:

The community-based projects/initiatives will take action across at least one, preferably several, of the following five themes:



Community/Energy

Many Irish buildings have very low energy ratings and high running costs, mainly due to heat loss. How we build, heat and run our buildings can play a big part in reducing Ireland’s greenhouse gas emissions. Heat loss accounts for 10% of Ireland’s greenhouse gas emissions.

Projects of interest under this theme would reduce the climate impact of buildings in communities by using less energy, utilising renewable energy and avoiding heat loss. Project examples include but are not limited to:

<p>We can make our buildings more energy efficient by retrofitting them (e.g. insulation), switching off and using low energy lights/ appliances, and using smart controls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small community renewable energy projects (solar, hydro, wind) • Retrofitting community buildings
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Travel

<p>Transport accounts for approximately 20% of Ireland’s greenhouse gas emissions. Changing our means of travel is not simple and is often dictated by previous planning and housing choices, particularly in rural communities. How we travel is one of the main areas where behaviour change can have a rapid and real impact on achieving our climate goals</p>	<p>Projects of interest under this theme would contribute to a reduction in travel related emissions. Project examples include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in carbon footprint in services • Improving access to cycle/ walkways • Cycle parking
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Food & Waste

<p>Growing, processing and transporting food requires large amounts of energy and materials. It is estimated that one third of the food we grow is wasted and accounts for 10% of global emissions. There is a national commitment to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030. While being mindful that different situations such as the culture, religion, health, abilities and tastes can affect the decisions individual people can make; at a systems, community and lifestyle level there are opportunities to connect and engage people in action on food, waste and climate change.</p>	<p>Projects of interest under this theme would reduce food waste. Project examples include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community gardens • Allotments • Repair hubs • Community composting facilities
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Shopping & Recycling

<p>What we buy has a major contribution to emissions in terms of how they are made, transported, used, reused and recycled. If we keep on using resources as we do now, by 2050 we would need the resources of three Earths to satisfy demand. Ireland is moving towards creating a circular economy - making products that last longer, can be repurposed, reused and eventually recycled more easily. One of our climate goals is to increase the amount of waste that is recycled and to make all packaging reusable or recyclable by 2030. As shoppers we have the power to influence. People are changing their shopping habits by buying products that last longer or repurposing items, planning what they will do with things when they are finished using them, recycling as much as possible, actively segregating their waste for collection and using recycling centres and services near to them.</p>	<p>Projects of interest under this theme would increase the variety and number of recycling facilities in the local community and initiatives aimed at reducing, reusing and recycling.</p> <p>Project examples include but are not limited to:</p> <p>Community repair hubs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swap shops • Toy/Sport reusable kits • Water filling stations
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Local Climate & Environmental Action

Ireland has an abundance of natural resources, from our bogs and forests to our rivers and oceans. These natural resources need to be protected from climate change, and in return, they will help us by absorbing carbon, reducing the risk of flooding, increasing plants and wildlife (biodiversity), and acting as places for us all to reconnect with nature. Community action can take many forms from simple clean-ups to community schemes, to making plans to adapt to the changes already happening.

Projects of interest under this theme would take a holistic approach to managing the local environment, including in relation to climate action. Project examples include but are not limited to:

- Mini forests
- Forest schools
- Dispersed orchards
- Community gardens
- Roof gardens
- Pollinator projects
- Water harvesting
- Climate resilience projects
- Wetland conservation

Cost and Budgeting

As part of the application community groups will need to prepare a budget detailing everything that they will need to pay for during the project. To ensure an application represents value for money, three written quotes for each part of the project must be sought and must be submitted with the application (for example, if applying for raised beds and solar panels, if there are from separate suppliers then 3 quotes will be required for the raised beds and 3 quotes likewise for the solar panels). Communities must also consider green procurement where possible. LCCC must be satisfied that the application represents value for money and that the applicant has engaged with suppliers in developing their proposal. Where three quotes for a particular product/service is not possible or is overly burdensome in the case of multiple project components, this requirement may be waived, and the application may be evaluated on the quotes available. Groups should consult with the Community Climate Action Officer prior to submitting their application if this situation arises. When drawing up costs it is advised to include a contingency to address any unforeseen changes to costs or inflation. This would be especially important for bigger projects.

Eligible costs:

Eligible costs will be considered on a case-by-case basis. However, the following general conditions will apply:

- Costs submitted must be for the sole purpose of implementing the project and should not relate to any other purpose.
- Duplicate public funding must not have been received, or will be received, from other sources for the same purpose.
- Costs must be verifiable e.g., by evidence of public procurement, an invoice and receipt for payment.
- Community groups/organisations will be advised if some costs have been deemed ineligible from the outset. This will be taken account of in the grant amount recommended and the amount awarded and included in the grant agreement for the proposed project/initiative.

- Community groups/organisations cannot include the cost of using their own equipment or premises.
- Up to 100% funding may be provided from the Community Climate Action Programme. Other funding may be leveraged for projects (e.g., with LEADER, Tidy Towns, Town and Village Enhancement funding, etc.) although that is not a requirement of this programme.
- Pre-funding can be provided to community groups/organisations up to a maximum of 25% of the approved allocation in very limited circumstances and on a case-by-case basis. Pre-funding will only be considered for community groups/organisations where a clear need has been identified and is evidenced.
- Funding must comply with State Aid requirements.
- 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.

Ineligible costs:

The Community Climate Action programme will not formally fund activities involving*:

- Projects that solely benefit individuals.
- Teaching/staffing.
- Travel and transport costs except in exceptional circumstances.
- Equipment, unless directly associated with the project.
- Income generating projects.
- Overheads, ongoing running costs.
- Insurance.
- Accommodation and subsistence.
- Redundancy costs.
- Penalties/interest/bank interest/bank charges.
- Loan repayments.
- Retrospective costs i.e., expenditure which has taken place prior to approval date of the project.
- Legal fees.

*Please note, this list is not exhaustive.

State Aid Requirements:

Public funding is deemed to be 'State Aid' where it provides the recipient, whether an enterprise, not-for-profit organisations, or an individual, an economic advantage over others. To comply with State Aid rules, the level of funding provided to a project promoter must not exceed €300,000 - this is known as the De Minimis ceiling. De Minimis regulations sets a limit on how much assistance can be given to organisations. The current limit for a company, or group, irrespective of size or location, is €300,000 during the previous three-year fiscal period. Many groups/ projects under this Programme would not be considered State Aid and therefore will not be subject to the De Minimis ceiling. However, community groups when submitting their application will need to clarify their status

and if necessary declare if they have previously received any De Minimis State Aid (e.g. from a state agency, government department, Local Enterprise Office, local authority, LEADER funding etc.)

Application Process:

Interested community groups should contact Limerick's Community Climate Action Officer to discuss their project ideas. The Community Climate Action Officer is there to offer guidance to groups developing their projects and completing the application form.

Applications are submitted through the completion and submission of a signed online Application form. This is accessible through Limerick City and County Councils' online application platform, available at:

<https://mypoint.limerick.ie/en/applications>

APPLICATIONS OPEN TUESDAY 21ST OCTOBER AT 10AM AND CLOSE ON TUESDAY 16TH DECEMBER AT 5PM.

APPLICATIONS OUTSIDE OF THIS PERIOD CANNOT BE ACCEPTED AND ONLY THOSE MADE THROUGH THE CORRECT ONLINE APPLICATION PORTAL WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Documents to submit with the application form:

- Governance Documents for the organisation e.g. terms of reference, constitution, AGM minutes etc.
Costings breakdown i.e. written proof of quotes
- Any relevant supporting documentation, e.g. biodiversity reports, energy audits etc. This is not compulsory and only relevant documents should be submitted.

Evaluation, Selection and Approval

For a project to be successful and receive funding they need to first pass the evaluation stage, then the selection stage and finally the approval stage.

1. Evaluation: All applications will be evaluated by LCCC to ensure they align with the objectives and eligibility of this Programme and will be marked against the selection criteria below. Applications must meet a minimum score of 50% or above and meet the minimum scores, to be considered for selection by LCCC.
2. Selection: Following evaluation, LCCC will then select the final projects taking account of the highest scores, geographical distribution of projects, desirability to fund a variety of different projects and across multiple themes and the contribution of the projects to the climate action objectives of LCCC
3. Approval: LCCC will submit the selected projects to the Minister of the Environment, Climate and Communications for final approval. Success at the evaluation, and selection stages is not a guarantee of funding. The Minister will decide what projects are ultimately approved and any specific conditions of funding.

Selection Criterion	Weighting	Basis for Assessment
Relevance and Impact	30%	The project meets the objective of strand 1 to shape and build a low carbon community, and can clearly demonstrate the impact of the project in contributing to Ireland's climate and energy targets.
Innovation and Scalability	20%	The project contains practical innovation/(s) and/or approaches. It has the potential to be scaled up or replicated in other communities post funding. The project has a lasting impact.
Value for money	20%	The costs applied for are reasonable, represent an efficient use of resources and are commensurate with the quality and nature of the activities proposed. Realistic, specific, and relevant outputs and outcomes are identified, which are commensurate with the level of investment.
Achievability	10%	The organisation/partnership has the appropriate expertise to deliver the proposed project. The proposal is clear and coherent and is deliverable within the timeframe. Key 15 milestones are specified with an explanation of how these will be monitored.
Partnership Approach	10%	Any Partner/Consortium roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined with partnership agreements in place (where applicable). The proposal demonstrates how all key stakeholders will be involved in the planning and implementation of the proposal.
Governance Arrangements	10%	Any necessary governance and financial management systems, controls, and processes are in place to meet the requirements of the programme. Where applicable, evidence of tax compliance and registration with relevant bodies is supplied. Details of track record in managing other state funding is supplied.