EirGrid.ie

The North Connacht Community Benefit Fund Guidelines

January 2026





The North Connacht Community Benefit Fund Guidelines have been prepared by SECAD Partnership CLG on behalf of EirGrid.

SECAD Partnership CLG
Midleton Community Enterprise Centre
Owennacurra Business Park
Knockgriffin
Midleton, Co. Cork
P25 Y893
Ireland

Phone: 021 461 3432
Email: info@secad.ie
Website: www.secad.ie

Copyright © EirGrid
All rights reserved. No part of this work may be modified or reproduced or copied in any form or by means – graphic, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping or information and retrieval system, or used for any purpose other than its designated purpose, without the written permission of EirGrid



Table of Contents

1. EirGrid 6
2. The North Connacht 110 kV Project 6
3. The North Connacht Community Benefit Fund 6

3.1 Principles 8
3.2 Funding streams 8

4. Key dates and figures 9
5. Area of Benefit (AOB) 11
6. Funding rules 12
7. Funding amounts 16
8. Project types 18
9. Umbrella application 21
10. Project plan and budget 22
11. Common errors on applications 23
12. Sustainable development goals 24
13. How to apply 25

13.1 Documents you must provide 25

14. The application process 27
15. Our evaluation process 28
16. Evaluation criteria 29
17. Feedback 30
18. Contract offer 32
19. Abiding by terms and conditions 33
20. Payment structure 34
21. Project closing dates 34
22. Grant claims process 35

22.1 Acknowledging the support of EirGrid 35
22.2 Case studies and testimonials 35

23. Project monitoring 36
24. Terms and conditions 37
25. Glossary to key terms 39
26. Contact information 40

1. EirGrid

EirGrid operates and develops the electricity transmission grid in Ireland. This includes interconnection with neighbouring grids and the wholesale electricity market. The grid brings power from generators to the ESB distribution network that supplies every home, farm and business in Ireland. The grid is also used to deliver power directly to businesses that use large amounts of electricity. EirGrid ensures electricity is always available – today, tomorrow and for decades to come.

2. The North Connacht 110 kV Project

The North Connacht 110 kV Project will add a new line to the electricity grid in Co Mayo and Co Roscommon. This new line will strengthen the grid in Connacht. It will provide electricity capacity to meet increasing electricity demand, supporting economic growth in the area. By connecting to renewable energy, it will also help to meet Ireland's climate action targets.

As of 2020, around 40% of the electricity that we use in Ireland comes from renewable sources. The government's Climate Action Plan aims for 80% of electricity from renewables by 2030.

The North Connacht 110 kV Project is an important step in reaching this target.

3. The North Connacht Community Benefit Fund

We have set up the €1.53 million North Connacht Community Benefit Fund to recognise how important the local communities are who support our work. We recognise that there may be temporary disruption to areas close to the cable line during construction.

We appointed SECAD Partnership CLG as Fund Administrator in September 2023.

They have worked closely with us in EirGrid and with:

- North Connacht Community Forum
- local communities
- stakeholders.

This work has enabled SECAD to develop a community benefit strategy relevant to the geographical area of the project. The strategy was designed with and for the local community.

We expect the fund to support communities within the North Connacht project area. This will help local groups to deliver on projects and initiatives that will strengthen opportunities and address challenges in the areas.

The fund will address challenges across three funding streams: Community, Sustainability and Biodiversity.

You can view the project's Strategy Document on our website.

The fund is open to:

- community groups
- not-for-profit organisations
- social enterprises.

When applying you need to show how you would use the funds to benefit your community and the environment around the cable line.

3.1 Principles

The following principles are at the centre of the North Connacht Community Benefit Fund strategy, The fund:

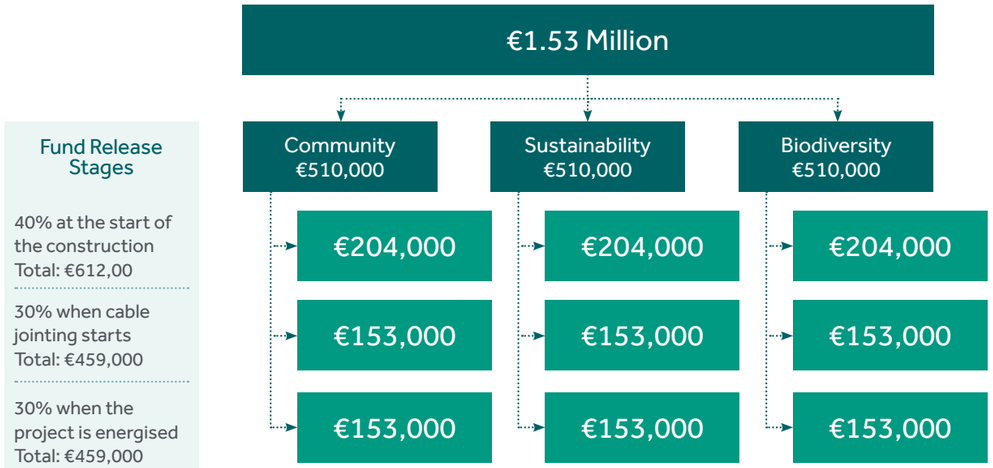
- must support projects that are community-led
- will try to leave a positive legacy within communities that host the North Connacht infrastructure
- will support projects which align with the Sustainable Development Goals
- will be delivered in a fair and balanced way.

3.2 Funding streams

The fund is divided into 3 streams:

- Community
- Sustainability
- Biodiversity.

There is an equal balance of funds available across each stream. The Community Benefit Fund will be released on a phased basis as the North Connacht 110kV Project progresses. The diagram below shows the anticipated timeline for release of funds.



4. Key dates and figures

Key dates and figures for Phase 1.
The Phase 1 total fund value is €612,000. We will not accept applications or related documents after the closing date.

Event	Date
Phase 1 fund opening date	13 January 2026 at 2pm
Phase 1 fund closing date	13th March 2026 at 5pm
Application Response / Contract issue	Summer 2026

Type of stream	Funds available
Community Stream	€204,000
Sustainability Stream	€204,000
Biodiversity Stream	€204,000

Area of benefit (AOB)
2km either side from the cable line (see map)

Minimum and Maximum grant available
€1,000 minimum and €75,000 maximum* *We may consider an exception to the maximum grant amount for a significant, high-impact, area-wide project or initiative.

Outcome of your application

We will tell you whether or not your application was successful during summer 2026. Please note, if we are experiencing any delays due to application volume, we will let you know.

Read all of this document before applying

Before you apply for funding, it is essential that you read the whole document. It sets out the criteria we use to decide who we give funding to. Pay special attention to this criteria so that you can submit the best possible application for The North Connacht Community Benefit Fund.

We may give you some of the funding you apply for

If your application is successful, we may award you part of the full amount you applied for. We encourage you to consider funds from other areas before you submit your application and make sure you have examined how your group may fund a shortfall.

Other sources of funding include:

- public funding
- savings
- borrowings.

By exploring other funds, it will show us that you are committed to your project and community involvement.

Contact SECAD or our dedicated website for help or guidance

Please keep a copy of these guidelines to hand when completing your application, if you need help or guidance at any stage, please contact SECAD.

How to contact us:

Phone: 021 461 3432
Email: info@secad.ie

Community Benefit Funding website: with an information section for new applicants:
EirGrid.ie/northconnacht#communitybenefitfund

The online fund application form is available here, or scan the QR Code below.

Scan Here for Portal Application Form



5. Area of Benefit (AOB)

We will give priority to projects within 2 kilometres of the cable line. Please see the map below outlining the 2km area from the cable line. (TBC) This area is called the Area of Benefit.

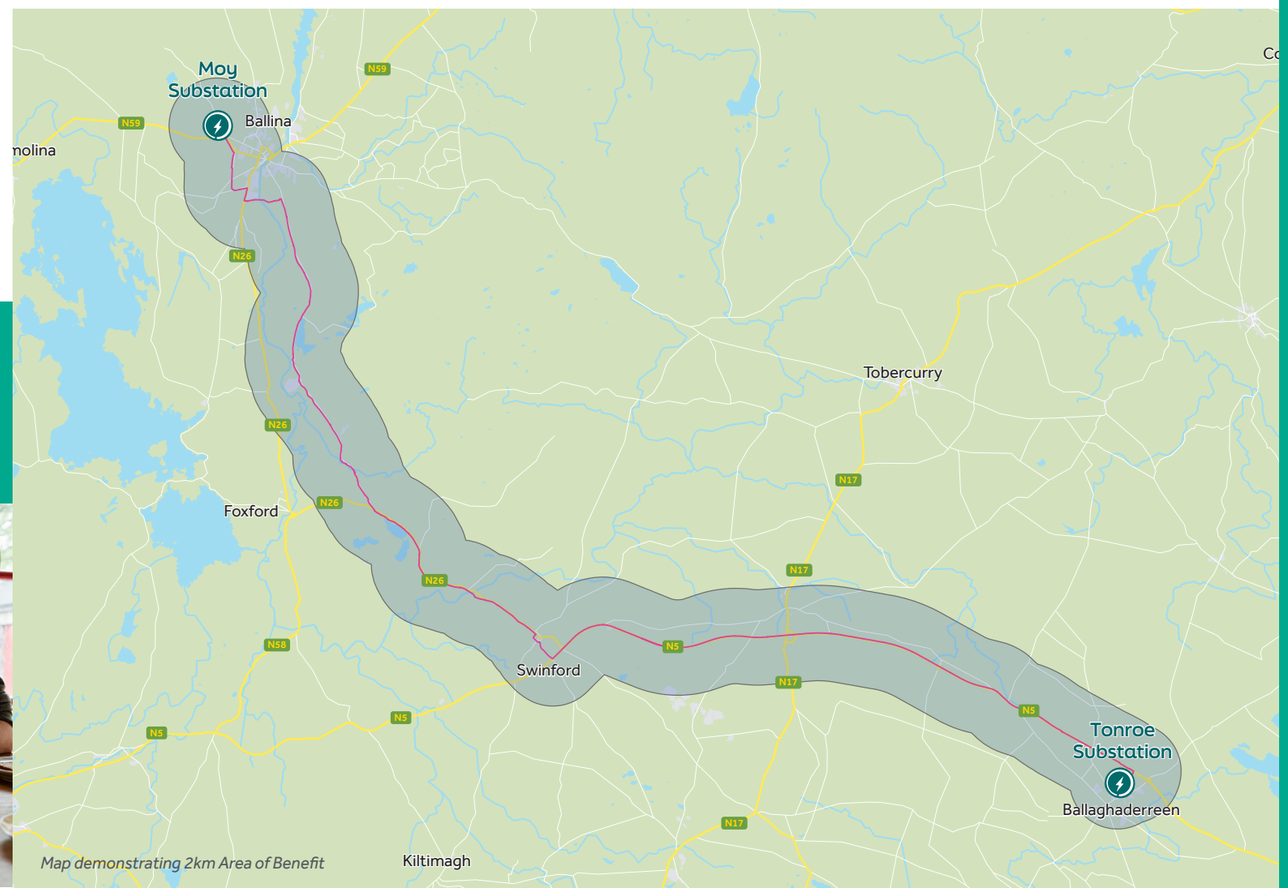
However, in areas where the nearest main service centre is outside the 2km zone, we may consider projects and initiatives if you can demonstrate that they will directly benefit residents within the Area of Benefit. A service centre could include a community centre or a resource centre, where a service or facility is being provided to the wider community.

After each funding phase, along with SECAD Partnership, we will review the geographic balance of funds across the Area of Benefit.

We will encourage and support communities which have not yet secured funding to submit applications in future phases.

In the third phase of funding, we will give consideration to communities that have not been awarded funding in earlier rounds. They must still submit full applications for eligible projects.

You can see a more detailed map here.



6. Funding rules

SECAD Partnership and EirGrid

SECAD Partnership and EirGrid will work together with communities to achieve a balanced investment across the fund's three streams. This is outlined in EirGrid's Community Benefit Fund Policy.

We consulted with local communities to find out what type of projects would benefit them. This showed that there were a broad range of projects and initiatives needing varying investment levels. In line with these findings, the fund will support small to large-scale projects with grant awards ranging from €1,000 to €75,000.

We may consider an exception to the maximum grant amount for a significant, high-impact, area-wide project or initiative.

The fund will support community projects through grant investment in:

- capital investment
- purchase of equipment
- technical and professional expertise and support
- community animation / development / co-ordination costs
- training and capacity building.
- research and development

Capital Investment

The fund will support investment in the capital infrastructure where there is an identified need within the community, e.g. the costs involved in upgrading existing or establishing new infrastructure for community use. Support for land purchase will also be considered where a clear need has been identified within the community for land ownership in order to develop a high impact, legacy project under one or more of the fund streams. Communities must be able to demonstrate how land purchase will enable project delivery and how it will be managed. The community purpose/planned use(s) of the land must also be clearly identified.

Purchase of Equipment

The fund will support the purchase of equipment required by community and voluntary groups to undertake their activities.

Technical and Professional Expertise & Support

The fund will support communities to procure specialist, skilled, technical expertise which is critical to project planning and delivery. Communities will be supported to procure professional expertise where it is deemed critical to the development of projects or initiatives. This may be for a specific purpose such as to research, plan and finalise details for high-impact projects, or to engage specialist expertise to develop projects in line with best practice or regulatory requirements (e.g. qualified and experienced project engineers/ architects/ecologists/heritage specialists/ energy efficiency expert, etc.).

Technical expertise

The fund will support communities so they can procure the contracted services of specialist, skilled, technical expertise they need to support a project for a specific purpose. This could be for research, or to plan and finalise details for high-impact projects.

Community Animation / Development / Co-Ordination Costs

A direct need has been identified in the area for output-based animation and community development resources which will support voluntary efforts to bring projects and initiatives to fruition, particularly in relation to stakeholder engagement, relationship-building and collaboration, preparing grant applications, project co-ordination and project oversight.

To enable sustainable local development, the fund will support animation (engaging people, facilitating activities, or energising a project) / project development / co-ordination roles which are directly linked to the establishment and growth of sustainable, collaborative community-based initiatives within the Area of Benefit, and which will have long-lasting impact for those living in the area. These roles, which will be limited to one per applicant, may be considered for key towns and villages within the Area of Benefit, or to support the development and implementation of area-wide projects and initiatives. They must support the development of collaborative projects which benefit the whole community, are providing services for the most vulnerable or isolated people in the community or are implementing climate change/environmentally focused initiatives.

Training & Capacity Building

The fund will support local community and voluntary organisations to deliver training and capacity building programmes under one or more of the fund streams. The purpose of this will be to strengthen knowledge and awareness around the priorities identified during the consultation.

Research and Development

The fund will support the costs of research and development to enable groups to investigate new approaches to addressing local challenges or opportunities under the priorities outlined in Section 7.3. This may include undertaking feasibility studies or practical research necessary to support the development and implementation of innovative new projects or initiatives for the local area.

Collaborative Investment and Other Funding Supports

The fund will encourage collaboration and co-financing of investment where other funding streams exist. The maximum grant award for projects will be 90% project costs (except for umbrella projects which may be funded up to 100% in certain circumstances). Large projects will require a larger match finance contribution.

Social Enterprise Support

The fund will support Social Enterprise as a solution for meeting a gap in community-based services, supporting vulnerable or isolated people in the community, or leading the implementation of climate change/ environmentally focused initiatives across the Area of Benefit.

Sport Clubs

Sports clubs that apply for projects with an overall community benefit may be considered. Large scale sporting applications from sports groups for their mainstream sporting activities, may not be a priority. This is due to budget limitations and the availability of other sports related funding streams to support mainstream sports projects.
Exceptions could be made in the following circumstances;

- if Community Stream funding is still available after all other 'priority' broad based community applications have been considered
- if sports projects are in a geographic area and have no other relevant application made for funding streams
- if sports clubs are applying for something eligible under the Sustainability or Biodiversity Streams.

Approval in principle

The fund will support high-potential projects that have a clear project plan but need more time to complete their full application. In these circumstances we may grant an 'approval in principle'.

The fund will sometimes give approval in principle so that larger projects have a better chance of getting funding from other sources. Eligible projects must be significantly developed, for example they must have things like some assets in place and a project plan developed.

Large projects

Large-scale projects that need capital, facilities and equipment must show how they will benefit the entire community and engage more than one local user group.

'Umbrella applications' for smaller projects

We will support new, multi-community and smaller groups initiatives through an 'umbrella application'. An umbrella application is where a lead applicant, like a Community Council, might make an application on behalf of several smaller groups or projects within the community. See more information in section 9: Umbrella application.

Matching or additional finance

We expect that where other applicable funding streams exist that you will use the community benefit fund to match or add to other finance. The fund cannot support ineligible activities or projects, if one or more of the following apply

- Projects proposed by individuals.
- Projects proposed by private or commercial companies.
- Requests for sponsorship and ongoing operational costs.
- Trips abroad.
- Political activities.
- Religious organisations or activities.
- Projects beyond the timeframe.
- Existing loans, debts, or retrospective supports; you must apply for future needs.
- Organisations that are fully state funded, for example, the fund cannot replace funding that is, or has been, the responsibility of any statutory bodies.
- Schools, ;however parent's associations are welcome to apply. If you wish to apply on behalf of a BOM, please contact SECAD to discuss.



7. Funding amounts

You can apply for between €1,000 and €75,000. This is to make sure a wide range of community organisations can benefit from this fund.

Applicants with a project value over €75,000 should upload a business plan with their quotations, this should include financial projections and other potential funding sources.

In most cases, €75,000 is the most funding we will allocate. This can be either in one single awarded grant or a total of €75,000 across the three phases.

We may consider an exception to the maximum grant amount for a single application or all together across each phase, for a significant, high-impact, area-wide project or initiative.

While communities can submit multiple applications, we encourage individual organisations to submit only one application

7.1: Phases 2 and 3 of fund distribution

Projects which receive grants during Phase 1 of our fund distribution can apply for more funding under Phases 2 and 3. However, they can only do this if the total they have received so far is less than €75,000. However, we do not guarantee that they will secure additional funding. We will release more details on these phases at a later date.

Projects which did not receive funding during Phase 1 may also apply for and receive funding during Phases 2 or 3 of distribution.



7.2 Project amount(s) applied for and description

Examples of projects and amounts you may apply for:

Smaller initiatives: €1,000-€10,000

We welcome applications from new and grassroots community groups and residents' associations.
These may fall under an 'umbrella application' or a single application from one applicant group.
Our funding may be suitable as seed funding. This means you can use it to:

- get help to apply for alternative funds in the future
- complete a pilot project, which is an initial small-scale implementation that is used to prove the viability of a project idea

For awards of this size, we will allocate funding as a once-off grant and projects must be put in place and completed within 12 months.

Medium initiatives: €10,000-€40,000

We will consider organisations and groups who apply for grants between €10,000 and €40,000 as 'medium initiatives.

We will give priority to projects which address the themes outlined in these guidelines. The emphasis should be on real and lasting benefit to the community and environment. Projects of this scale may address one or more of the fund streams and priorities under the streams.

Large initiatives: €40,000-€75,000

Organisations and groups can apply for grants of up to €75,000.
We will give priority to projects that address one or more of the fund streams and priorities under the streams. The emphasis should be on creating real and lasting benefit to the community and environment.

We encourage collaborative applications. We will give priority to projects where community and voluntary groups work together to serve a wider area or a larger number of people.

If the application is from a partnership or consortium, you will need to clearly identify who will 'be in charge' of the facility or project.
We may allocate funding as a once-off grant or in phased payments and we expect projects to be put in place within 24 months.

For these amounts, we will look for evidence of sustainability and lasting impact. If the application relates to infrastructure, we will need to see your plans for maintenance, running and upkeep.

8. Project types

Through the local consultation process, we identified a broad range of local priorities under each of the three Community Benefit Fund streams.

Funding streams, who and what the funds can support

We encourage groups to apply for a percentage of their project costs from more than one funding stream where suitable. For example, projects like the following could apply under the 'Community Stream and the Sustainability' stream:

- a community infrastructure project or community centre upgrade, falls under the Community Stream
- installation of solar panels to the community infrastructure, falls under the sustainability stream

Priorities under different streams

Community Stream

Description	Examples
The community stream aims to reinforce community: • cohesion • wellbeing • education. It will support communities so they can put in place projects that leave a positive legacy for those living within the Area of Benefit.	• Revitalising Town and Village centres • Upgrade and Development of Outdoor Recreation & Amenity Space • Engaging Older People, Active Ageing, Ageing in the Community • Arts, Culture and Heritage projects • Improved Sporting Facilities • Social Inclusion & Integration of New Communities • Development of Facilities for Young People • Multi-purpose and shared facilities/services, such as community 'hubs' • Encouraging Connectivity between Community Facilities/Amenities in towns and villages • Improving Accessibility of Community Buildings and Facilities • Community-led Tourism • Social Enterprise • Community Childcare • Community Health & Wellbeing Initiatives

Sustainability Stream

Description	Examples
The sustainability stream aims to enable communities to take positive sustainable action across a broad range of activities. This includes transforming how communities think about, generate and use energy and resources. It will also support communities so they can put in place projects that: • address climate change • reduce greenhouse gas emissions • strengthen resilience • contribute to an inclusive and sustainable future for people and planet.	• Community Training & Awareness Campaigns • Renewable Energy Projects • Energy Efficiency Upgrades for Community Buildings & Facilities • Sustainable Use of Water Resources • Waste Reduction and Circular Economy Projects • Retrofitting and Reuse of Heritage Buildings for Community Purpose • Community Gardens & Orchards • Youth Climate Action Initiatives • Rural and Community Transport Initiatives • Remote Working/Distance Learning Facilities • Community Transport & Active Travel • Research, Feasibility and Expert Technical Assistance • Climate Crisis Community Response Initiatives

Biodiversity Stream

Description	Examples
The biodiversity stream aims to significantly improve the biodiversity of an area and ensure its ongoing sustainability. It should leave a lasting, positive biodiversity legacy. Proposed biodiversity projects must show compliance with relevant environmental licensing. While communities will own their projects, they must have a strict inspection schedule and comply with relevant regulations. Project requirements • An ecological baseline: The first step to achieving a biodiversity project is to establish an ecological baseline using a qualified ecologist. The ecological baseline identifies what habitat and species already exist at a site. As part of our fund, this important step can be included in your application as a project cost and incorporated into your project timeline if not already completed prior to application. • Protection of species and habitats. For example, ensure a proposal does not disturb a badger sett or other sensitive feature. • Support the all-Ireland pollinator plan. For example, avoid using wildflower seed, except native-grown yellow rattle. • Use tried and tested methods.	• Development of Biodiversity Action Plans • Feasibility Studies to develop large-scale biodiversity projects • Training, Education & Awareness • Conservation of Local Habitats (e.g. bogs, rivers, lakes, forests) • Establishment of Native Woodlands • Biodiversity Trails • Tidy Towns Initiatives (e.g. pollinators, gardens, parks etc.) • Supporting Invasive Species Management • Research, Mapping and Ecology Specialist Support • Nature-based Flood Relief Solutions • Biodiversity & Wellbeing Initiatives Added Value • Support county biodiversity actions - County biodiversity plans. • Support local biodiversity actions - Local biodiversity plans. • Support climate action initiatives - Climate action plan for your County. • Engage the wider community.

Collaboration and other funding supports

Any funding we offer must support and add to existing funding streams that local communities already have access to.
For projects to be sustainable, collaboration is key. We want to make sure communities can make the most of the opportunities open to them for transforming their area to meet their needs. This means EirGrid and SECAD Partnership CLG will work closely with:

- communities
- local authorities
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)
- State agencies.

9. Umbrella application

If you have a project with a value of up to €5,000, we ask that you consider submitting your application under an 'umbrella application'. This option is to support smaller emerging groups that may need additional support.

Groups with a smaller value project are also welcome to apply directly with a single application if they wish.

You can start your umbrella application by contacting our fund administrator. They will put you in contact with the lead organisation in your area. You will need to provide them with a completed copy of this form and a copy of your group's constitution. If the group doesn't have a constitution, which is a document that provides information on your group, a template is available for download here.
You can edit the template to suit your group. You will also need to supply quotations relevant to your funding application.

The lead organisation will include your project under an 'umbrella application' with other similar value projects from the area. The lead will take responsibility for managing administrative and compliance requirements of the overall grant application.

SECAD Partnership can give you a list of lead organisations and groups in your area.





10. Project plan and budget

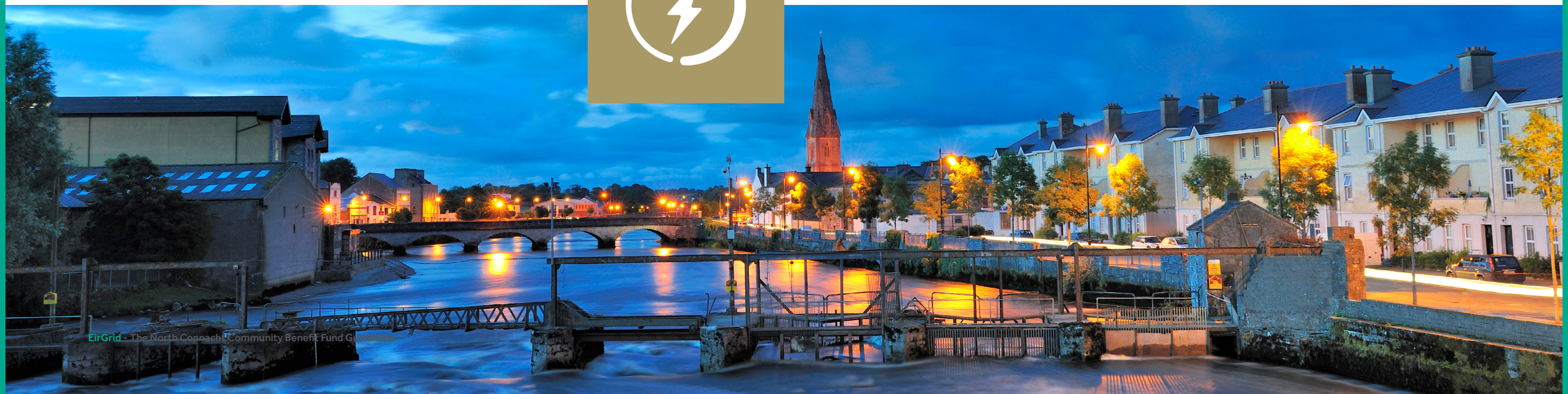
It is important to take some time to think through your community project. Consider carefully what costs should be included in your project budget. It essential to note that the final 50% of the contract value payment, cannot be made until the project is fully completed.
The project plan and description should include the:

- needs and benefits to the project
- number of beneficiaries
- business plan for large projects

Please give details of any support from or collaboration with other community groups or organisations in the area for the project. Please consider uploading video content and testimonials on the online application portal.

11. Common errors on applications

- Incomplete applications.
- Poor project description or lack of information.
- Applicants did not read the fund guidelines or criteria, or both.
- Blank answers to questions.
- Missing paperwork such as planning permission or an exemption from planning permission.
- Project costs do not tally with quotes.
- The projects fall outside the Area of Benefit.
- Projects did not show appropriate governance or committee structure.



Construction and electrical certification

You may be carrying out construction or electrical works of some kind. If so, at the 'Claim stage', you must supply any necessary:

- Engineer's report
- RECI certification in the case of electrical works
- Installation report
- ROSPA report in the case of playgrounds

You may include the costs associated with any of these reports in your application. Please make sure to provide a quotation.

Take some time to consider the project you wish to submit for support. Make a plan so that you will have the necessary documents available to submit before the closing date.

12. Sustainable development goals

The North Connacht Community Benefit Fund will be underpinned by the objectives of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Sustainable Development Goals are a universal call to action to:

- end poverty
- protect the planet
- improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere.

The 17 goals were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It set out a 15-year plan to achieve the goals.

In your application, please identify which goal your group or project most closely aligns with. Please visit this website for further information on each goal:

- https://irelandsdg.geohive.ie/



13. How to apply

Please see our guide to completing an application here.

Please also take a look at our website site page (tbc) for further information including a summary of each section of the application (link TBC – completing the application form)

Go to the application portal or us the QR code:

13.1 Documents you must provide

You must submit the following documents with your application, at a minimum.

Financial details

Submit a copy of a statement from your organisation's account with your:

- bank,
- credit union, or
- post office.

Your constitution

Submit a copy of your organisation's signed and dated constitution. If the group doesn't have a constitution, which is a document that provides information on your group, a template is available, and you can edit the template to suit your group. Contact SECAD for a copy or download the template from our website.

Your constitution must confirm that the organisation:

- has charitable purposes
- is not for profit in nature
- does not pay any directors or trustees.

Verify value of each item

You must submit quotations to verify the value of each item that you are seeking funding support from the North Connacht Community Benefit Funds to purchase.

- If any individual item is less than €5,000, you need one quote for that item.
- If it costs €5,000 or more, you must provide three quotes from three different suppliers, or evidence that you tried to obtain three quotes.

You must be registered with your local Public Participation Network

Applicants must be registered with their local Public Participation Network (PPN) or be able to show that registration is in progress.
Mayo PPN:
https://mayoppn.ie/join-mayo-ppn/
Roscommon PPN:
https://roscommonppn.ie/join-us/

Leases and planning permission

You must supply particular paperwork for work relating to:

- renovation
- construction
- refurbishment
- groundworks
- installation.

If the applicant group is not the owner of the premises or location, you must supply a lease or letter of permission from the owner to undertake the proposed works.

If relevant, you must supply details of planning permission, or a letter or email showing exemption from the relevant Local Authority.

You must provide the relevant permissions

It is important to note that you are responsible for providing the relevant permissions.

You can read further information on the planning process and get contact details for Local Authorities on at www.housing.gov.ie/

Please note that applicants who do not submit the required documentation with the application form, may not proceed to evaluation. This includes:

- planning permission
- planning exemption
- owner permission.

14. The application process

You must submit your application online. Once you have submitted your application, you will receive an email to confirm that we have received your application. You can download a copy of this for your records.

SECAD will then make checks to make sure the applicant organisation and project meet the funds' eligibility criteria. Complete, eligible projects will proceed to evaluation stage.

In some cases, we may defer your application. SECAD may ask you to provide more information so that they can reconsider your application during a subsequent call.



15. Our evaluation process

An evaluation panel will assess all applications and make sure there is a fair and objective distribution of grants and grant value amounts, across the scheme area. This evaluation panel will be led by SECAD Partnership and will include representatives from EirGrid and independent evaluators.

When selecting who benefits, we aim to choose organisations that will gain the most from these grants.

The evaluation panel will try to make sure that the benefits of the fund are received by communities in the defined Area of Benefit. They will consider the geographic spread of applications. The panel will also try to make sure that a broad mixture of projects and project values are funded. The funded projects should serve a wide range of people.

Please note, canvassing or lobbying will automatically disqualify your group.

16. Evaluation criteria

We will evaluate each fund application using the following criteria

Type of applicant
The project should be proposed by: • a community group • not-for-profit entity • social enterprise.
Location of project
The project should: • be within the 2km boundary of the Area of Benefit • clearly serve communities within this priority area.
Project eligibility
The project must be eligible for funding and not on the list of ineligible items or activities.
Project must fall under one of the three themes
The project must benefit the community and improve the quality of life in the area under the themes of: • Biodiversity • Sustainability • Community. The benefits must be clearly outlined in the application.
Target group and scale of impact
The group in the area benefiting from the project should be: • large • diverse • under-served • a mixture of one or more of these. You must have consulted with the user or target group or groups. Ideally, for larger funding, we encourage cross-community applications or even applications from multiple communities.

Viability and sustainability of your project
Your project must aim to make a positive social and, or, environmental impact. If your project needs to purchase physical goods or materials, the project team must commit to sourcing the most environmentally and socially sustainable option available. The project must show how it is linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The project should have the potential for longevity and you should be able to show you can manage it in the long term. You should have thought about future funding or maintenance costs if relevant.
Your capacity and track record
You must be able to show that you have a history of community involvement and experience delivering community projects. Otherwise, you must show that you have access to the relevant expertise and are registered with the Public Participation Network.
Project value for money
Your proposal should show value for money. Our funding should give you the support that you cannot get elsewhere through alternative funding.

Please note applicants may not proceed to evaluation if they fail to submit required documentation with the application form, for example:

- **planning permission**
- **planning exemption**
- **owner permission.**

17. Feedback

SECAD Partnership works in cooperation with EirGrid. They take care to assess all applications against criteria in a consistent and fair way.

Although decisions are final, if your application is unsuccessful, you can ask SECAD Partnership for feedback. The may benefit you in a future application.

We welcome all observations and feedback on the process. Please download a feedback form or access it on our website. Once complete, please email it to info@secad.ie and we will respond to you.



18. Contract offer

If your application is successful, we will send you a provisional grant offer and contract through an online electronic signature platform. You must accept, sign and return this within 15 working days.

Please note, the provisional grant offer email may set conditions which you must fulfil within the 15-day timeframe.

Along with the contract, successful applicants will receive the relevant grant claim login details and guidance notes. These will explain how to drawdown the funds.

Please note, unless otherwise agreed with SECAD, you should not spend anything related to the grant aided parts of your project until at least after the date you submitted your application. If you spend money on the project before a contract has been issued and signed by SECAD and you, you then assume the risk that you may not receive an offer of funding.

19. Abiding by terms and conditions

If SECAD thinks an applicant has breached the terms and conditions of grant aid, they may ask them to return all of the grant awarded.

SECAD in cooperation with EirGrid may also stipulate that no future applications for funding will be accepted from that organisation for a minimum of two years. After two years, we will only accept their application if the organisation can prove they have taken action to improve their ability to complete the project. This must include evidence of support sought from appropriate support or umbrella organisations.



20. Payment structure

If we offer you funding, we will detail the payment structure on your contract.
Once the contract has been signed by both the applicant and SECAD, and a proforma invoice and timeline for the project has been provided, successful groups will receive an advance payment of 50% of the award value.

SECAD will transfer 50% of the contract amount to the group or organisation account named by the applicant in their application.
We will make the final payment in line with the 'Grant claims process' outlined on page 35.

21. Project closing dates

All contracts contain a closing date. After this date, your grant offer will no longer apply and not be payable. Generally, this is 12-24 months from date of issue but may differ depending on the scale or your project.

If, for some reason, your project is delayed and will not be completed by the closing date, please contact SECAD immediately.



22. Grant claims process

Please remember that before we pay out funding, you must submit all the necessary documents. Then when you complete your approved project and pay your contractor/ service provider, you must upload the required documents to detail your spending on the project.

In order to issue your 'claim for payment', please log into the portal or click the link we previously sent you. This will enable you to access the claim form.

Scan Here for Portal Application Form

At a minimum, you must answer the questions asked and upload the following:

- copies of your invoices or receipts
- pictures of your project or purchase
- a copy of your group's financial statement (from your bank or post office account for example) showing the transaction or transactions

Invoices and receipts must be dated after the date you submitted your application for funding.

If a group does not complete the project fully in line with the contract, SECAD may not make the final payment. They may also ask you to return the initial funding provided to your group.

Please note, if documentation is missing or incomplete, it will delay processing of your claim.

Funding is paid by electronic funds transfer

When processing your grant payment, SECAD will make the payment to the name of the group or company stated on the 'Offer Contract'. They will pay your funds through electronic funds transfer (EFT) to the account details provided with your application. SECAD does not pay out funding in cash.

22.1 Acknowledging the support of EirGrid

We will ask you to acknowledge the support of EirGrid Community Fund on any materials associated with the grant. Groups are asked to download the template and logo(s) for use in social media to acknowledge EirGrid.

Please contact SECAD Partnership if you want to discuss.

22.2 Case studies and testimonials

The last section of the claim form asks for a testimonial from the applicant group and a picture suitable for future publication.
This is for use in future reports and case studies. Please make sure to get the permission of everyone photographed before submitting an image. For people under 18, please get permission from their parent or guardian.

23. Project monitoring

SECAD and EirGrid reserve the right to visit any of the funded applicants to monitor progress. Where phased funding is agreed, we will put in place an appropriate monitoring framework.



24. Terms and conditions

Before completing your application, please note the following terms and conditions.

1. **Signature**
   The Chairperson, Secretary or Treasurer of the organisation or group making the submission must sign the application.
2. **Accurate and complete**
   The information you supply must be accurate and complete. Incorrect information may mean we disqualify you, or you have to repay any grant made, or both.
3. **Fund may be oversubscribed**
   You should know that the fund may be oversubscribed. Some applications fulfilling the conditions may not be successful or we may approve them for a reduced amount
4. **Award amount is final**
   The amount we offer to the successful application is final and we will not increase it if even if prices increase.
5. **Managing information**
   We will hold all information you supply in your application for a grant electronically. The Freedom of Information Act applies to all records held by EirGrid. This means anything you write in your application is part of the public record.
6. **You should provide quotes**
   All proposals should provide quotes for activities. If you do not provide these at the proposal stage, we will ask you for them before we offer you a grant.
   For items or activities under €5,000, you must provide one quote. For items or activities above €5,000, you must provide three quotes.
7. **Electronic funds transfer**
   Your organisation must have a bank, credit union or post office account or access to one. All grants will be awarded by electronic funds transfer (EFT) and will be paid directly to the organisation.
8. **Tax affairs should be in order**
   If we award your organisation more than €10,000, you must show that your tax affairs are in order. You must also submit your tax reference number on the claim form before we finalise the grant offer.
9. **Receipts and invoice**
   You must keep evidence of expenditure, receipts and invoices and show them to us if we ask for them.
10. **Relevant permissions**
    If relevant to the project, along with your application form you must provide evidence of:
    - landowner consent or permission
    - planning permission or exemption.

11. **Procedures, policies and insurance**
Before drawing down funding, each organisation must make sure that it has:
    - proper procedures and policies in place
    - appropriate insurance where relevant.

12. **Working with the young or vulnerable**
Where relevant to the project, we expect successful applicants to have a policy in place and proper procedures for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. You must have these in place before you draw down the funding.

13. **Health and safety**
Each project, event or activity must make sure that the relevant health and safety regulations are complied with. Groups should have insurance cover on a project's grant-aided assets, including public liability insurance.

14. **Ethics and environment**
You should consider the ethical and environmental aspects of activities, materials and equipment.

15. **Good governance**
We encourage you to sign up to the Charities Governance Code with the Charities Regulator. This is a code of practice for good governance of community, voluntary and charitable organisations in Ireland.

16. **EirGrid acknowledgement**
You must publicly acknowledge EirGrid's contribution in all materials associated with the purpose of the grant.

SECAD Partnership and EirGrid are not liable for any claims relating to funding allocated for projects under this fund.



25. Glossary to key terms

Term	Explanation
Application portal	This is the online platform you use to complete your application.
Area of Benefit	This refers to a 2 km area on either side of the cable route as shown by the cable route map. Applicants within this zone are eligible to apply to the fund.
Constitution	A document that provides information on your group. Download the template on our website, if your group doesn't have a constitution.
Engineer's report	A report from your engineer after civil works have been completed. It should confirm that your project complies with the rules and regulations and verify the project value.
Evaluation criteria	These are the guidelines our evaluation team members use so they can evaluate each application or project consistently.
Grant claims process	The process you will use to request payment of your awarded funding, if you are successful in your application.
Phase(s) 1-3	The fund is divided into three Phases; Phase 1 is now open for application.
RECI certification	A compliance certificate provided from an electrician after electrical works have been completed.
ROSPA Report	This only applies to playground equipment, this is a written report completed by The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, covering things like site safety and condition, equipment and surfacing.
Stream(s)	The fund is divided into three funding streams: Community, Sustainability and Biodiversity.
The global goals for sustainable development	In the application we will ask you to select a goal or goals that your project most closely aligns with. There will be a drop-down menu to choose from.
Umbrella projects or applications	This is when a lead organisation completes an application on behalf of a number of community groups.

26. Contact information

Please get in touch with SECAD Partnership if you have any questions.

Address
SECAD Partnership CLG
Midleton Community Enterprise Centre
Owennacurra Business Park
Knockgriffin
Midleton, Co. Cork
P25 Y893
Ireland

Phone 021 461 3432
E-mail info@secad.ie

Website www.secad.ie



EirGrid

The Oval, 160 Shelbourne Rd,
Dublin 4, D04 FW28
01 627 1700 | EirGrid.ie

SECAD PARTNERSHIP

CARBON BALANCED PAPER
WORLD LAND TRUST™
www.carbonbalancedpaper.com
CBP002856