## Community Climate Action Programme Phase 2

**FAQ Document Version 1 – October 2025**

**Topics:**



### 1 Funding queries

**Q. If a community group need to apply for a loan (ie. Credit Union loan) does the amount applied for have to include the interest amount that will apply to the loan?**

**Answer:** The interest would not be eligible for Climate Action Fund expenditure. Payment can only be made for eligible expenditure in relation to the project, not for servicing a loan.

**Q. How are the funds distributed to community groups?**

**Answer:** The Department will have a grant agreement with each Local Authority who will be responsible for administering the fund to relevant, eligible projects in communities. The community groups will make payments in relation to their project and provide vouched expenditure drawdown requests to the LA. The LA will pay the community group directly once they are satisfied that the payment has the required documentation and submit a quarterly drawdown request to the Department seeking payment of these vouched expenditure claims.

**Q: Can a large project combine funding from the CAF with alternate Government funding if it is broken down into components?**

**Answer:** The component would have to be assessed individually and stand up on its own merits, exclusive of the alternate funding, against the eligibility criteria, objectives, and themes of the programme. It must also be noted that there cannot be a duplication of funds. It must be clearly demonstrated that the individual component(s) can be advanced in fulfilment of the objectives of the Community Climate Action Programme without being subject to or compromised by the delivery of the larger project.

**Q. Can CAF funds be leveraged with SEAI or other grants?**

**Answer:** Yes, provided it would not result in duplicate funding.

### 2 Organisation/Project Eligibility

**Q. Are schools eligible to apply under strand 1, if they are publicly run?**

**Answer:** No, schools cannot apply under strand 1.

Q: **Are Naíonras/preschools eligible to apply?**

**Answer:** Naíonras and preschools are not eligible to apply.

**Q: Are the following groups eligible to apply (assuming they have Articles of Associations/ constitutions, hold AGM and have minutes etc.):**

- **Housing Associations (e.g. estates or apartment blocks)**

  **Answer:** They would have to be satisfied that they have met the community organisation eligibility criteria. Strand 1 of the CCAP aims to support local community action so smaller home-owners residents' associations would be eligible provided the project was targeting shared, public areas within the estate for the benefit of the wider community.

- **Social Enterprises.**

  **Answer:** Yes, provided they meet the eligibility criteria.

- **Sustainable Energy Communities**

  **Answer:** If they meet the not-for-profit community base criteria and/or other eligibility criteria.

- **Credit Unions**

  **Answer**: No, financial institutions are not eligible for funding under this programme, unless they are acting as a supporting partner in a project.

- **Branches of a national not-for-profit community organisation**

  **Answer:** If multiple branches want to apply in order to access the funding, they would have to be financially independent of each other. Only one application per organisation is accepted so each branch would have to be independent enough to be considered their own not-for-profit community-based organisation.

- **Churches/Religious Institutions**

  **Answer:** International/National Organisations are ineligible. However, insofar as it is an individual religious institution or group that is applying within the Local Authority Area and they are assured that they are financially independent of the larger organisation, it is up to the Local Authority to determine that the project meets the eligibility criteria (not for profit, registered with the PPN etc). The projects must be evaluated on their own merit and meet the programme objective of shaping and building low carbon, sustainable communities in a coherent way to contribute to national climate and energy targets.

Local authorities must ensure due diligence is carried out on the eligibility of the applicants to the programme confirming that they are:

- A not-for profit organisation
- Located within the administrative area of the local authority to which they are applying.
- 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.

**Q. Are Partnerships/consortiums eligible under Strand 1? For example, more than one community is involved in the project.**

**Answer:** Partnership is permitted, but they must be in the jurisdiction of the Local Authority. No duplication should be allowed. There would have to be a lead partner identified.

**Q. If land/ property/ other assets are provided for the project by a public or private body what are the rules for its inclusion regarding the future (leasing etc.)?**

**Answer:** Where a project will be delivered from a site/building(s)/floor space that are not in the ownership of the Local Authority, it must be in the ownership of the partner organisation of the Local Authority or either party must have a minimum five years lease or agreement in place from date of project completion, making it available to the community.

**Q. Is store rent and set up an eligible expense?**

**Answer:** No, renting/leasing is not an eligible expense. The Community Climate Action Programme is not intended to be a startup fund. Any space should be made available to the public for at least five years.

**Q. Does a not-for-profit community organisation have to be registered with a PPN?**

**Answer:** No, they can also be connected with other collectives, such as the Wheel, Tidy Towns and/or be a community group with Articles of Association or a Constitution, which hold an AGM, and for which approved minutes are available. They must have connections with the community/connected to another group.

The Local Authority must ensure that all documentary evidence is gathered and assessed to satisfy the terms of the eligibility criteria of the programme.

**Q. Would an application to purchase electric vehicles for a community organisation be eligible?**

No, the purchase of community electric vehicles is not eligible for funding under strand 1 of the Community Climate Action Programme.

**Q. Would an application to purchase an electric lawnmower for a community organisation be eligible?**

No, the purchase of community electric lawnmowers are not eligible for funding under strand 1 of the Community Climate Action Programme.

**Q When a community project generates a by-product that can be income generating, is it eligible?**

**Answer:** Yes, so long as the objectives of the programme are being met, though the applicant would need to demonstrate how the income from that by-product will be reinvested in the community group/project. The exchange must be reasonable and not excessive and a natural/necessary by-product of the project. Care should be taken to apply the De Minimis rule if the project appears to involve state aid.

**Q. What costs are eligible and ineligible?**

**Answer:**

<u>All costs included for this grant must:</u>

- Be for the sole purpose of implementing the project and shall not be used for any other purpose.
- Not duplicate public funding received from other sources for the same purpose.
- Must be verifiable e.g. supported by evidence of compliance with public procurement in Ireland, an invoice and receipt of payment.
- Be reasonable in their nature and amount i.e. not excessive and it what would be incurred by a prudent person in the conduct of delivering a project of this nature
- Be considered necessary for the delivery of the project
- Up to 100% funding may be provided from the Climate Action Fund. Other funding may be leveraged for projects (e.g. with LEADER, Tidy Towns, Town and Village Enhancement funding, etc.). However, the CAF funded component must be able to stand on its own merits and be independent of the other funding. Duplication of funding is not permitted.
- Funding must comply with State Aid requirements.

Costs should be considered on a case-by-case basis. As it is impossible to ensure that all costs are included in this list above. This is a new and innovative programme, some costs will be considered based on the nature of the application and justification and rationale provided by the applicant.

**Non-Eligible Projects and Activities**

<u>The Community Climate Action Fund will not formally fund activities involving:</u>

- Projects that solely benefit an individual
- Teaching/staffing
- Travel and transport costs except in exceptional circumstances
- Equipment, unless directly associated with the project
- Profit generating projects
- Overheads, ongoing running costs
- Insurance
- Accommodation and subsistence
- Redundancy costs
- Penalties/Interest/Bank Interest/Charges
- Loan repayments
- Retrospective costs i.e. expenditure which has taken place prior to approval date of the project
- Costs for which more appropriate funding opportunities already exist are ineligible, where it is clear that Community Climate Action Programme funding is a substitute for other public funding which is currently available
- Notional costs e.g. the room hire within the applicant's own premises
- Legal Fees

This list is not exhaustive.

Note: Applicant organisations nor their partners cannot include the cost of using their own equipment or premises i.e. items such as the use of a photocopier or use of their own rooms for meetings.

**Q. Can communities get reimbursed for assessments done during the application period (if they are chosen) for example energy audits?**

**Answer:** No, funding is only available for costs incurred after project selection.

## <u>3 Application Questions</u>

**Q. Should groups put the cost on the application forms down exclusive or inclusive of VAT?**

**Answer:** The cost should be inclusive of VAT. However, some groups may be able to reclaim VAT. These groups should submit expenses exclusive of VAT. The application form has a question asking groups to declare if they can reclaim VAT.

## 5.General Queries

**Q. How will the projects be evaluated?**

**Answer:** In the first-place projects are evaluated by local authorities who will then package their selected projects into a portfolio for proposal. Each Local Authority can submit one proposed portfolio containing all the projects they wish to partner with under strand 1. These projects will then be reviewed on behalf of the Minister to ensure that they can be funded under the NORA Act and the CCAP, and notifications will issue to LAs informing them of the projects that have been approved for funding.

**Q: Does the project have to be completed in its entirety within an 18-month period?**

**Answer:** Yes, the project has 18 months to complete but projects may complete earlier than 18 months. No payments can be made for work done outside of this 18-month period.