



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

**Our Rural Future: Enhanced Community Centre Fund highlight of
€390 million Rural Development Budget for 2023 – Ministers
Humphreys and O'Brien**

- ***€20 million in funding to be provided for targeted scheme for new build community centres as well as upgrades and improvements to existing centres***
- ***Further €20 million to assist small community groups with €10 million of this targeted at energy costs***
- ***€200 million for Key Rural Development schemes such as Town and Village Renewal, LEADER and the Rural Regeneration & Development Fund***
- ***Announcement made as Ireland hosts landmark OECD Rural Development Conference in County Cavan***

Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, and Minister of State, Joe O'Brien TD, have today announced funding of €20 million for community centres across the country in 2023.

Under an enhanced **Community Centres Investment Fund**, grants will now be provided for the delivery of new build community centres in targeted areas as well as upgrades or improvement works to existing Community Centres.

The Ministers also confirmed that they have secured a further €20 million to assist small community groups with €10 million of this targeted at helping with energy bills.

The measures for community centres are among the highlights of €390 million budget for rural and community development.

The announcement was made by Minister Humphreys at a major international conference in County Cavan, which is being attended by over 400 delegates as well as Rural Development Ministers from the United States, Canada, Colombia, Czech Republic, Scotland, Slovenia and a number of other countries.

The conference, which is being co-hosted by Ireland and the OECD, is focusing on the theme, '**Building Sustainable, Resilient and Thriving Rural Places**'.

It's the first time Ireland has hosted such an event.

Speaking from the event in Cavan, Minister Humphreys said:

"This week's Budget provides over €390 million in funding for rural communities the length and breadth of the country.

"I'm really pleased that the Budget contains significant funding for our community centres, which have been so important for people of all ages as we've reconnected coming out of Covid-19.

"€20 million in funding will be allocated next year to groups to carry out upgrades and refurbishments to their centres. Crucially this funding will also support the delivery of a new targeted scheme to support new build community centres.

"I also plan to make €20 million immediately available to support community groups impacted by the rising cost of living, with half of this targeted at assisting with energy costs. Details on this will be made available by my Department shortly."

"I'm delighted to announce this funding this week as Ireland hosts a major rural development conference in conjunction with the OECD.

“Ireland has been chosen to host this conference in recognition of our unique rural development policy, ‘Our Rural Future’, which is held up internationally as an example of how rural development policy should be implemented.”

Under Budget 2023, over €200 million in funding is available for the Department’s Rural Development schemes such as Town and Village Renewal, LEADER and the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF).

It also provides funding increases for the continued provision of lifeline transport services to our offshore islands. This demonstrates the Government’s continued commitment to Our Rural Future, with investment in rural development more than doubling since 2018.

Some €190 million is available for the Department’s Community Development Programmes.

Funding for the Community Services Programme (CSP), which provides a contribution to employment costs of workers in community organisations, will increase by €3.5 million, to over €52 million in 2023.

This will help ensure that organisations providing community services are funded on a more sustainable basis and that these important services continue to be provided throughout the country.

Budget 2023 also provides €11 million to assist with the community response to the Ukraine crisis. This supports work to assist and help integrate arrivals from the Ukraine into local communities throughout the country.

Minister of State O’Brien added:

“Budget 2023 demonstrates Governments continued commitment to support community development, and the community and voluntary sector.

“Increased funding for the Community Services Programme brings the total for this programme to over €52 million and provides the opportunity to proceed with a new model. There will also be increases for Community Development, Volunteer Centres and Public Participation Networks.

"I am particularly pleased that €11 million is available to continue to support the community response to the Ukraine crisis. The sector has played a vital role in helping people settle and integrate within their new communities, and this will continue throughout 2023."

ENDS

Notes for editors:

The budget provision of over €390 million for the Department of Rural and Community Development will provide over €200 million in funding for rural development and €190 million in funding for community development. The Department will have €196 million for capital investment, with the remaining funding for current expenditure supports.

Budget 2023 will allow for continued strong implementation of Our Rural Future through:

- Significant capital investment in rural areas through the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (€60 million), the LEADER programme (€46m) and the Town and Village Renewal Scheme (from €17m to €19m).
- Additional funding for CLÁR, the Local Improvement Scheme, and the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, bringing their funding to €7.8 million, €12 million, and €16 million, respectively.
- Funding for lifeline transport services and the maintenance and upgrade of essential island infrastructure is increasing from €13.2 to €14.2 million.
- Our Rural Future is the whole-of-government policy for rural Ireland for 2021-2025. The 2022 work programme is available on the Department's page on [gov.ie](https://www.gov.ie), and preparation for the 2023 work programme will commence in the coming weeks.

The Community Development funding of €190 million will allow for:

- €20 million in funding for the Community Centres Investment Fund – providing funding for upgrade and improvement of existing centres and to allow a new funding stream to support new centres where they are needed.
 - €20 million in immediate funding to help assist local community groups manage increased cost for service delivery, with half of this targeted at energy costs.
 - Increased support for the Community Services Programme, with its annual allocation increasing from €48.9 million to €52.4 million.
 - Funding for Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and similar type supports increasing from €44 million to €46 million.
 - An additional €10 million is also being provided under SICAP to allow Local Development Companies to continue their work to support arrivals from the Ukraine.
 - Increased support for the Community and Voluntary sector, increasing from €18.3 million to €19.7 million, with supports for volunteering seeing an increase of €1 million and funding relating to Public Participation Networks increasing by €0.4 million.
 - There has also been an increase in funding for the Charities Regulatory Authority (from €4.5 million to €4.8 million) and Water Safety Ireland (from €1.2 million to €1.4 million).
 - Further details on all programmes administered by the Department can be found at www.gov.ie/drcd
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