

Good Afternoon,

Please see below Press Release which issued last Friday launching a new 2023 Community Centres Investment Fund – New Builds Measure. The Fund Guidelines are attached for ease of reference.

Eligible Project

The Fund is open to new build community centres which are 'shovel ready' with all the necessary permissions and consents in place e.g. planning consent etc. The development must be on a green/brown field site and not the refurbishment of an existing property and all the relevant ecological and archaeological survey work (if applicable) has been undertaken.

Eligible Applicants

As the grant funding is substantial (up to €6m) and for the purposes of compliance with public financial procedures, the lead party to an application must be a State-funded body e.g. local authorities, local development companies or other State agencies.

Community organisations, voluntary groups or other civil society bodies cannot act as the lead party to an application but should partner with a State-funded body, which would be in a position to assume the lead party role.

Application Forms

So that the Department can communicate with the potential applicants over the coming months, including issuing FAQs etc., application forms will only issue to eligible State-funded bodies. Each application form which be assigned a unique identifier and this number should be used in all correspondence with the Department.

If you have any queries regarding the Fund please contact ccif@drcd.gov.ie



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

Our Rural Future: Minister Humphreys announces €20 Million Fund for the construction of new Community Centres

- ***First ever dedicated fund for shovel-ready community projects in our towns and villages***
- ***Investment of at least €1 million per amenity; Focus on areas which currently lack community facilities***

- ***Minister Humphreys: This is about delivering ambitious projects that bring communities and families together***

March 31st, 2023 - The Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, has today launched the **2023 Community Centres Investment Fund**, which will see €20 million invested in new and ambitious community projects in our towns and villages.

For the first time, funding of at least €1 million will be invested in projects that are shovel ready and which are in areas that currently lack community facilities.

This builds on the highly successful 2022 initiative, which delivered an investment of over **€45 million** to renovate and upgrade over 850 projects the length and breadth of the country.

Minister Humphreys made the announcement during a visit to the Oxfield Community Centre in North Sligo, which has just received an investment of **€24,000** from her Department.

Announcing the details of the 2023 scheme today, the Minister said:

“Our community centres are the lifeblood of our rural villages and indeed our urban centres.

“They are places that bring people of all ages together.

“Places where our young people come to socialise and meet up with friends, to take part in activities ranging from soccer to snooker and drama to dance.

“And they are places where our elderly people come simply for a chat – sometimes the only chat they will have on any given day.

“As Minister, I have placed a huge focus on developing and improving community centres nationwide.

“Last year alone, we invested over €45 million in making over 850 of our community facilities safer, more accessible and more enjoyable places for families.

“By doing, we have ensured that these great centres remain at the heart of our communities and continue to act as a hive of activity.”

The Minister continued:

“This year I want to shift the focus of the Community Centres Investment Fund to new builds.

“This is because I know that we have towns and villages, particularly in Rural Ireland, that have no community centre whatsoever and therefore couldn’t avail of the 2022 funding.

“And so, I’m delighted to announce €20 million to support communities with shovel-ready plans to build new community centres.

“I want to assist community groups striving to build their own community centre and to service local needs.

“I’m excited to see the kind of applications that will be put forward and I’m urging communities to work with their local authorities in submitting ambitious plans.

“I in particular want to see plans put forward that will make these communities better places to live, work, visit and raise a family.”

The 2023 New Builds Measure is for new build community centres on brown/green field sites with grant funding of at least €1 million available per project.

Funding for renovations or refurbishment of existing community centres is not eligible but can still be accessed through the Department’s CLÁR Programme, Town and Village Renewal Scheme or LEADER Programme.

The Minister continued:

"I know the vital role that these centres play at the heart of each community in bringing people together and engaging with those who may be marginalised or disadvantaged.

"This Fund will target areas which do not have an appropriate facility to meet the needs of their area.

"It is important that we build strong and safer communities and that we provide such facilities to meet the needs of communities into the future. So I would encourage communities which have shovel-ready projects to apply for funding under this initiative."

Details of the Community Centres Investment Fund – New Builds Measure are available on www.gov.ie/drcd with the **closing date for applications on 3rd July 2023**.

ENDS

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Photo desks:

Official photography will be available from Charlie Brady.

Notes to editor:

The Community Centres Investment Fund - New Build Measure will invest in new build multi-functional community centres with a minimum grant of €1,000,000 up to a maximum of €6,000,000.

The projects must be 'shovel-ready' with all the necessary permissions and consents in place (e.g. planning consent) and be located on a green/brown field site.

The lead party to an application must be a State-funded body (e.g. a local authority).

The fund will provide 90% of the total project value to a maximum of €6,000,000, with at least 10% to be provided in matching contributions. A minimum of 5% of the matching contributions element must be in cash.

An application form can be requested from ccif@dracd.gov.ie. The deadline for the receipt of applications is 12 noon on 3rd July 2023.