



Comhairle Contae
an Chabháin
Cavan
County Council



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Cavan's Community Climate Action Programme Briefing Note and Guidelines for Applicants

Strand 1: Action: Building Low Carbon Communities

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The Community Climate Action Programme has been developed by the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (DCEE) to support small and large, rural and urban communities to take climate action at a local level.

Ireland is committed to reducing its carbon emissions by 51% by 2030 and becoming a net zero and climate neutral economy by no later than 2050. For Ireland and Cavan to make this transition, we need to work together to address how we power our buildings, work, travel, consume goods and services, and manage our waste.

This guide has been prepared for groups in the operational area of Cavan County Council (CCC) to learn more about the Community Climate Action Programme and Climate Action Fund.



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Groups are advised to contact Tara Smith, Community Climate Action Officer, to discuss potential projects under the Climate Action Fund by emailing tarasmith@cavancoco.ie or call 087- 675 9129.

1. Objectives of the Community Climate Action Programme

The overall objective of this Programme is to support and empower communities, in partnership with Cavan County Council, to shape and build low carbon, sustainable communities in a coherent way to contribute to national climate and energy targets.

Overview of Strand 1

Strand 1 - Action: Building Low Carbon Communities

CCC have been given an allocation of €439,000 for projects under Strand 1. Under this strand communities will carry out projects that have a direct climate action impact and involves capital investment.

A number of projects will be selected from across the County which demonstrate the delivery of national climate action at local level in Cavan.

Projects must meet the objectives of the Programme as set out in project eligibility below and be completed within 18 months following a letter of offer. Based on current guidelines from DCEE, we are expecting letters of offer to issue in **April 2026**. 100% funding is available for projects. Projects can, and are encouraged to, include a suite of measures, not just one specific action.

This Programme is an opportunity for groups to take a holistic approach in making their community less carbon intensive and more sustainable for the future.

2. 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

To be eligible to apply under Strand 1, community organisations must:

- be a not-for-profit organisation
- be located in the operational area of CCC
- be registered with the 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



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

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

3. Eligible Projects

Projects must:

- Meet the overall objective “to shape and build low carbon, sustainable communities in a coherent way to contribute to national climate and energy targets.”
- Address one or more of the five Programme Themes and national climate action targets, as set out below.
- Comply with all statutory requirements in relation to planning, building regulations, Health and Safety, and Fire Codes etc., if applicable.

Five Programme Themes

Projects should address at least one, preferably several, of the following five themes:

Theme 1: Community Energy

These projects aim to reduce the climate impact of buildings in communities by using less energy, utilising renewable energy and avoiding heat loss. This can include:

- Small community renewable energy projects (solar, hydro, wind)
- Retrofitting community buildings
- LED community lighting
- Community EV charging point(s)

1. Theme 2: Travel

Projects which contribute to emissions reductions related to travel. This can include:

- Reductions in carbon footprint in services
- Improving access to cycle ways
- Cycle parking
- EV charging points
- Safe or active travel routes to schools

2. Theme 3: Food and Waste

Projects that reduce food waste, promotes locally grown/sourced food and food security. This can include:

- Developing community gardens to promote local food production
- Allotments, community gardens
- Food pledges from local businesses

- Food markets
- Community composting facilities
-

3. Theme 4: Shopping and Recycling

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.

This can include:

- Initiatives aimed at reducing, reusing and recycling
- Elimination of single use plastic
- Community repair hubs
- Swap shops
- Water filling stations or single use plastics elimination in businesses in communities

4. Theme 5: Local Climate and Environmental Action

We are interested in projects that take a holistic approach to managing the local environment. This can include for example:

- Mini forests
- Forest schools
- Dispersed orchards
- Community gardens
- Roof gardens
- Pollinator projects
- Community water stations
- Climate resilience projects

Projects can address one, all or some of the five themes. However, communities should try to incorporate as many themes as possible. These are only examples and communities are encouraged to be as innovative as possible with their projects.

For further examples of projects, you can view previously funded projects under Phase 1 of this funding on our website.

Groups should also consider how their projects contribute to progress in relation to relevant [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#).

National Climate Action Targets

Apart from the Programme themes, projects should seek to demonstrate the following delivery of national climate action at a local level for strand 1:

- Reducing or supporting the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
- Increasing the production, or use, of renewable energy
- Improving energy efficiency
- Increasing climate resilience

- e) 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
- f) 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
- g) Involving potentially innovative solutions to address the above asks.

Project locations

It is essential that projects be available to the community, where applicable. If the group do not own the land/ building(s)/ floor space then they must have a **minimum of a five years lease or agreement in place from date of project completion**. Groups will be asked to provide proof of ownership, lease or access agreements.

4. Funding/ Grant Sizes

Funding is available for 100% of the project costs. There are three project sizes:

- Small projects (Up to €20,000) - 10% of projects selected will be small scale
- Medium projects (€20,000 – €50,000) - 40% of projects selected will be medium scale
- Large projects (€51,000 - €100,000) - 50% of projects selected will be large scale

Eligible Costs

The Programme will cover principally capital costs. Below is a guide to the eligible and ineligible costs for projects. Eligible costs will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

However, the following general conditions will apply:

Eligible Costs	Ineligible Costs
• For the sole purpose of implementing the project, be necessary and shall not be used for any other purpose • Verifiable and reasonable • No duplicate public funding • Other funding may be leveraged for the project, but the Community Climate Action Programme funding component must be able to stand on its own merits and be independent of the other funding • Funding must comply with State Aid requirements	• Projects that solely benefit an individual or income generating projects • Training, staff costs etc. • Equipment, unless directly associated with the project • Overheads, operating, travel, transport, subsistence, notional, legal, insurance or banking, loan costs etc. • Costs incurred before the Letter of Offer is issued • Costs where more appropriate funding opportunities already exist

VAT Status

VAT is considered eligible for grant payment in cases where it cannot be reclaimed. For groups who cannot reclaim VAT, all their costs should be inclusive of VAT. If a group is able to reclaim VAT then their expenses should be exclusive of VAT. Documentation may be sought by CCC confirming the VAT status of the group, i.e. a recent letter, or letters, from the Revenue Commission confirming the VAT status. Every group will be required in their application form to declare their VAT status.

The Community Climate Action Officer will be able to advise what costs are eligible when groups are planning their projects.

5. How to Apply

Interested community groups should contact Tara Smith, Community Climate Action Officer, Cavan County Council 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.

Application Form:

To apply groups must complete the application form online via 'Submit'. The application window will be open from 12 noon on Tuesday 28th October 2025 to 12 noon on Tuesday 23rd December 2025.

Applications can be made online on <https://cavancoco.submit.com>

You can save the form as you go, so you do not need to complete and submit the application in one sitting. You will also be able to upload all relevant documentation.

No applications will be considered after the deadline of 12 noon on Tuesday 23rd December 2025. Only one application per organisation may be submitted.

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.

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, please refer to the table below to see requirements for quotations.

For projects that involve the **supply of goods and services from €5,000 up to the value of €50,000, a minimum of three quotes** should be sought for each item. For goods and services valued from €1,000 to €5,000, one written quotation is required. Below €1,000, one verbal quote is required, please record in writing the quotation received. Where the value for these **goods and services is greater than €50,000, quotes should be sought on eTenders platform** -www.etenders.gov.ie.

For projects that **involve work-related services** and are valued greater than **€5,000 but less than €200,000, 5 written quotes per item is required**. For works between €1,000 and €5,000, one written quote is required. Below €1,000, one verbal quote is required, please record in writing the quotation received

Procurement Procedure Local Rule - For Below National Threshold requirements - valued	For Goods/ Supplies and Services	For Work- related Services	For Works	Notes
Less than €1,000 ex vat	Seek min 1 or More verbal quotes	Seek min 1 or More verbal quotes	Seek min 1 or More verbal quotes	1. Written Specification must be provided for Quotation competitions valued €5,000 ex vat and higher. Below this a written specification may be provided. 2. If fewer than 3 / 5 bidders (whatever the case maybe) submit quotes, the council must only proceed with award if it considers that there has been genuine competition and that the bid selected represents value for money. 3. Below National Threshold requirements may be awarded on the basis of Quotations sought or may be advertised on eTenders as a Tender Competition.
Between €1,000 and less than €5,000 ex vat	Seek min 1 or more written quotes	Seek min 1 or more written quotes	Seek min 1 or more written quotes	
Between €5,000 and less than €50,000 ex vat	Seek min 3 or more written quotes	Seek min 5 or more written quotes		
Between €5,000 and less than €200,000 ex vat			Seek min 5 or more written quotes	

CCC must be satisfied that the application represents value for money and that the applicant has engaged with suppliers in developing their proposal.

Where the number of required 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. Groups should ensure they can show evidence of trying to request the required number of quotations.

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.

When getting quotes from suppliers, groups should try to ensure that quotes will be valid for when they are carrying out the work, otherwise procurement may need to be repeated if groups are awarded funding. Please note that successful applicants will need to follow public procurement guidelines and depending on the type of work and cost, may need to get further quotes. The Community Climate Action Officer can advise groups on this.

6. State Aid and De Minimis

Public funding is deemed to be 'State Aid' where it provides the recipient, whether an enterprise, not-for-profit organisation, 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.). The Community Climate Action Officer will be able to assist groups on this requirement.

7. 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 CCC 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 CCC.

2. **Selection:**

Following evaluation, CCC will then select the final projects taking account of the highest scores and:

- the geographical distribution of projects
- the desirability to fund a variety of different projects and across multiple themes and the contribution of the projects to the climate action objectives of CCC

3. **Approval:**

CCC will submit the selected projects to the Minister of Climate, Energy and the Environment 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.

Evaluation criteria

To ensure projects are selected in a transparent and fair manner, applications will be first evaluated on the following criteria. The maximum score is 100. Applications must meet a minimum score of 50% or above and meet the minimum score required under selected criteria to be considered for a project partnership with CCC.

Strand 1 – Evaluation Criteria

Selection Criterion for Strand 1	Weighting	Min. Required
Relevance and Impact	30%	15%
Innovation and Scalability	20%	10%
Value for Money	20%	10%
Achievability	10%	5%
Partnership Approach	10%	5%
Governance Arrangements	10%	5%
	100%	50%

Additional note on the evaluation of small-scale projects

Small projects will be evaluated under the same criteria listed above however consideration will be given to the smaller scale of the project. Projects should still be relevant and demonstrate impact. Thought should be given to the potential for replication by other communities.

8. What to expect if your application is successful

Following the Minister's approval, CCC will issue a Letter of Offer to the successful communities setting out the terms and conditions. Groups are responsible for carrying out their projects and will have 18 months from the Letter of Offer to complete their projects. Current timelines provided by DCEE suggest Letters of Offer will be issued in April 2026.

CCC reserves the right to withdraw from a project if all requirements are not met within a reasonable period.

If an applicant is awarded a lower funding allocation from what was initially sought, the applicant may submit a revised programme of works to the satisfaction of CCC.

In signing their funding agreements, each community will agree to the following:

- Compliance with [Circular: 13/2014](#), from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.
- Compliance with [Public Procurement guidelines](#) in relation to the purchase of all goods and services.
- Agree to retain all documentation for 7 years.

- The provision of data and information on the actions funded as may be requested by DCEE and CCC
- The maintenance of separate accounting records for its projects.
- The funding is subject to audit by DCEE and CCC.
- Vouched receipts, photographs of before and after completed works (where appropriate), and other documentation as necessary may be sought by CCC and DCEE.
- Site Visits: The Department and/or CCC may carry out unannounced site visits to verify compliance with Programme terms and conditions.
- The contribution of the 'Government of Ireland' and 'Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment' (DCEE) must be acknowledged in publicity, promotions and signage, and other relevant matters as appropriate.

Payment and reporting

Successful applications for funding under this Programme will only be paid to the applicant group/organisation's Bank Account. Groups will submit quarterly expenses to CCC including invoices, proof of payments, contracts and a brief update on progress (e.g. any information on progress of the project, conditions of funding, challenges/issues etc.). The Community Climate Action Officer will be developing case studies on projects and groups will be asked to provide details about their projects and experiences.

All payments are subject to:

- Evidence of compliance with the public procurement guidelines. If the grantee does not comply with the public procurement guidelines, financial sanctions may apply e.g. expenditure will be deemed ineligible and will not be reimbursed.
- Evidence of compliance with Climate Action Fund Guidelines.
- Eligibility of the costs as per the guidelines for the Programme and Letter of Offer.

Pre-funding

This is a reimbursement grant (i.e. groups pay for the works and are refunded quarterly) however funding is available for groups who would not be in a position to pay for the works and wait to be refunded. Groups can contact the Community Climate Action Officer if they require pre-funding/ bridging financing.

Pre-funding can be given out in instalments (e.g. 25% of the total project cost) at set times over the lifetime of the project (e.g. quarterly). Only when groups have fully spent their first prefunding instalment (i.e. vouched expenditure has been submitted and approved by CCC) and have met the milestone criteria will the next instalment be released, and so on. CCC will agree with each individual group their prefunding instalment amounts and timelines. Prefunding should only be used for the payment of eligible costs approved by CCC. Any unused portion of prefunding that remains unspent at the end of the project must be returned/repaid to CCC immediately. Groups will be liable for unspent funds or ineligible costs.

9. Data Protection

Information provided by applicants and those who receive funding will be utilised for the purpose of evaluating and administering this Programme, and to facilitate reporting, auditing and any site visits. When evaluating the applications and during the lifetime of the projects, CCC may share information with the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (DCEE).

10. Important Dates

Milestone	Date
Application period	Opens at 12 noon Tuesday 28 th October 2025 and closes at 12 noon Tuesday 23 rd December 2025.
Date for completion of Evaluation and Selection by CCC	February 2026
Date for Approval by DECC	March 2026
Results announced/ Commencement of projects	April 2026

11. Contact Information

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