



**EirGrid
Community Benefit Fund
Laois Kilkenny Reinforcement
Project**

Guidelines for Applicants
What it is and how to apply



The current. The future.

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. THE LAOIS-KILKENNY REINFORCEMENT PROJECT	5
3. WHAT IS THE FUND?	6
4. WHO CAN APPLY?	7
5. HOW MUCH CAN WE APPLY FOR?	8
6. AREAS OF IMPACT	9
7. HOW WILL THE APPLICATIONS BE EVALUATED?	11
8. HOW DO WE APPLY?	12
9. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE GRANTS ARE AWARDED?	13
10. COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM	14
11. TERMS AND CONDITIONS	17



1. Introduction

EirGrid is now inviting applications to a €511,500 fund for communities adjacent to the Laois-Kilkenny Reinforcement Project. This fund has been established in recognition of the importance of working closely with communities across the two counties throughout the construction of the project elements between Coolnabacky in Co.Laois and Ballyragget in Co.Kilkenny.

The fund will provide grants to local community groups, not-for-profit organisations and social enterprises that operate or service communities near this new electricity line, and who can deliver projects that will create positive social and environmental impacts. The overall aim is to increase public and environmental wellbeing in the community and to leave a positive legacy.

Phase 1 of the fund will open for applications on Tuesday 30th of November and close at 2pm on Tuesday 1st February 2022. Applications can be made at <https://eirgridcommunityfund.submit.com/>.

These guidelines will provide you with all the information required to develop and submit your application, and we advise that you read them carefully. Additional support for applicants will be available in the form of information evenings, one-to-one project development meetings, and grant application workshops.

About EirGrid

EirGrid plans for the future of Ireland's electricity grid and operates it every minute of every day. EirGrid does not generate electricity - they bring it from generators across the grid to safely supply every home, farm, community and business in Ireland. The grid also brings power directly to large energy users, providing opportunities for economic development in the region.

As a regulated utility owned by the Irish Government, EirGrid operates solely for the benefit of the electricity user. This includes interconnecting to neighbouring grids and running the wholesale electricity market to ensure that everyone has power when they need it at the most economic price possible.

What is the Community Benefit Fund?

EirGrid operates thousands of kilometres of power lines across the island of Ireland. When upgrading or adding new transmission infrastructure to help make the grid more efficient, economic and sustainable, many factors are considered. These include the need to protect the interests of individuals, households, businesses and communities whilst ensuring long lasting benefits of safe, secure and sustainable energy. EirGrid aims to create as little disturbance as possible, but at times this work can involve some disruption to communities.

For this reason, a dedicated fund for new grid development is made available to provide direct benefits to communities who are closest to new transmission infrastructure. These funds, which are proportional to the scale of the project, support local good causes, help communities transform their area, and provide the opportunity to each community to become or remain a 'sustainable energy community'. The overall aim is to leave a positive legacy in the communities hosting electrical infrastructure.

To date, EirGrid has established €1,055,500 in community benefit. These funds benefit communities across Ireland and support projects from community gardens, sports facilities and community hall improvements to afterschool club equipment, generators and defibrillators.

2. The Laois-Kilkenny reinforcement project

EirGrid is reinforcing the electricity network in the general Laois-Kilkenny region. This is in response to problems resulting from existing and projected increases in demands for electricity that are affecting the quality of supply across Laois, Carlow, Kildare and Wicklow and a security of supply issue that affects County Kilkenny. The development follows the transmission planning criteria for the affected areas and minimises new infrastructure to reduce the impact of the scheme.

The primary developments include a new 400/110 kV substation situated to the southeast of Portlaoise, at Coolnaback, a new 110/38 kV electricity substation located next to the existing 38 kV electricity substation at Ballyragget, County Kilkenny, and a new 110 kV line between these two new stations.

A new 110 kV line will connect these two new stations, passing near to a number of communities including:

- Coolnaback, Co. Laois
- Timahoe, Co. Laois
- Ratheniska, Co. Laois
- Spink, Co. Laois
- Ballinakill, Co. Laois
- Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny
- Ballyouskill, Co. Kilkenny
- Tinnalinton, Co. Kilkenny

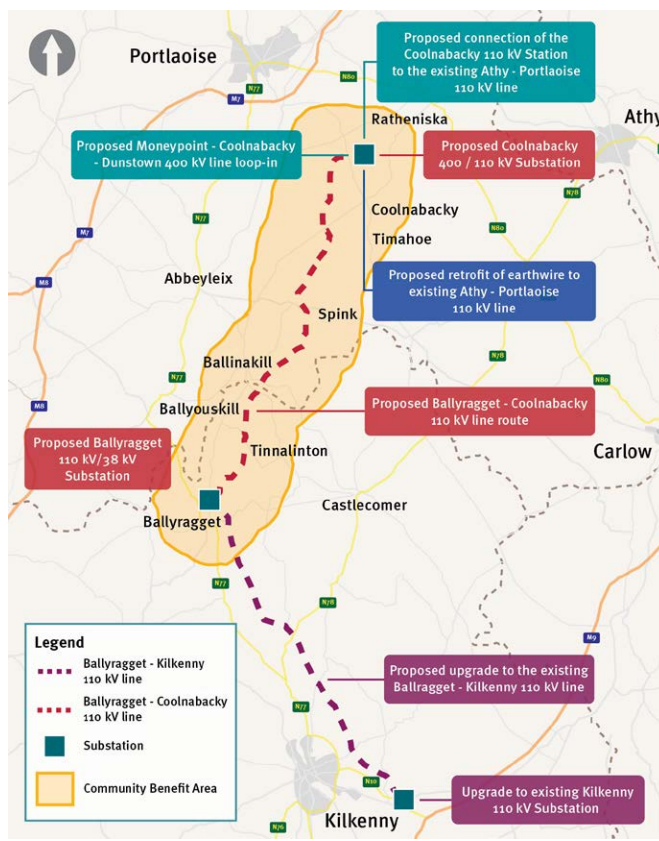


Figure 1: Map (provided by EirGrid) of the Laois Kilkenny Reinforcement Project line and the existing Kilkenny 110 kV Substation. The area circled in red is the area subject to the community fund.

A Google Map has been created, outlining the 3km radius from the line. [The map can be viewed by clicking on this link.](#)



3. What is the fund?

In recognition of the impact of these developments on local communities and their role in the facilitation of electricity infrastructure, EirGrid has established the Laois-Kilkenny Fund with a value of €511,500. This fund will be released in three phases which align with the development of the infrastructure:

Phase 1: 40% (€204,600) - Starting construction (Open for applications now)

Phase 2: 30% (€153,450) - Line stringing/cable jointing (TBC 2023)

Phase 3: 30% (€153,450) - Energisation (2025)

As construction has commenced on this project, Phase 1 of the fund is now open for applications and will be disbursed in early 2022. All communities within the scope area are entitled to apply for funding and a relatively even spread of funding across both counties will be sought.

A Community Forum was set up in June 2021 to provide advice and guidance on the Community Fund and to ensure it aligns with local needs. The Forum has allocated seats to local representatives from community groups and associations, and elected representatives in Laois and Kilkenny, and is chaired by Irish Rural Link.

EirGrid has appointed an independent body, M-CO, to administer the Fund on its behalf.

4. Who can apply?

The Fund is open to community groups, not-for-profit organisations and social enterprises who can demonstrate the provision of benefits to communities and the environment adjacent to the new line.

In order to ensure that the Fund reaches communities closest to the new infrastructure, a key criterion that will be used when making a grant is the location of the project. The map above shows the areas located within 3 km from the electricity line, and priority will be given to communities within this boundary which have been most affected by the development.

However, we recognise that some organisations and groups which serve communities adjacent to the line may operate out of areas that are more than 3km from the line and we will assess each application on a case-by-case basis.

Example of projects which may be funded include (but are not limited to):

- Equipment
- Facilities/infrastructure
- Activity/programme/initiative costs
- Pilot projects
- Training/capacity building
- External expertise
- Co-funded projects

We will not be able to fund:

- Projects proposed by individuals
- Private or commercial companies
- Requests for sponsorship and ongoing operational costs
- Individual salaried positions
- Trips abroad
- Land purchasing
- 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 i.e., the Fund cannot replace funding that is, or has been, in the remit of any statutory bodies
- Schools – however Parent's Associations and Boards of Management are welcome to apply

5. How much can we apply for?

In order to ensure a range of community organisations can apply to and benefit from this Fund, there are two levels of grant you can apply for. While multiple applications can be submitted within communities, we would encourage individual organisations to only submit one application.

Strand 1: Small Initiatives:

Organisations and groups can apply for grants between **€500 and €19,500** under this strand. Applications are welcome from organisations including new and grassroots community groups and residents' associations for this strand. For smaller groups it is recommended that they look at partnering with other or larger organisations to develop an idea which may have the potential to impact at a larger scale.

This strand may also be suitable as seed funding to make the case for alternative funds in the future, or for smaller pilot projects. Funding will be allocated as a once off grant with projects implemented within **12 months**.

Strand 2: Large Initiatives

Organisations and groups can apply for grants between **€20,000 and €45,000** under this strand. Priority will be given to projects which address the themes outlined in this brief with an emphasis on creating real and lasting benefit to the community and environment. Applicants

must be registered with their local Public Participation Network (PPN) or able to show that registration is in progress.

Collaborative applications are encouraged, and priority will be given to projects where community and voluntary groups work together to serve a wider area or a larger number of people. In the case of a partnership/consortium the group who will 'be in charge' of the facility/ project will need to be clearly identified.

Funding may be allocated as a once-off grant or in phased payments, with projects implemented within **24 months**. For these amounts, the Fund will look for evidence of sustainability and lasting impact including plans for maintenance, running and upkeep if the application relates to infrastructure.

Phases 2 and 3 of Fund Distribution

Projects which receive grants during Phase 1 of Fund distribution can apply for additional funding under Phases 2 and 3 of the Fund (to be confirmed) however there is no guarantee that additional funding will be secured. Additional details on these phases will be released at a later date.

Projects which did not receive funding during Phase 1 will also be eligible to apply for and receive funding during phases 2 or 3 of distribution.

6. Areas of impact

The aim of the Fund is to positively impact the communities adjacent to the line by addressing areas of particular need. To ensure that the funds available are used in the most effective and transparent way priority will be given to projects which address one or more of these areas outlined below. These were identified through a scoping study completed by M-CO, with input from local communities. However, the Fund is open to all applications that can demonstrate capacity to deliver broad community benefit.

- 1. Community Infrastructure:** Applications are welcome for projects delivering new or improved facilities and amenities which will benefit the community long-term. For example, this may include upgrades to community halls and sports halls or the development of outdoor spaces such as playgrounds, street furniture and river walks.
- 2. Sporting Facilities:** We recognise the important role that sports groups have in strengthening communities in the area. We particularly welcome applications for projects which may have broader community benefit, such as the development of walkways around pitches or community meeting spaces. Please note that priority may be given to projects which cannot easily access alternative funding and which benefit the broader community.
- 3. Heritage and Culture Activities:** We recognise that heritage is an integral part of the local environment and welcome projects along this theme where they can show community benefit. This may include support for heritage groups and projects which celebrate and share the heritage of the area, or which attract new visitors to the area.
- 4. Environment and Sustainability:** We welcome applications for projects which improve the sustainability of the area for example through biodiversity projects, community climate initiatives, or sustainable energy projects.
- 5. Older Person Support:** We recognize that COVID-19 has had a particular impact on older people and would like to support projects which offer facilities or services to older people and support social inclusion.
- 6. Younger Person Support:** We welcome non-sporting projects which support diverse youth activities such as scouting, culture and music, and provide spaces and services to improve mental health and inclusion among younger demographics.

Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, Ireland was one of 193 countries from across the world that signed up to and committed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The SDG framework involves seventeen goals that are universal (applies to every country and community) and interdependent (each goal has connections and relationships to other goals). This call for funding asks you to align your application to the goals and explain to us how your proposal contributes to the achievement of the goals in your community.

For further information on the Goals - [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)



7. How will the applications be evaluated?

An evaluation panel will be responsible for assessing all applications and ensuring a fair and objective distribution of grants across the project area. This evaluation panel will be chaired by M-CO and will include representatives from EirGrid as well as independent evaluators.

When selecting who benefits, we aim to choose organisations that will gain most from these grants. Applications will firstly be assessed for eligibility.

Eligibility Criteria	Objective
Applicant	The project is proposed by a community group, not-for-profit entity or social enterprise.
Location	The project is located within 3km of the reinforcement project, or clearly serves communities within the 3km priority area.
Project	The project is eligible for funding and not on the list of ineligible items or activities.

Applications will then be assessed and scored under the following criteria:

Assessment Criteria	Objective
Community Benefit	The project benefits the community and improves quality of life in the area. The benefits are clearly outlined in the application.
Target Group and Scale of Impact	The project will support a large and/or diverse group of people within the target area of 3km from the line and/or benefits an under-served group. The applicant has consulted with the user/target group. Ideally for larger funding we would encourage cross community applications or even applications from multiple communities.
Sustainability	The purpose of the project is to make a positive social and/or environmental impact. Where the project requires the purchase of physical goods/materials, the project team is committed to sourcing the most environmentally and socially sustainable option available. The project has showed how it is linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. The project also has the potential for longevity and can be managed accordingly by the applicant.
Capacity and Track Record	The applicant has a history of community involvement and experience delivering community projects and is registered with the Public Participation Network.
Viability and Value for Money	The applicant has thought about future funding or maintenance costs if relevant. The proposal demonstrates value for money and provides support that cannot be accessed elsewhere e.g., through alternative funding.

The Evaluation Panel will seek to ensure that the benefits of the fund are received by communities along the transmission line, and consideration will be given to the geographic spread of applications. The Panel will also seek to ensure a broad mixture of projects are funded, which serve a range of demographics.

8. How do we apply?

Applications can be made online at <https://eirgridcommunityfund.submit.com/>. The application portal will open for applications on Tuesday 30th of November 2021. The deadline for applications is Tuesday 1st of February 2022 at 2.00 pm.

We want to help you to develop a project with maximum impact, and to make it as easy as possible to complete the application form.

We recommend you take the following steps when developing your application:

1. Read this briefing document thoroughly.
2. Register your interest in applying for the Fund by registering an account at eirgridcommunityfund.submit.com.
3. Submit any queries you have on the Fund by sending a message to Fund Administrator Marion Weymes via the messaging option on the online portal. Please note that all queries and responses will be circulated to all who have expressed interest in the Fund.
4. Attend the online information session which will take place on **Tuesday 7th December** from 7-8pm where you will have the opportunity to ask questions on the Fund and the application process. Where possible we ask that you submit your queries in advance of this session. [You can register for the meeting here.](#)
5. Arrange an online one-to-one support session with the fund administrators by contacting Marion through the online portal or at mweymes@mco.ie. These sessions are scheduled to take place on **Wednesday January 12th** and they will help applicants to check their project ideas for eligibility and to further develop their application. We strongly recommend applicants engage with these sessions.
6. Complete the application form available at eirgridcommunityfund.submit.com before Tuesday 1st of February 2022 at 2.00 pm. Late applications will not be accepted.
7. Clarifications and additional information may be sought by M-CO. For applications to Strand 2: Large Initiatives we may request an interview (via Zoom) to further discuss the proposal.



9. What happens after the grants are awarded?

1. Applications will be evaluated in February – March 2022, and it is expected that grant offers will be made in May 2022. All applications will be advised of the outcome of their application and an independent external appeals panel will be put in place.
2. For successful applicants we will ask that you acknowledge receipt of the grant in writing or by email. You will also need to confirm that the grant will be used for the purpose it was applied for, and to agree to our terms and conditions. Please be aware that we will publicise these grants for promotional and information purposes.
3. An agreement must be entered into between M-CO on behalf of EirGrid and the group/organisation receiving the funding, which will detail the terms and conditions of the Fund. Please note, no expenditure in relation to grant-aided elements of the project should be incurred until the signed contract has been received by the applicant group/organisation and signed by both the applicant and M-CO.
4. Payment schedules will be tailored to each project however we expect that:
 - a. Upon awarding the funds, there will be a period of 12 months for projects funded under Strand 1 and 24 months for projects funded under Strand 2 to submit a claim for final payment. All successful applications will be reviewed after 6 months and if no satisfactory progress has been made, a grant or part thereof may be revoked.
 - b. Successful applicants must confirm that the tax affairs of all contractors/suppliers are in order and that they are registered for VAT.
 - c. For larger projects, the fund administrators can facilitate meetings with community finance providers to discuss bridging finance options.
 - d. On completion of the approved project, each applicant group will be required to upload invoices, receipts, bank statements and additional evidence to demonstrate project expenditure was undertaken in accordance with the contract. In the event a group does not complete a project in full accordance with the contract, reimbursement of the initial funding may be sought.
5. Successful applicants will be required to monitor and report progress in relation to the supported projects at agreed intervals. This will entail an Interim Report after six months and a Final Outcome and Financial Monitoring Report when complete. This report will confirm how the grant has been spent and the impacts of the project. M-CO will supply guidelines for completion of such reports.
6. In addition, successful applicants may be asked to submit a short report two to three years after completing the project. This is to measure the long-term impact where relevant.
7. We will ask you to acknowledge the support of EirGrid Community Fund on any materials associated with the grant.
8. EirGrid may choose your project for a site visit - selected projects will be notified in advance.

10. Completing the application form

The online application portal will ask for the below information.

Contact Information

1. Applicant Details

- Name of lead Community Group/ Organisation
- Chairperson:
- Secretary:
- Treasurer:

2. Contact details of the person dealing with the application

- Name
- Role in organisation
- Address
- Phone
- Email

3. What strand of funding are you applying for?

4. Total amount applied for.

Applicant Details:

5. Address of lead Community Group/ Organisation.

6. Distance (in km) of the project from the proposed Laois-Kilkenny Development (see map in guidelines).

7. When was the group established?

8. Are you registered with your local PPN?

9. Please provide an overview of your organisation (300 words). This should address:

- Your goals
- Your audiences/users and location of users

- The main services/activities you deliver

10. Please describe the organisational/ governance structure of your group.

11. Are you partnering with any other organisation to deliver this project? If yes – please give a brief description of each project partner.

12. Please provide links to your website/social media pages if applicable.

Details of proposed project i.e. What the funds will be used for

13. Title of project (15 words)

14. Provide a brief summary of the project i.e., the activities/project you are proposing to deliver (100 words)

15. Describe the project in detail. Please address: (600 words max)

- The community need or gap in services
- How the project will address this need
- What activities/items will be delivered
- Who the project will support/serve
- How the plan for this project has been developed (e.g., through committee meetings, community consultation)
- Aspects of the project which have already commenced or been delivered
- How the project fits the priority themes of the brief

16. Please outline how your proposal contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in your community. Please refer to more than 1 goal in your answer.

17. What is your expected timeframe to deliver this project? Please include the main milestones or phases from now to project completion (400 words max).

- 18.** You may attach a file consisting of audio or visual material to further describe or illustrate the proposed project (Limit 300 MB per file). This is not a requirement however we encourage you to attach:
- Photos of the organisation, your premises or location, your activities etc.
 - Letters of support from users or stakeholders e.g., community groups, local authority, local schools.
 - Plans, drawings or maps for proposed developments.
- 19.** If your project relates to infrastructure or capital development (e.g., upgrade to community facility, development of a new playground, extension of sports pitch) please describe any arrangements relating to land/building ownership and/or planning permission.
- 20.** Provide details of the applicant's previous experience/capacity in undertaking similar community projects (500 words max). If there are multiple partners or other funding partners involved in the project, please describe each partner's experience.

Cost of Project

- 21.** Have you applied for other sources of funding for this particular project or activities relating to this project (e.g., Local Authority Funding, LEADER funding, Sports Capital Grants, Lottery Funding)? If yes, please state:
- The funding source
 - The amount of funding sought or received
 - Whether you have received this funding or are awaiting the outcome of your application, and when you expect to hear the outcome.
 - The details on the project/activity for which you have applied for funding and how it related to the project/activities detailed in this proposal.

22. Please breakdown your budget in items or work packages as appropriate using the table below.

Cost of Project		
Item	Amount (€)	Additional Information
TOTAL COST		
Project Funds		
Source	Amount (€)	
EirGrid Community Benefit Fund	[amount sought]	
e.g. Own Funds		
e.g. Additional Grant		
TOTAL FUNDS		

NB. The Total Project Cost and Total Funding (blue cells) should match.

- 23. Please outline how this project demonstrates value for money.
- 24. Offers of funding may be of a lesser amount than is sought by the applicant. Please describe what you would prioritise for delivery if a lesser amount was offered and how you may fill any shortfall in funding to deliver your project.
- 25. How will the project be delivered and then managed post completion? Please detail the roles of each person organisation who will:
 - Manage the project budgeting
 - Manage the contractors/purchase the equipment
 - Provide upkeep/maintenance
- 26. How do you propose to acknowledge EirGrid's contribution to this project?

11. Terms and Conditions

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

1. The application must be signed by the Chairperson, Secretary or Treasurer of the organisation/group making the submission.
2. The information supplied by the applicant must be accurate and complete. Misinformation may lead to disqualification and/or the repayment of any grant made.
3. Applicants should be aware that the Fund may be oversubscribed. Some applications fulfilling the conditions may not be successful or may be approved for a reduced amount.
4. The amount offered to the successful application is final and cannot be amended due to price increases or inflation.
5. All information provided in respect of the application for a grant will be held electronically and The Freedom of Information Act applies to all records held by EirGrid.
6. All proposals should provide quotes for activities as far as possible. If these are not provided at the proposal stage, they will be requested prior to the grant offer being made. One quote will be required for items or activities under €5,000. Three quotes will be required for items or activities above €5,000.
7. The organisation must have a bank account or access to one. All grants will be awarded by bank transfer and will be paid directly to the organisation.
8. Applicants awarded in excess of €10,000 will be required to indicate that their tax affairs are in order and submit their tax reference number on the claim form before the grant offer is finalised.
9. Evidence of expenditure, receipts/invoices must be retained and provided if requested.
10. If relevant to the project, you will be required to provide with your application form evidence of landowner consent/permission and/or planning permission/exemption.
11. It is the responsibility of each organisation to ensure that it has proper procedures and policies in place, including appropriate insurance where relevant prior to the drawdown of funding.
12. Successful applicants are expected to have a policy in place and proper procedures regarding working with children, young people and vulnerable adults where relevant to the project prior to the drawdown of funding.
13. Each project/event/activity should ensure the relevant health and safety regulations are complied with. It is expected that groups have insurance cover taken out on a project's grant aided assets, including public liability. M-CO and EirGrid are not liable for any claims relating to funding allocated for projects under this Fund.
14. Activities, materials and equipment should consider the ethical and environmental aspects.
15. Applicants are encouraged to sign up to the Governance Code, A Code of Practice for Good Governance of Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations in Ireland.
16. EirGrid contribution must be publicly acknowledged in all materials associated with the purpose of the grant.



The Oval, 160 Shelbourne Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin D04 FW28 • Telephone: 01 677 1700 • www.eirgrid.com

