

Sliabh Bawn Power DAC Community Benefit Fund Guidelines 2023

The key dates for the Sliabh Bawn 2023 Community Benefit Fund are as follows:

Fund opening date: Tuesday 21st November 2023

Fund closing date: Tuesday 30th January 2024

Contract Issue: Mid-April 2024

Please note, applications or required accompanying documentations will not be accepted after the closing date.

Applicants can expect to be informed of the outcome of their application no later than Mid-April 2024. Please note, if we are experiencing any delays due to application volume, we will inform you of same.

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1. Overview of the Sliabh Bawn Community Benefit Fund

Sliabh Bawn Power DAC (“Designated Activity Company”) (“SBPD”) is committed to the development of sustainable energy in Ireland. SBPD has a fundamental role in meeting Ireland’s target of achieving 40% of its electricity consumption from renewable sources. We believe in working together to enhance energy security for all. As such, the communities in which we develop wind farms should be able to experience the benefit of the wind farm in the locality.

Sliabh Bawn Wind Farm is a project involving Coillte, Bord na Móna and Greencoat Renewables PLC, located approximately five kilometres south east of Strokestown, Co. Roscommon, in the Doughill Forest on Sliabh Bawn mountain and SECAD Partnership CLG administers this fund.

Please keep a copy of these guidelines to hand when completing your application, if you need help or guidance at any stage, please contact SECAD at 021 4613432 / info@secad.ie

Further information is also available on our information website <https://www.communitybenefitfunds.ie/sliabhbawn/>

Applications to the funds can be made at: <https://www.communitybenefitfunds.ie/sliabhbawn/>



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2. Introduction to the Sliabh Bawn Community Benefit Fund

The Sliabh Bawn Community Benefit Fund (“the Fund”) will be available each year over the 25-year operational lifetime of the wind farm to benefit local community projects and initiatives. The 2023 Fund is valued at €101,028.72 inclusive of indexation. (CPI (“Consumer Price Index”) is calculated and confirmed at the opening of the Fund each year).

3. Application Budgeting

Successful applicants may not be awarded the full amount applied for and instead may be awarded a percentage of their application costs. Applicants are requested to seek a percentage of funding from other sources i.e. public funding, savings, borrowings etc. This demonstrates community involvement and commitment to projects.

Please ensure you have considered this before submitting your application and have examined how the group may fund a shortfall.

With regards to the Fund Available (2023), the figures referenced above may include existing commitments to community projects.

Prior to making an application it is essential that you read this document, which sets out general grant making.

4. Who will benefit?

The Fund will prioritise projects and initiatives that will benefit the area surrounding Sliabh Bawn, subject to them meeting the Fund criterion. Priority will be given to projects that bring socio-economic benefit to the area including strategic projects. The Fund can be used as matching finance for other third-party grants. The Fund will accept applications seeking funding to benefit a community initiative, not an individual.

5. Who can apply?

The Fund is open to community and voluntary groups, not for profit groups and organisations with charitable status. A key criterion is that the Fund should be used to benefit the local community as a whole. A maximum of one application can be submitted from each group / organisation per annum.



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6. What the Fund can and cannot support

Thematic Objectives – The Fund can support projects which contribute to one or more of the following thematic areas:

Recreation	Your project delivers community-based sport and recreation activities.
Social Sustainability	Your project generates greater social cohesion and/or generates health and well-being benefits.
Culture and Heritage	Your project increases cultural awareness and preserves the local heritage.
Environmental Sustainability	Your project enhances the local, natural and built environment for the community. Community energy efficiency projects/schemes are also eligible
Tourism	Your project develops new, and strengthens existing tourism initiatives, which make a contribution to the local economy.

7. The Fund cannot support

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications from individuals;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications that only benefit an individual;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications that promote religious or political activities;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational/running costs;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory organisations or the direct replacement of statutory funding*;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications for funding to cover the cost of; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ trips abroad; ○ retrospective funding; ○ activities which do not directly benefit the local community and are not deemed as 'charitable'; ○ Salaried positions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects that may damage the reputation of the sponsor or that conflict with or adversely affect the aim, objectives or policy of the Service Provider, Sliabh Bawn Power DAC or any other associated company;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects that duplicate work that the sponsor or other third parties have already committed to or completed in the area.

- The Fund does not normally support statutory or other accountable bodies (including schools) unless they can provide evidence that the project is community-led, open, accessible and for the benefit of the community and not a statutory responsibility.
- If a school wishes to apply to the Fund, they must demonstrate that their project would not normally be funded by the Department of Education and Skills. If in doubt, please contact SECAD.

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8. Multi Annual Funding / Legacy and Strategic Planning*

Support to larger projects can be facilitated through a multi-annual agreement. In cases such as these, a contract is issued to the group for an overall sum, which is then paid in set instalments on an annual basis.

e.g. €6,000 x 4 year = €24,000. As a multi-annual award is paid over a number of years, the award must be fully drawn down before a group can apply for further funding.

In order to be considered for multi-annual funding, the following must be demonstrated in an application:

- The project will be completed in the first year of the contract (accompanied by appropriate sign off / verification as outlined in contract, e.g. Engineers / Architects report);
- Only legacy / strategic projects will be considered for multi-annual support e.g. community hall renovation, development of sporting facilities, upgrade of basic services.

Please note there are strict publicity requirements for multi-annual projects referenced under the Standard Terms and Conditions, Section 2.5.

Strategic Projects

A strategic project will maximise the benefit of the Fund and identify substantive areas of funding priority that are likely to have an enduring positive and permanent impact on the community with a lasting legacy. Strategic applications/projects should also be linked and focus on the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

It is envisioned that large scale, good quality initiatives are designed for the benefit of the community and with long term impact. Such legacy/strategic projects may often be expensive and will need to be supported through public funding sources e.g. LEADER etc.



We expect that Fund support to larger projects can be facilitated through a multi-annual agreement. In this case, an award agreement is issued to the group for an overall sum, which is then paid in set instalments on an annual basis e.g. €5,000 x 4 year = €20,000. This lump sum is a guarantee of funds over a number of years. If you require bridging finance to complete the project your group can now take this offer of a multi annual fund award to a social finance organisation such as Clann Credo, Community Finance Ireland, your local Credit Union or banking institution, who may offer you an upfront loan based on this offer.

These types of project will likely need to ensure satisfactory and appropriate governance is in place e.g. supporting documentation, lease agreement, evidence of formal planning/exemption permissions are in place and evidence of the project progressing each year.

VAT

If your organisation is VAT registered, no claim for payment may be made for the VAT element of expenditure.



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9. How to make an application

If it is your first time applying to the funds, please visit our page ['A Beginners Guide to Completing an Application'](#)

Please also take a look at our website

<https://windfarmcommunityfunds.ie/sliabhbawn/help> for further information on the funds.

Go to the application portal at www.communitybenefitfunds.ie/sliabhbawn

1. You must first register using the Register function on the site, an email with your login details and password will be issued (please ensure to check Spam/Junk mailbox)
2. Log into the site and click on the 2023 Application Form. Provide details of the group/organisation and project.

You will be asked to submit the following documents with your application, at a minimum:

- **A copy of your organisation's bank**, online bank, credit union / post office account, statement.
- **A copy of your organisation's signed and dated constitution** (a template is available on request from SECAD or [here](#) on our website). Please note, at a minimum a constitution should include confirmation that:
 - the organisation has charitable purposes;
 - is not for profit in nature; and that
 - no directors or trustees are remunerated.
- **Quotations are required** to verify the value of each item that you are seeking funding support from the Sliabh Bawn Community Benefit Fund to purchase, as follows:
 - If any individual item is less than €5,000, you need one quote for that item.
 - If any individual item costs €5,000 or more, you must provide three quotes from **three different suppliers**, or evidence that you tried to obtain three quotes

For works relating to renovation / construction / refurbishment / groundworks / installation etc, the following is required:

- A lease or letter of permission from the owner to undertake to proposed works is required if the applicant group is not the owner of the premises/location. The lease must be valid for the next 3 years at a minimum. The letter of permission must be dated within 3 months of the application submission date and remain valid for a minimum of 3 years.
- Planning permission, or a letter of exemption / email from the relevant Local Authority

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9. How to make an application continued..

Please note, construction/renovation/refurbishment/structural projects/civil works will not proceed to evaluation if planning permission or a letter of exemption from the relevant Local Authority or local area engineer has not been uploaded with the application form or an explanation as to why you feel the project does not require planning/exemption this may be detailing a conversation you have had with your local authority or local area engineer.

It is important to note that it is the responsibility of the applicant group to provide the relevant permissions. Further information on the planning process and contact details for Local Authorities are available at the links below:
<https://www.housing.gov.ie/PLANNING/LEAFLETS/PLANNING-LEAFLETS>

10. Once you have submitted your application

You will receive an e-mail to confirm receipt of your application with a copy of your application form in an attached PDF document, which may be printed for your records.

SECAD will then make checks to ensure the applicant organisation and project meet the funds' eligibility criteria. During which time you may be contacted by the SECAD team to discuss the project in more detail. SECAD reserve the right to ask applicants to submit further information in support of their application.

Complete, eligible projects will proceed to evaluation stage

Please note applicants that do not submit the required documentation with the application form, e.g., planning permission, planning application number or planning exemption, will not proceed to evaluation. If your project passes evaluation stage, and it is later determined that an aspect requires planning or exemption from planning the funding offer will be withdrawn.



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11. Project Plan & Budget

It is important to take some time to think through your community project, and to consider carefully what costs should be included in your project budget. It is essential to note that payment cannot be made until the project is complete and the goods are in hand.

Common Pitfalls

- Incomplete Applications
- Poor project description
- Did not read the criteria
- Blank answers to questions
- Missing paperwork
- Project costs do not tally with quotes
- The project falls outside the 'area of benefit'

If undertaking construction/electrical works of any nature, please be aware that an Engineers Report, RECI certification, installation report or ROSPA report in the case of playgrounds, will be required at Claim Stage, the costs associated with this report may be included in your application (please ensure a quotation is provided).

Take some time to consider the project you wish to submit for support and make a plan so that you will have the required documentation available to submit before the closing date.

12. The Global Goals for Sustainable Development

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 global goals set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015.

The SDGs address the global challenges we face and cover social, environmental and economic development issues such as poverty, education, inequality, climate, water and food crises. They provide a focus for how businesses, governments and civil society can tackle these challenges in order to promote a more sustainable future for all.



We ask that in your application you identify which goal your group/project most closely aligns with.

Please visit this website for further information on each goal.

<https://irelandsdg.geohive.ie/>

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13. The Decision-Making Process

The decision to award funds depends on the outcome of the evaluation process. The applications which proceed to evaluation stage are evaluated by the Sliabh Bawn Community Benefit Fund Evaluation Panel (the "Panel") with final approval and sign off from Sliabh Bawn Power DAC.

Please note, canvassing or lobbying of any Panel member will result in automatic disqualification.

In some cases, an application may be deferred, SECAD may then request additional information to be provided in order that your application can be reconsidered during a subsequent call.

Each application received by the fund will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

14. Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	
Project Location	Is the project located within the hinterland of Sliabh Bawn, or is the primary provider of a service/function to the area of Sliabh Bawn
Demonstration of the need and potential impact of this project on the people and communities who live within the area surrounding Sliabh Bawn	Projects should demonstrate that the project is addressing an expressed need within their community. An understanding of the benefits of the proposed project is also required. The relevance of the project to the location within the hinterland of Sliabh Bawn is considered, both at a local and strategic level.
Project Life-Span / Appropriate project timelines	Project life span refers to the anticipated longevity of a proposed project. In the case of festivals / events, the scoring may be informed by anticipated impact, in addition to track record. Applicants should show that their project will be completed within the contract expiry date, (6 months)
Contribution to thematic objectives of the Fund	The Fund aims to support projects and initiatives that will benefit the area surroundings Sliabh Bawn Wind Farm. Priority will be given to projects that bring socio-economic benefit to the area including investment in large strategic projects in the appropriate service centres. The Fund can be used as matching finance for other grants.
Value for Money	Applications should also demonstrate that the project is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fully costed, • well-organised, and • represents good value for money, including estimated number of users on weekly / monthly basis
Contribution of project to social inclusion within the locality	Are the benefits of the project free of cost to the public, open to everyone, is there a specific reference to socially marginalised initiatives, community groups etc.
Robustness of Application	All sections answered, application form completed and all relevant documents provided, including planning / exemptions/ permissions /quotes etc

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15. Feedback

Throughout SECAD's grant-making policy and specific fund/programme criteria, care is taken to assess all applications against criteria in a consistent and equitable way.

Although decisions are final, SECAD can provide feedback on unsuccessful applications, if requested.

Please click [this link](#) to download a feedback form, once complete, send it via email it to info@secad.ie to receive a response.

16. Contract Offer

Successful applicants will receive a provisional grant offer and contract via an online electronic signature platform, which must be accepted, signed and returned within 15 working days.

Please note the provisional grant offer email may stipulate conditions which will need to be fulfilled within the 15-day timeframe.

Along with the contract, successful applicants will receive the relevant grant claim log in details and guidance notes relating to the drawdown of funds.

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.

Breach of Terms and Conditions

In the event that SECAD considers an applicant has breached the terms and conditions of grant aid, SECAD reserve the right to request the return of the total grant awarded. SECAD may also stipulate that no future applications for funding will be accepted from the organisation

for a minimum of two years and then only if the organisation can provide evidence that action has been taken to strengthen their capacity, which will include evidence of support sought from appropriate support/umbrella organisations.

17. Project closing dates

All Contracts contain a closing date after which time your grant offer will lapse and cease to be payable, generally this is 6 months from date of issue.

If, for some reason, your project has become delayed and will not be completed by the closing date, **please contact SECAD immediately.**

Please note, groups/organisations must complete a project, submit claim documentation and satisfy the terms of the contract before they can submit an application to the next round of funding.

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18. Grant Claims Process (Claim for Payment)

On completion of the approved project, each applicant group will be required to upload the required documents, to demonstrate that project expenditure was undertaken. Please remember for groups who are due 100% payment retrospectively, that for funding to be paid out, you must submit all the necessary documentation required.

In order to issue your '**claim for payment**' please log back into the portal:

www.communitybenefitfunds.ie/sliabhawn using your original login details, please [click here](#) to reset your password if needed.

Click on the relevant '**claim**' button and this will take you to the first page of the claim form.

At a minimum you must answer the questions asked and upload the following:

- A copy of your [invoice/receipt](#)
- [Pictures of your project/purchase](#)
- If the project spend exceeds €3,000, a copy of your groups [bank statement](#) showing the transaction/s

SECAD advises that cash payments are minimised or avoided.

In the event a group does not complete the project in full accordance with the contract, SECAD may not make the final payment and may seek reimbursement of the initial funding provided to the group.

18. Grant Claims Process (Claim for Payment) contd.

Please note that if documentation is missing or incomplete, this will delay processing of your claim, for groups claiming retrospectively.

When processing your grant payment SECAD will make the payment to the name of the group or company stated on the 'Offer Contract' and funds will be paid via EFT to the account details provided with your application.

Project Monitoring

SECAD and SPBD reserve the right to undertake a monitoring visit to any of the funded applicants. Where multi-year funding is agreed, an appropriate monitoring framework will be implemented.

Case Studies and Testimonials

The last section of the claim form asks for a testimonial from the applicant group and a picture suitable for future publication.

This is for use in future reports and/or case studies, please ensure you have the permission of everyone photographed before submitting an image and in the case of minors, parental/guardian permission.



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19. Payment Structures

There are three different payment structures which will be detailed on your contract, should you receive an offer of funding.

At any stage in the process if you need to discuss your groups individual needs, please contact SECAD.

Payment Type	Description	In order to qualify	Projects which will not be considered for this payment type	Payment Schedule
100% Upfront Payment on commencement of the contract	To assist community groups, successful groups receive an advance payment of 100% of the award value, once the contract has been signed by both the applicant and SECAD	To qualify for advance payments, projects must fulfil the following qualifying criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of goods, services and equipment only • Maximum contract value €3,000 • Quotation(s) must be submitted in advance, as part of a complete application, from service/goods provider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi annual projects • Projects which include construction / renovation / installation or landscaping works • Projects where any permissions are required, including but not limited to planning permission, owner permission, heritage / conservation officer etc 	<p>Once the contract has been agreed and signed by both parties, SECAD will transfer 100% of the contract amount to the group / organisation bank account nominated by the applicant.</p> <p>A claim verification will need to be submitted on completion of the project through the online portal www.communitybenefitfunds.ie/sliabh-bawn</p>
Multi Annual Contract /Payment	<p>When the funding requested by an applicant is greater than the amount of funding available (to offer)</p> <p>For example, if a project requests a grant of €20,000 but only €5,000 is available, an multi annual fund award of €5,000 each year for 4 years may be offered.</p>	To qualify for a multi annual agreement, projects must fulfil the following qualifying criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legacy / strategic projects will be considered for multi annual support e.g. community hall renovation, development of sporting facilities, upgrade of basic services. • Large scale projects benefitting a large section of the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller scale projects • Projects where permissions are not in place, including but not limited to planning permission, owner permission, heritage / conservation officer etc 	<p>Once the contract has been agreed and signed by both parties, A claim verification will need to be submitted on completion of the project through the online portal www.communitybenefitfunds.ie/sliabh-bawn</p> <p>Once a claim for payment has been received SECAD will transfer the first increment of the contract amount to the group / organisation bank account nominated by the applicant. Second and/or subsequent payments will be issued annually once funds are available.</p>
100% Payment Retrospectively	Payment is issued to the applicant group on completion of the project and on submission of a claim for payment	All projects are eligible for this payment structure	All projects are eligible for this payment structure	<p>100% of the contract value is paid on completion of the project and in line with 'issuing your Claim for Payment' outlined earlier.</p> <p>Once a claim for payment has been received SECAD will transfer 100% of the contract amount to the group / organisation bank account nominated by the applicant.</p>

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20. Contact Information

Please get in touch with SECAD if you have any questions:

Tel: 021 4613 432

E-mail: info@secad.ie

Web: <https://www.communitybenefitfunds.ie/sliabhbawn/>
<https://www.sliabhbawnwindfarm.ie/community-benefit/>

SECAD Partnership CLG
Midleton Community Enterprise Centre,
Owennacurra Business Park,
Knockgriffin,
Midleton,
Co. Cork