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

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland 2040

Ár dTodhchaí Tuaithe
Our Rural Future

CLÁR 2024 Scheme Outline

Measure 1: Developing Community Facilities & Amenities

Background

CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) is a targeted investment programme for rural areas that aims to provide funding for small infrastructural projects in rural areas that have experienced significant levels of de-population.

CLÁR Programme for 2024

The CLÁR Programme allocation has increased from €7.8 million to €8.7 million in 2024. The 2024 programme will be delivered through three separate Measures as follows:

Measure 1:	Developing Community Facilities & Amenities
Measure 2:	Mobility, Cancer Care, Community First Responder and Meals on Wheels Transport
Measure 3:	'Our Islands'

This Scheme outline refers to Measure 1: Developing Community Facilities & Amenities which are delivered via local authorities (LAs).

Applicants to apply for this funding to their local authority.

Timelines

Scheme launch	12th April 2024
Applications due into the Department from the Local Authorities*	19th June 2024
Funding awarded (indicative)	October 2024
Projects completed and drawn down	30th April 2026

***Applicants are encouraged to contact their Local Authorities with regard to closing dates for expressions of interest and relevant forms. It is the Local Authorities that administer the CLÁR progamme Measure 1 on behalf of the Department.**

Progression of Projects

It is the responsibility of the LA to ensure that the project will be completed and funding drawn down within the above timelines. LAs will be asked to report on the progression of approved projects on an ongoing basis.

The Department may grant an extension under exceptional circumstances. Any extension request must be submitted in writing and **in advance of the contract end date** stating the reason for the extension and the new requested completion/drawdown dates. The Department reserves the right to allow or deny any extension request.

Application Process for 2024

The 2024 programme will allow for applications to be submitted to the local authorities from schools, community and voluntary groups and Local Development Companies under this Measure. Local authorities may self-deliver projects also but these must be developed in partnership with the local community.

Community groups can include local sporting organisations where the infrastructure being supported through the application is for the benefit of the community generally (not just the sporting organisation) and is made **freely available to all members of the community.**

Up to **15 project** applications may be selected by the local authority for onward submission to the Department for consideration. A completed 'Application Overview' (MS Excel), is required to be completed by each LA. Projects should be prioritised (1 to 15).

The Local Authority is also required to submit a list of all the Expressions of Interest (EOIs) (MS Excel) received by them in relation to this Measure. This list should comprise of any/all applications that did not make the list for consideration to the Department.

The proposed projects should be of sufficient quality, in line with the scheme outline, the County Development Pan/Town Plan, the Local Economic and Community Plan and the Climate Action Plan.

Applications under this Measure may include a number of different elements in respect of a single facility up to the maximum funding limit of €50,000.

The local authority is required to submit a 'Project Application' form (MS Word, not in PDF format) in respect of each individual project. The LA must ensure that the forms are fully completed and comply with the 2024 Scheme Outline. In particular, the local authority must ensure that funded facilities are publicly accessible to all with clear arrangements to insure and manage the facility. Any facilities funded must be available to the public without a requirement to be a member of a club, enrolled in a school etc. **Facilities on school grounds must be open to the public outside school hours.**

Landowner consent and planning permission, if applicable, and the required match funding must be confirmed and in place at the time of application in respect of each application. The Department may request evidence of same during the assessment process. Such documentation must be held on file for a period of 6 years from the date of application.

In the case of capital works, the applicant must own or have a valid 15-year lease for the property.

Please ensure applications are fully completed and all required supporting documentation submitted as the Department may not be in a position to follow up regarding missing documentation or incomplete application forms.
Incomplete applications may not be considered.

Applications should be submitted directly to the Department at CLAR@DRCD.gov.ie by **19th June 2024.**

Eligible Applicants

Schools, community and voluntary groups, local development companies, local authorities.

Local Authority Selection of Projects

The measure will be implemented via the local authorities. Projects proposed to the Department by the local authority must be selected on the basis of:

- being located in a CLÁR area
- an application by a community or voluntary organisation, school or local development companies to the local authority
- clear evidence of need
- alignment with the County Development Plan/Town Plan, the Local Economic and Community Plan, and the Climate Action Plan.
- evidence that all necessary permissions are in place or are in train (planning reference number must be provided)
- evidence, where applicable, that ownership/minimum 15- year lease is in place
- comprehensive estimated costs including local authority administration/professional fees
- evidence that match funding is in place at time of application
- evidence that the funded project will be open to the public without appointment, and that the necessary insurance is in place
- a single facility (not multiple locations)
- project must be accessible to all
- Projects must be shovel ready

The local authority must ensure that funded facilities must be publicly accessible with clear arrangements to insure and manage the facility. Any facilities funded under this Measure must be open to the public without a requirement to be a member of a club, enrolled in a school etc. Facilities on school grounds must be open to the public outside school hours. The local authority must ensure that facilities funded are operational for at least 5 years from completion.

In the assessment process, DRCD will prioritise project applications that are in accordance with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Climate Action Plan.

Rate of Aid

A minimum grant of €5,000 and maximum grant of €50,000 will apply to this measure. The scheme will provide up to 90% of the cost. The remaining 10% or balance of the cost must be provided through local authority/community/other resources. Philanthropic contributions will be accepted as full or part of match funding costs. This funding must be in place at the time of application.

Please note that match funding cannot come from other DRCD Schemes.

Eligible Projects

Measure 1 will support a variety of capital projects provided that they contribute to the enhancement of existing, and/or the development of new, accessible Community Recreation Facilities.

All community amenities funded under this programme must, in so far as practicable, be accessible to all abilities and ages.

The list below provides an indication of the types of projects that may be supported, **but is not exhaustive**:

- Small scale renovation works to community facilities open to the wider community such as community centres/sports centres/clubhouses of sporting groups/youth centres/mens sheds etc
- Multi-Use Gaming Areas (MUGAs)/Astro-Turf facilities including upgrades
- Playgrounds/Skateboard parks/Pump tracks/Cycling tracks
- Walking/Running /Athletics tracks
- Handball Alleys/Tennis Courts/Basketball Courts/Cricket Grounds
- Community Gyms/Community Cinemas
- Sensory Gardens/Community Gardens/ Allotments
- Access to unique local heritage sites / areas of natural beauty
- Outdoor Bowling Areas/Outdoor Toilet Facilities/Car Parking

- Improving access at sports grounds e.g. development/upgrade of spectator stands at local sports grounds with a particular focus on improving access for people of all abilities and ages
- Solar Bins
- Biodiversity planting

The application form must clearly outline the need and rationale for the projects put forward.

Ineligible Projects

In the current 2024 scheme, the following projects will not be funded:

- School/Community Safety Measures*
- Footpaths
- Road markings
- Pedestrian crossings
- Bus shelters*
- Works to current school buildings which are not open to the public after school hours
- CCTV

*Funding for safety works at schools and the provision of footpaths etc. is available under both the Safe Routes to School Programme/the Active Travel Programme operated by the Department of Transport/TII.

Eligible Costs

Applications should detail the eligible costs associated with the proposed project. Please note only items of a **capital** nature, integral to the project, are eligible.

All local authority administration/staff costs associated with the proposed project should be kept to a minimum and be clearly detailed on the Application Overview.

Professional Fees

In recognition that some projects are delivered in sensitive areas e.g. ecological or archaeological, the threshold for professional fees has been removed but must be at a reasonable level and this would be detailed in the application form.

The local authority staff costs as referenced above and that relate to project development, supervision etc. should also be included as part of this calculation.

DRCD Assessment Criteria

In assessing applications, a number of factors will be considered including the local authority indicated order of priority; the range, mix, quality and impact of proposed projects; sustainability of projects, previous funding provided, and other relevant considerations.

Successful applications will be concise and focussed. The quality and clarity of completed applications, in particular the need / rationale outlined in the application are important in the assessment process.

The number of projects approved in each County may be determined with reference to the size of the CLÁR area in the County relative to the overall size of the County.

Project Delivery

It is expected that the local authority will take a lead role in the delivery of many of the projects approved by the Department. It is the responsibility of the party entering into contract with the Department, as appropriate, to meet any shortfall arising out of any project non-compliance.

All projects must comply with the National Public Procurement Policy Framework published by the Office of Government Procurement. Please see www.etenders.gov.ie for more details. Failure to adhere to these requirements may result in the associated expenditure being deemed ineligible.

Grant Payment Arrangements

Funding may be drawn down in phases in respect of each project individually;

- The first claim may be submitted when at least 50% of the estimated project costs have been expended.
- The final claim can be made upon project completion and when all project costs have been incurred.

Drawdown requests for payment must only be submitted by the local authority when the local authority **have issued payment** and the relevant works **have been completed**. It is not permissible to submit a drawdown request to the Department if invoices remain unpaid or where relevant works are not fully completed by either the community group and/or the local authority.

Queries

Any queries should be submitted to CLAR@DRCD.gov.ie.

Funding Conditions for Rural Schemes funded under the Department of Rural and Community Development.

All expenditure registered through the Department's Rural Schemes i.e. Town and Village Renewal Scheme, CLÁR, Outdoor Recreation and Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) will be subject to the terms of the Public Spending Code.

In addition to this, the requirements outlined below will apply to all funding approved through those schemes. The need for adherence to all of the requirements will be reflected in the contractual agreement between the Department of Rural and Community Development and the grantee approved for funding under the scheme.

1.	Projects are expected to commence and be completed in line with the timelines set out in the relevant Scheme Outline.
2.	The Department may de-commit funding allocated to projects under the Scheme where the project is not completed within the time specified, and where the express agreement of the Department to extend the funding arrangement has not been agreed in advance.
3.	The grant funding for the approved project will be provided from the Department of Rural and Community Development's capital budget. Administration and/or professional costs associated with the proposed project, where allowed for in the Scheme Outline, should be kept to a minimum. These costs must be clearly documented in the application.
4.	A cash contribution as set out in the relevant Scheme Outline is required. The grantee will be required to confirm that the cash contribution is in place at time of application and retain a record of the source of the cash contribution. The Department may request evidence of same during the assessment process.
5.	Projects must be completed in full in order to drawdown the full grant amount. Where it is established that a project has not been completed, the Department may request the grantee to repay any funding received on the

	project. Any changes to the proposed project must be advised and agreed with the Department in advance of the change being implemented.
6.	Where an element of the approved project is not carried out as per the project application, grant funding may be reduced to reflect the amended project.
7.	If the project involves works on buildings or lands that are not in the ownership of the grantee, a minimum 15 year lease must be in place unless otherwise agreed with the Department.
8.	In the case of funding allocated to enterprises or facilities (i.e. community centre, hubs, vehicles under CLÁR etc.), it is a requirement that they must operate as funded for a minimum of 5 years following release of the final stage of funding, otherwise funding may have to be repaid. Where they do not operate as funded this must be advised and agreed with the Department in advance.
9.	All appropriate financial, Public Procurement and accounting rules and regulations must be complied with and each grantee will fully account for the funding received in a timely manner.
10.	Full and accurate documentation to support all expenditure should be maintained and accessible by Department officials for audit purposes at all times and for a period of six years from the date of completion of the project.
11.	Grantees will acknowledge the support of Project 2040 / Department of Rural and Community Development/ Government of Ireland, and any other applicable sources of funding (as identified in the relevant Funding Agreement) in all public announcements, advertising and signage, as appropriate, relating to the project. In addition, the Department may seek to use the project in the broader promotion of its policies.
12.	Signage must be in place at all CLÁR funded projects. These signs must be in a prominent location, of durable quality, acknowledge the CLÁR funding and be of sufficient size to be clearly visible to the public. These signs must follow the Department's Branding Guidelines.
13.	Grantees will provide any reports and information relating to the project as may reasonably be requested by the Department of Rural and Community Development from time to time.

14.	On-going monitoring and evaluation of the project outputs and outcomes should take place in the context of assessing the impact of the project. Grantees will be expected to collect appropriate data to facilitate this learning on an on-going basis. On request, a brief report (1-2 pages) on the outputs and outcomes of the project funded should be completed and made available to the Department.
15.	Each grantee, will provide a contact point/points to the Department to facilitate payment and information requests. The Department should be updated on any changes to contact personnel in a timely manner.

Non-Compliance with the conditions as outlined or any additional stipulations agreed during contract negotiations may result in the requirement to refund part or all of the grant aid awarded.