

KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

Local Environmental Action Fund

Briefing Note, Terms and Conditions and Guidelines

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The Local Environment Action Fund is a grant programme developed in partnership with IPB Insurance and the CCMA marking the 100th anniversary of IPB.

The fund supports the sustainability aims of local Tidy Towns and similar voluntary groups that contribute to enhancing their community's local environment.

Under the Fund, all 31 Local Authorities in partnership with IPB Insurance have committed to a €3m+ fund for community grants for Tidy Towns and similar voluntary community groups. This fund equates to €50,000 per local authority area from IPB Insurance and funding matched by each Local Authority.

The focus of the fund is to support climate action and environmental enhancement.

1. Terms and Conditions

- Kilkenny County Council (KCC) will only provide funds for eligible costs to groups/organisations that are directly involved in approved projects at a community level, on a not-for-profit basis, aimed at supporting climate action and enhancing their local environment.
- The information supplied by the applicant group/organisation must be accurate and complete.
- Misinformation may lead to disqualification and/or the repayment of any grant made.
- All information provided in respect of the application for a grant will be held electronically. KCC and IPB insurance reserve the right to publish a list of all grants awarded on their websites.
- The Freedom of Information Act applies to all records held by KCC.
- The application must be signed by the Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer or responsible person of the group/organisation making the submission.
- It is the responsibility of each group/organisation to ensure that it has proper procedures and policies in place including appropriate insurance where relevant.
- Evidence of expenditure, receipts /invoices must be retained and provided to KCC or their representative to support payment of funds.
- Photographic evidence of the project may also be required to facilitate draw down of grants.
- KCC may carry out unannounced site visits to verify compliance with Programme terms and conditions.
- The Local Environment Action Fund (LEAF), contributions must be publicly acknowledged in all materials associated with the purpose of the grant.
- No third party or intermediary applications will be considered.
- Breaches of the terms and conditions of this programme may result in sanctions including return of funds already granted and disbarment from future grant applications.
- In order to process your application, it may be necessary for KCC to collect personal data from you. Such information will be processed in line with KCC's privacy statement which is available to view online here.
- A grant agreement will be put in place between successful applicants and KCC.

2. Objective of the Local Environment Action Fund

The overall objective of this Fund is to encourage collaboration between Tidy Towns and similar groups to work with other community groups and stakeholders in their local environment promoting greener communities.

The aim is reflected in the strapline; Communities Working Together for Climate, where Tidy towns (and similar groups) apply for funding promoting collaboration with local partners such as schools, community groups, sports clubs, etc to deliver environmental and climate action projects of various sizes.

3. Overview

Communities Working Together for Climate. This scheme is designed to empower Tidy Towns and other voluntary community groups to take meaningful action to enhance their local environment through impactful, community-driven projects, collaborating with community stakeholders.

a. Funding

Funding is available for up to 100% of the project. There is no minimum grant amount or a requirement to hit the maximum threshold of €15,000

4. Eligibility

Community organisations meeting the requirements listed below are eligible to apply to implement a project under this Programme. They must:

- be a not-for-profit organisation
- be located in the operational area of KCC
- submit a completed application on or before the specified closing date and time
- be registered with the Kilkenny Public Participation Network (PPN)
- be a Tidy Towns or voluntary group with similar activities (e.g residents association, sports club, development committee)

Furthermore:

- The project applied for must be in line with the aim/purpose of the funding as set out in the section on [Projects eligible for funding](#) below.
- Only one application per organisation may be submitted for consideration. However, projects can address several measures and be bundled together into one single application.
- All applications should include collaboration with at least one other community stakeholder group (e.g local school, men's shed, youth club, Lyons / sports club, etc). If not possible, the application should outline the reason why.

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

- Private individuals
- Commercial undertakings (including sole traders)
- National community and environmental organisations
- Financial institutions

a. Eligible 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be for the sole purpose of implementing the project and shall not be used for any other purpose. • Be considered necessary for the delivery of the project. • Must be verifiable e.g. supported by evidence of compliance with public procurement, an invoice and proof of payment. • Be reasonable in their nature and amount i.e. not excessive, and is what would be considered practical and just in the conduct of delivering a project of its nature. • Up to 100% funding may be provided through the Local Environmental Action Fund. Other funding may be leveraged for projects (e.g. with LEADER, Tidy Towns, Town and Village Enhancement funding, etc.). However, the Local Environmental Action Fund funding component must be able to stand on its own merits and be independent of the other funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects that solely benefit an individual. • Teaching/staffing. • Travel and transport costs • Equipment, unless directly associated with the project. • Income generating projects. • Overheads, ongoing running costs, including rent and leases. • Insurance • Accommodation and subsistence. • Redundancy costs. • Duplicate public funding received from other sources for the same purpose. • Penalties/Interest/Bank Interest/Charges. • Loan repayments. • Retrospective costs i.e. expenditure which has taken place prior to the approval date of the project. • Costs for which more appropriate funding opportunities already exist, where it is clear that Local Environment Action Fund funding is a substitute for other public funding which is currently available. • Notional costs e.g. the room hire within the applicant's own premises. • Legal Fees • Activity undertaken, or work commenced, prior to the date of signing contracts / Letter of Offer is not eligible for grant aid

b. VAT

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 KCC 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.

c. Projects Eligible for Funding

The types of projects/initiatives, within communities, which are eligible for funding should seek to:

- a) Enhance local amenities, biodiversity and green infrastructure
- b) Provide greater public awareness and engagement with environmental issues
- c) Identify nature-based projects that enhance biodiversity and seek to reduce, or increase the removal of, greenhouse gas emissions or support climate resilience
- d) Projects must focus on climate action, biodiversity and/or environmental enhancement

Below are examples of projects. These are only examples and communities are encouraged to be as innovative as possible with their projects.

- Biodiversity Conservation (e.g creating pollinator friendly spaces)
- Tree Planting and Greening Initiatives
- Waste Reduction and Recycling Initiatives (e.g Repair Hub)
- Community Composting
- Water Conservation Projects (e.g Rainwater Harvesting)
- Community Gardens / Allotments
- Climate Resilience Projects (e.g Flood Prevention Measures)
- Mini Forests / Woodlands
- Green Roofs / Walls
- Ponds
- Seed Library
- Water Refill Stations
- Hedgerow Planting
- Toy/ Sport / Reusable Kits
- Orchards
- Wetland Management / Rainwater Gardens
- Swap Shops

Furthermore:

- a) Projects must take meaningful action to enhance their local environment through impactful, community-driven projects, collaborating with community stakeholders.
- b) Projects must comply with all statutory requirements in relation to planning, building regulations, Health and Safety, and Fire Codes etc., if applicable.
- c) Community groups must be able to demonstrate their ability to carry out the proposed works.

In developing projects, communities should also consider how their projects contribute to progress in relation to relevant [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) (UN SDG's).

Additional notes on biodiversity projects

Projects should consider how these components will be maintained into the future. All planting and biodiversity measures should be in line with the **All-Ireland Pollinator Plan**, see [here](#) and **Kilkenny County Councils Biodiversity Action Plan**, see [here](#)

d. Project Location / Ownership

It is essential that projects be available to and accessible by the community. Where a project proposed is in a building/space that is not in the ownership of the community group, the community/group must have a permissions letter from the owner of the building/space for a minimum of five years from the date of project completion. Groups may be asked to provide proof of ownership, lease or access agreements.

Facilities aided under this Scheme shall comply fully with all statutory and/or licensing requirements. In particular they shall comply with the provisions of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Acts, the Building Regulations 1997, the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work (Construction Regulations) 2006 and any amendments thereafter.

e. Insurance

The applicant/beneficiary shall agree to be responsible for any loss, damage or injury to persons or property arising out of the provision or use of the facility and shall affect and produce evidence of appropriate Employers Liability Insurance and Public Liability Insurance to limits specified by Kilkenny County Council. All grant-aided assets shall, where appropriate, be kept insured at all times against loss or damage by fire, storm or flooding. All compensation paid under such insurance shall be used to restore the property so damaged or lost, and any shortfall shall be made good by the beneficiary.

5. How to Apply

Interested community groups should contact the Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Team to discuss their project ideas. It is not mandatory that they do so however the Climate Team are there to offer guidance to groups developing their projects and completing their application form.

The application form will be available to download from KCC website or communities can request a copy of the application form from Kilkenny's Community Climate Action Officer,

Breda Maher. Completed application forms should then be issued with associated documentation via email / post, see [Section 4a](#)

Documents to submit with the application include:

- Governance Documents for the organisation; e.g terms of reference, constitution, AGM minutes, etc
- Quotes, see [Section 5,c](#) Procurement Guidelines
- Relevant Supporting Documents; e.g Biodiversity report, etc (this is not compulsory and should only be uploaded if relevant to the application)
- Partner(s) supporting letter(s) on headed paper (where applicable)
- Photographs of the location(s) where project is proposed

To contact members of the Climate Team for queries on this Fund please see details below:

Breda Maher

Claire Prendergast

Community Climate Action Officer

Climate Team

Email: breda.maher@kilkennycoco.ie

Email: claire.prendergast@kilkennycoco

056 7794523

056 77694112

Climate Action Office: climate@kilkennycoco.ie

Climate Phone No: 056 7794350

a. Application Form

To apply community groups must complete and return their application form and associated documentation on or before the specified closing date and time. The application form will be available to download from KCC website and can be completed and returned via email or post.

If a community wants to request a copy of the application they can contact Kilkenny County Council's Climate Action Team.

- Request Via Email: To request this application form please use email: climate@kilkennycoco.ie or breda.maher@kilkennycoco.ie
In your email please use the subject line **"LEAF Application Request [*Insert Community Name*]"**.
- Submission Via Email: To submit your completed hard copy application form please use email: breda.maher@kilkennycoco.ie / climate@kilkennycoco.ie
- In your email please use the subject line **"LEAF Application Submission FINAL [*Insert Community Name*]"**

- Submission Via Post: Send your application and associated relevant documentation to: Community Climate Action Officer, Breda Maher, Climate Action Team, Kilkenny County Council, Patrick's Court, Patrick's Street, Co.Kilkenny, R95 N28F

Applications will be accepted from **Tuesday 7th July to Tuesday 11th August 2026 at 16:00**

No applications will be considered after the deadline. Only one application per organisation may be submitted.

b. Project Costs

As part of the application community groups will need to prepare a budget detailing everything that they are requiring funding for to complete the project. To ensure an application represents value for money, quotes must be sought and must be submitted with the application. See [Section 5.c below](#) for details on procurement thresholds. Communities are also asked to consider green procurement (goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact) where possible. KCC must be satisfied that the application represents value for money and that the applicant has engaged with suppliers in developing their proposal.

When drawing up costs for large projects it is advised to include a contingency to address any unforeseen changes to costs or inflation.

When getting quotes from suppliers, groups should ensure that quotes will be valid for the period they are carrying out the work as there will be no avenues available to request additional funding after application.

This programme will operate on a vouched expenditure basis, i.e invoices and receipts will be required for expenditure. For communities claiming vouched expenditure they will need to include all relevant documentation to this, to ensure they are included in the drawdown request. There is a provision in the Programme for quarterly drawdown of expenditure. Further details on this process will be provided to successful applicants at Letter of Offer stage.

The beneficiary must get planning permission, a fire safety certificate and commencement notice, if required. Any costs associated with these will be borne by the beneficiary.

c. Procurement Guidelines

Those who are approved for funding in the Programme, will need to comply with Public Procurement guidelines in relation to the purchase of all goods/services when carrying out the project. Below are the [National Procurement Thresholds](#). Note threshold amounts are exclusive of VAT.

Threshold Amounts (ex VAT)	Works (e.g supply and fit)
< €1,000	1 Verbal Quote

€1,000 - €200,000*	Direct Invitation. 5 quotes to be sought in writing by email/ post from interested and competent companies.
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Threshold Amounts (ex VAT)	Supplies or General Services
< €1,000	1 Verbal Quote
€1,000 - €50,000*	Direct Invitation. 3 quotes to be sought in writing by email/post from interested and competent suppliers/service providers.
€50,000 and above*	Must Publish Contract Notice on eTenders

* Local Environment Action Fund, max €15,000

6. Evaluation of Projects

All of the completed application forms received by KCC on or before the specified closing date and time of this programme will be reviewed by KCC. These will undergo a preliminary examination to confirm that all relevant documentation is supplied. Only applications that are fully completed with the necessary supporting documentation will be considered for funding and proceed to selection.

The selection of projects is a competitive process, applications will be evaluated by an Evaluation Panel to ensure they align with the objectives and eligibility of this Programme and will be marked against the [Evaluation Criteria](#).

a. Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria for Strand 1		Maximum Score
Relevance to Climate Action / Environmental Enhancement Goals	Project has an obvious direct climate action impact (real change, impactful, sustainable)	11
	Contribution to biodiversity and environmental enhancement	10
	Alignment with Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan	7
	Alignment with Kilkenny County Council Biodiversity Action Plan	7
	Alignment with SDG's (Sustainable Development Goals)	5
	Subtotal:	40
Community Engagement & Impact	Project has a lasting impact	8
	Level of community engagement and participation in the project (partnership & volunteerism)	8
	Demonstrated benefit to the local community	4

	Subtotal:	20
Feasibility & Sustainability	Plans for ongoing maintenance or long term sustainability	6
	Efficient use of resources (Investment v output)	6
	Evidence of value for money (Adequate quotations submitted)	4
	Rationale for choosing suppliers (Green Procurement, Local Suppliers, Service Provided, etc)	4
	Subtotal:	20
Innovation & Creativity	Reuse of materials (repair, reuse, repurposing of materials)	10
	Novel approaches to tackling environmental challenges	5
	Use of local knowledge and resources	5
	Subtotal:	20
TOTAL:		100

7. Project Timeline

Applications Open	07/07/2026
Applications Closed	11/08/2026
KCC issue Letter of Offer to successful projects and puts contracts/MoUs in place	18/08/2026
Projects in Delivery	Works Commencement Date 19/08/2026 Programme delivery period is 3 months
Projects Complete	19/11/2026
First Drawdown for Projects	19/10/2026
Final Drawdown	19/11/2026
Final Report	19/01/2027

There is 3 months, from the date of the Letter of Offer issued to communities, to deliver projects, where successful, all projects need to be fully delivered and drawdowns submitted 19th November 2026.

8. Successful Applications

Following approval, KCC 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 3 months from the Letter of Offer to complete their projects.

KCC 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 KCC.

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 IPB and/or KCC.
- The maintenance of separate accounting records for its projects.
- Vouched receipts, photographs of completed works, and other documentation as necessary may be sought by KCC
- Site Visits: KCC may carry out unannounced site visits to verify compliance with Programme terms and conditions.
- The contribution of the 'Government of Ireland', 'IPB Insurance' and 'Kilkenny County Council', must be acknowledged in publicity, promotions and signage, and other relevant matters as appropriate

9. Unsuccessful Projects

If an application is unsuccessful the Community Climate Action Officer will provide feedback to the applicants. In addition, the Community Climate Action Officer will continue to support the applicants with the view to improving their application should the applicants wish to re-submit should another phase of this Programme or similar open.

10. Data Privacy Statement

KCC collects some personal data during the application and processing of this programme. Please see KCC's Data Privacy Statement for information on this. KCC also has a detailed [Data Protection Policy](#) which goes into more detail on how we as a public body are committed to ensuring the security of any personal data you provide to us.