



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

Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



Tionscaldal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

Town and Village Renewal Scheme



Town and Village Renewal

2023 Scheme Outline

All queries should be emailed to: townandvillage@drcd.gov.ie

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Introduction

The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets the vision and strategy for the development of our country, balanced across all of our regions, towns and cities, out to the year 2040. The Department of Rural and Community Development strives to support vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities throughout Ireland and supports the NPF commitments through targeted policy and investment that empowers communities, supports sustainable rural regeneration and fosters regional growth.

“*Our Rural Future* - Ireland's Rural Development Policy 2021 – 2025”, commits to supporting a thriving rural Ireland which is integral to our national economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing and development. This includes regenerating rural towns and villages, and enhancing the vibrancy of rural places. It aims to enable people to live and work in a high quality environment.

The *Town Centre First* policy further aims to give our towns the tools and resources they need to become more viable and attractive places in which to live, work, visit and run a business. It contains a range of actions and direct supports designed to enhance the social and economic revival of towns, as well as addressing challenges like vacancy and dereliction. The actions also support the protection of our environment, as well as the heritage and culture of our towns.

Funded under Project Ireland 2040, the Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS) is a key measure directly supporting the objectives of *Our Rural Future* and the *Town Centre First* (TCF) Policy. The Scheme which was introduced in 2016, is part of a suite of measures designed to rejuvenate rural towns and villages throughout Ireland.

The 2023 TVRS is designed to support the revitalisation of rural Ireland through a renewed focus on town centre economic and social recovery and regeneration. This will be achieved through projects focusing on **town centre regeneration**, enhancing our **Streetscapes** and bringing **vacant and derelict buildings** back into use as community multi-purpose spaces through refurbishment and renovation.

This year the scheme will also include a focus on **Town or Village Centre Markets** (e.g. Farmers Markets, Open-Air Markets, Local Trader Markets, Artisan Markets or similar) in alignment with the Programme for Government. This will be achieved through the provision of infrastructure to support the facilitation of these outdoor markets (e.g. public realm works, service provisions, canopies etc.). The tourism potential of such markets has gained recognition from regional experiences for tourists; and regional promotions and branding as a tourist attraction in towns and villages. Markets must be built on ethical and sustainability principles to ensure longevity and must be developed with high visibility and improved public realm which will attract a high level of footfall.

The Scheme is administered through local authorities, who work closely with local communities and businesses to develop place-based proposals that can make a lasting impact in revitalising rural towns and villages across the country.

1 Overview of the 2023 Scheme

The Department, through the *Our Rural Future*, *Town Centre First* and *Our Living Islands* policies recognise the importance of creating and maintaining vibrant rural towns and villages, and we will continue to achieve this by delivering a wide range of strategic interventions and investments throughout the country.

Since the launch of the Town and Village Renewal Scheme in 2016, more than €154 million has been allocated to more than 1,700 projects across Ireland. The Scheme has supported towns and villages the length and breadth of the country.

In 2022, over €29m was allocated to various strands of the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, to support a wide range of projects across rural Ireland.

In March 2023, a €13 million fund was made available for the Building Acquisition Measure to tackle vacancy and dereliction in rural Ireland.

An indicative fund of €15 million is now available under the 2023 TVRS to support small to medium capital projects which enhance the environment of town or village centres and support economic and social vibrancy. Grant funding for projects will range from €20,000 to €500,000.

The 2023 Scheme is designed to support the revitalisation of rural Ireland through a renewed focus on town centre regeneration and enhancing economic and social vibrancy in line with the Town Centre First policy.

This will be achieved through:

- Town Regeneration projects
- Enhancing our streetscapes
- Green spaces / recreational amenities in town or village centres
- Refurbishment of existing community centres
- A new option to allow local authorities to acquire plots of land to enable development of town regeneration, such as town parks, plazas, etc.
- Bringing vacant and derelict buildings/ back into use as multi-purpose or community spaces
- Projects to support town or village centre markets, e.g. farmers markets or artisan markets.
- Town/village centre plaza development

The 2023 Scheme will place particular emphasis on projects that bring economic and social vibrancy to town centres and help bring vacant and derelict buildings and sites back into use as community or multi-purpose spaces in line with the objectives of “*Our Rural Future – Ireland’s Rural Development Policy 2021-2025*” and the Town and Village Scheme will support these objectives and will to encourage more people to return confidently to town and village centres to work, shop and socialise.

Project Development and Planning

In line with the Government's *Our Rural Future* and *Town Centre First* policies, strong focus has been given to town centre revitalisation and regeneration under the TVRS 2023. To complement and enhance this a separate funding strand of *Town Centre First* related supports is currently being developed. This will replace previous supports available for the development of Town Plans of various types and Project Development support offered under the 2021 and 2022 TVRS. The aim of this approach is to ensure communities are afforded clear support in developing high quality projects and proposals in line with the *Town Centre First* approach. It is proposed to launch this package of support in the coming months and it is envisaged that it will lead to strong project cohesion across the funding streams available under the Rural Development Investment Programme.

2 Grant Level Available

The indicative budget for the Town and Village Renewal Scheme in 2023 is €15 million.

- The minimum grant available is €20,000.
- The maximum level of grant available for 2023 will remain at €500,000 in respect of **one** application from each local authority, in order to align the scheme with the type of projects and level of ambition identified in *Our Rural Future*. It is envisaged such projects will generate significant positive impacts.
- A maximum of €250,000 will apply in respect of a further **4** applications.
- **One additional application** will be accepted from each local authority **with inhabited offshore islands**, for one large scale project of up to €250,000.

The maximum grant level has been set at 90% of the total cost of a project under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. The remaining 10% match funding must be contributed by the Local Authority and/or the community and/or Philanthropic contributions.

Funds secured from existing Department of Rural and Community Development schemes or programmes or other public funding streams are **not eligible** to be used as matched funding.

Specific Provision to support the North-Western Region

In recognition of the classification by the EU Commission of the North-Western region as a Transition Region and with a view to proactively address regional disparities, **grant aid of 95%** of the total project cost will exceptionally apply to counties in the N-W region. The remaining 5% match funding must take the form of a cash contribution and can be contributed by the Local Authority and/or the community and/or Philanthropic contributions. Funds secured from existing Department of Rural and Community Development schemes or programmes or other public funding streams are **not eligible** to be used as matched funding.

Counties in the North West Transition Region are:

Donegal

Cavan

Sligo

Mayo

Roscommon

Galway

Leitrim

Monaghan

3 Categories of Towns

The 2023 scheme will be targeted at three categories of Towns/Villages as follows:

Category 1: Towns and villages with a population of up to 5,000 people.

Category 2: Towns with a population of 5,001 to 10,000 people.

Category 3: Larger towns with a population of up to 15,000 people may be eligible where the application is of a high quality and outlines a strong need for the investment, good value for money and positive outcomes that will have a substantial impact on the town.

In addition, inhabited offshore islands are deemed to be eligible and are actively encouraged to apply.

The primary focus of the scheme will be on villages and towns with a population of up to 5,000 (Category 1). These towns/villages will receive at least 60% of funding available.

For the purposes of the 2023 Town and Village Renewal Scheme, a village is defined as a small settlement of houses, smaller in size than a town, clustered around at least one central point of interest such as a school, church, shop, pub, community centre etc.

In line with *Our Living Islands*, the Government's national islands policy and as set out in *Our Rural Future*, we will continue to support our inhabited offshore islands under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme in 2023. Inhabited offshore islands are explicitly eligible to apply under the Scheme and are actively encouraged to do so. This will support sustainable and vibrant communities, and also provide visitors an opportunity to experience and appreciate the unique culture, heritage and environmental richness the islands have to offer.

Counties with Eligible Inhabited Offshore Islands

- Donegal
- Sligo
- Mayo
- Galway
- Cork

4 Application, Assessment and Approval Process

The Town and Village Renewal Scheme is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and administered through the Local Authorities.

The selection of projects under the Scheme for 2023 will be by means of a competitive process. When selecting the successful projects, in line with the Public Spending Code, **the Department will give consideration to the past performance of the Local Authority in delivering previous projects under the scheme.** Excessive delays in project delivery, may lead to a reduction in the number of projects approved in a county under the 2023 Scheme.

Final project selection will be made by the Department on the basis of proposals submitted by the Local Authorities.

Local Authorities will be required to submit:

- An Individual Application form for each project.
- An Application Overview sheet listing all applications.
- An Expression of Interest Overview sheet (listing all EOI's received by the LA).
- Financial Analysis appropriate to the scale of the project.
- Additional information on remote working / training / enterprise hubs (where applicable)
- Additional information on community centre renovation works (where applicable)

Applications must be submitted by close of business on 10th November 2023

The following conditions apply to the application process:

- Local Authorities will be required to **advertise for expressions of interest from towns/villages in their area** and to select up to 5 proposals for development into detailed applications to be submitted to the Department. Exceptions apply:
 - 6 proposals where an inhabited offshore island applies
- **The development of these proposals must be undertaken in consultation with local town/village community and business interests.** Full involvement by community interests and/or business interests will be an essential feature of successful projects. Projects should have been identified as part of a Town Centre First plan, strategic / statutory plan, County Development Plan, Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) or similar, produced for the town or village.

- Only one application can be submitted in respect of any individual town/village, including towns that may be under the remit of more than one Local Authority. Also note, an individual application may include several linked components to support the rejuvenation of the town/village.
- Where a project application in respect of a town/village is submitted for funding under this Scheme and is also the subject of a Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) application, the Local Authority is required to explain the rationale for submitting the application to the Town and Village Renewal Scheme and how this links with the RRDF application.
- The assessment and approval of all projects will have regard to a number of factors including: alignment with ***Our Rural Future***, *Town Centre First* plans, other Department priorities; available funding; the range, mix, quality and impact of proposed projects; past project delivery performance of local authorities; previous funding provided; and other relevant considerations.
- Projects that include nature based solutions or contain a strong sustainability focus will be given additional examination and may be considered more favourably.
- A focus on accessibility for all and inclusivity should be to the fore when developing project proposals for the community.
- Appropriate assessments, feasibility studies and planning permissions (if required) **must** be in place prior to the submission of a project application. Where this has not taken place, it is recommended that the application is retained for future years or an application be submitted to fund the development of the project. This should assist Local Authorities to develop a range of projects which might be subsequently progressed, subject to the availability of further funding.
- Only proposals that are capable of being delivered within a **12 - 18 month timeframe** should be submitted.
- An **exception** will be made for proposals received for **Ireland's inhabited offshore islands and for the larger scale project proposals (i.e. €500k)**, allowing a **timescale of up to 24 months for delivery** of the project. This is in recognition of the possible difficulties with project delivery due to reduced infrastructure and transportation for projects on inhabited offshore islands, and the complexity of delivery of larger-scale projects.

5 Types of Activities Supported

Under the 2023 Scheme, a minimum of **one** application must be submitted from Towns/Villages that have not previously been approved for funding under the Scheme in the last 3 years. Proposals in respect of towns or villages that have not previously applied, or have not been successful under the scheme, will also be prioritised by the Department where possible, subject to the overall quality of the project. Projects must demonstrate close collaboration between communities and business interests in the design and delivery of proposed projects, and must have the support of the Local Authority.

The increase in the scale of projects to be funded will remain again this year, with applications seeking up to €500,000 permitted.

The following indicative list of activities (not exhaustive) will be eligible for funding under the 2023 Scheme.

- Regeneration projects that assist in revitalising our rural towns and villages, in line with the *Town Centre First* Policy, through planned and sustainable regeneration and development projects that will drive greater economic activity and footfall, address vacancy and dereliction and ensure the re-use of heritage and other existing buildings; these projects should be identified in *Town Centre First* Plans, town and village masterplans (or similar) developed in collaboration with the local community, businesses and the other relevant stakeholders in the town or village.

(Footpath development/improvement projects or similar will not be supported as these can be financed by Local Authorities directly or through the Active Travel Investment Programme.)

- In recognition of the need for outdoor community spaces one application may be used for the acquisition of land in town centres which supports Local Authorities for the development of town regeneration / community focused projects (to include possibly town parks / plazas, the development of surrounding properties already in Local Authority ownership etc). This is a new option introduced under the 2023 TVRS. **Note:** if applying for land acquisition the local authority should confirm that acquisition of this land under TVRS does not impact upon potential use of this land for housing purposes etc.
- Renovation or refurbishment to existing community centres (where there is a clearly identified need / rationale) (additional questionnaire applies)
(Funding for new build community centres is available under an integrated programme of supports for the development and refurbishment of community centres across other schemes within the Rural Development Investment Programme.)
- Projects to support vibrant and sustainable island communities on Ireland's inhabited offshore islands.
(Donegal, Sligo, Mayo, Galway, Cork)

- Projects to support the establishment of town or village centre markets (e.g. farmers markets, open-air markets, local trader markets, artisan markets or similar) – i.e. ground works, provision of stalls, equipment, and services provision. Markets must be built on ethical and sustainability principles to ensure longevity and must be developed with high visibility and improved public realm which will attract a high level of footfall.
- Projects to develop town / village centre plazas, public outdoor dining spaces, parks, green spaces (including allotments and community gardens) and recreational spaces/amenities (to include outdoor sports facilities such as skate parks, basketball courts, tennis courts, etc.) in town centres to make them vibrant hubs for community enjoyment, and to increase footfall for local businesses. Only applications for funding for public or community owned or leased properties and/or lands will be considered. Projects must be located in the town or village centre.

(Please note, leases for all projects must be in place for a minimum of 15 years – see Funding Conditions below)

- Projects to support the upgrade and enhancement of shopfronts and street facades (including murals) in towns and villages. Local authorities are encouraged to engage with local business and property owners to examine how group projects can add colour and vibrancy to main streets.
- Projects that bring vacant and derelict buildings and sites back into use as multi-purpose spaces. This can include **both the purchase and renovation** of vacant and derelict buildings. This includes former state owned property that is no longer being used and is made available to the community. Multi-purpose use includes enterprise spaces, arts, tourism, youth hubs and other community uses.
- Projects that bring vacant properties in Town Centres back into use as Remote Working Hubs. Successful applicants who receive funding for remote working facilities will be required to commit to a three year membership of the National Hub Network.

N.B. If you intend to apply for funding to establish a hub (see Appendix 1 for hub classification guide) you will be required to clearly demonstrate that there is a demand for such a facility and that clear additionality will be delivered taking account of the significant level of public investment in this area to date. Any such applications will be required to provide information in relation to this. This is designed to ensure that there is a sound business case for a new hub.

- Marketing campaigns targeted at attracting remote workers and mobile talent to their county/region; and promotion of specific town/villages to attract new customers and/or business investment.
- Projects that support and enhance the night-time economy in line with emerging recommendations from the Night-Time Economy Taskforce.
- Enhancement of heritage assets (e.g. local museums/tourism attractions focused on historical aspects of the area, heritage sites/buildings, etc.) located in towns and villages, including energy efficiency measures.

6 Types of activities not supported

The following activities and project applications will not be supported.

Indicative list of ineligible projects (not exhaustive):

- Where the Local Authority does not have the appropriate planning permission or other permissions / leases necessary for the successful delivery of the project. A proposal should not be submitted if the Local Authority anticipates that there will be delays in securing the relevant permissions / lease / planning.
- Footpaths and cycle routes in towns and villages are not eligible under the 2023 Town and Village Renewal Scheme
- Projects that are not located within the immediate vicinity of a rural town or village. (Note exception for islands, which are deemed to be eligible given their specific circumstances.)
- Support for a single private enterprise – projects that collectively assist private enterprises within a town or village are acceptable.
- Incomplete projects - phases of projects are acceptable, however a project must be stand-alone and operable in its own right to be deemed eligible as a 'phase' of another project.
- Ongoing operational costs.
- New build community centres and sports clubs. Note: Funding for new build community centres is available under an integrated programme of supports for the development and refurbishment of community centres across other schemes within the Rural Development Investment Programme.
- Projects that cannot demonstrate that a consultative process has been undertaken to ascertain the views of local community and businesses.
- Projects that are more appropriate for funding under CLÁR, the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS), the Outdoor Rural Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) or Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF.)
- Funding for development of Town Centre First Plans. Funding for such plans will be separately available under the *Town Centre First Policy*.

7 Grant Level and Application Details

The indicative budget for the 2023 Town and Village Renewal Scheme is €15 million. The maximum grant level for the main scheme has been set at 90% of the total cost of a project. The remaining 10% match funding must be contributed by the Local Authority and/or the community and/or Philanthropic contributions.

For counties in the North West Transition Region grant aid of 95% of the total project cost will apply. The remaining 5% match funding must take the form of a cash contribution and can be contributed by the Local Authority and/or the community and/or Philanthropic contributions.

Funds secured from existing Department of Rural and Community Development schemes or programmes or other public funding streams are **not eligible** to be used as matched funding.

Number of Applications

Local Authorities are invited to submit up to **5 applications** up to the value of €1.5m per local authority (6 applications where inhabited offshore island applies, up to €1.75 million per authority) under the 2023 Scheme as follows:

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| i. | 4 applications* | funding €20,000 to €250,000 |
| ii. | 1 application | funding €20,000 to €500,000 |

* An additional application can be submitted where a Local Authority has an inhabited offshore island therefore up to 6 applications in total will be accepted from these Local Authorities.

Under the 2023 Scheme, on grounds of equity and to ensure a fair spread of investment, a minimum of 1 application must originate from Towns/Villages that have not previously been approved for funding under the last 3 years of the scheme.

Proposals in respect of towns or villages that have not previously applied, not applied in the last 3 years, or have not been successful under the scheme, will be prioritised by the Department where possible, subject to the overall quality of the project.

All projects funded must be in a position to **commence as soon as approval is granted** and must be capable of being delivered in a realistic timeframe i.e. within a 12 to 18 month period, or up to 24 months on the islands or for the €500k projects.

8 Local Authority Costs

The default position is that works undertaken will be subject to a separate competitive tender process or involve drawdown of a contract under an existing framework agreement. The procurement process should be in line with EU Public Procurements Requirements (EU Directive 2014/24) and National Procurement Guidelines published by the Office of Government Procurement.

Project Delivery Costs

Where services or works are proposed to be undertaken in-house by the Local Authority, a breakdown of these costs must be included in the application form and a rationale provided for same. Where Local Authority staff costs are included, they must be proportionate to the overall cost of the project and identified at application stage. Only salary costs in respect of time spent directly on the project shall be deemed eligible. The proposed level of Local Authority costs will be assessed at application stage and the Local Authority may be requested to reduce such costs if deemed to be excessive.

In addition, the reasonableness of the cost must be verified by the Local Authority i.e. the Local Authority must have evidence on the project file that the cost charged is in line with, or less than, the cost of engaging an external contractor. This evidence will be reviewed at project inspection stage. Failure to have this on file could deem the amount charged ineligible.

Administration / Technical Fees

Up to a maximum of 10% of the project grant allocation is allowable for Local Authority salary costs related to the administration of the project and/or technical fees. This 10% is contingent on the full delivery and completion of the scheme works within the advised timeframes and in line with this Measure Outline.

9 Funding Conditions

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

All expenditure under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme is subject to the terms of the Public Spending Code <http://publicspendingcode.per.gov.ie/>. The following requirements are also applicable;

Requirements

- 1 Projects will be expected to commence and be completed in line with the timelines set out in the relevant Scheme Outline.
- 2 Any project that has not commenced by the agreed completion date will automatically be de-committed, unless there has been ongoing engagement with the Department in relation to compelling reasons for the delay.
- 3 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.
- 4 The grant funding for the approved project will be provided from the Department'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.
- 5 A match funding contribution as set out in the relevant Scheme Outline is required. A minimum cash contribution of 10% is required, or as detailed above 5% is required for the NW counties. The grantee will be required to provide confirmation that the cash contribution is in place and retain a record of the source of the cash contribution.
- 6 Funds secured from existing Department of Rural and Community Development schemes or programmes are not eligible to be used as matched funding. Funding secured from other Government or public sources are also ineligible.
- 7 Town and Village Renewal Scheme projects must not be co-funded using other Department, Government, or public monies.
- 8 Phased Payments: Funding may be drawn down in up to 3 phases. The minimum amount that can be drawn down at any time is 20% of project costs. Funding drawdown requests (Annex 4 Drawdown Request Form) must be signed by the Director of Services (DOS) or an authorised official who should copy the DOS when submitting a claim.
- 9 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. It is essential that any changes to the project

elements, or reallocation of funding between elements, must be advised and agreed with the Department in advance of the change being implemented; the Department will not retrospectively approve changes to projects.

- 10 Where retention applies the Department will retain a percentage portion of the grant payment, in line with the percentage cost withheld, until the retention period passes, a conditional extension will be granted in these cases. LAs may then drawdown the remaining grant amount once proof can be provided of final retention amount being paid over.
- 11 Where changes have been applied to an approved project without Departmental approval, the grant funding may be reduced to reflect the amended project.
- 12 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 from date of project completion.
- 13 In the case of funding allocated to enterprises or facilities (i.e. community centre, hubs), 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.
- 14 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.
- 15 It is a matter for the local authority to determine if grant recipients are VAT registered, and if so, the VAT amount is not to be claimed as a project cost at drawdown.
- 16 Full and accurate documentation to support all expenditure should be maintained in the project file and accessible by Department officials for audit purposes at all times, for a period of six years from the date of completion of the project.
- 17 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. Costs for signage to be included in project costings at application stage.
- 18 Grantees will provide any reports and information relating to the project as may reasonably be requested by the Department from time to time. Progress reports should be submitted to the Department at: 9 months, 12 months, and 15 months from project approval, or, as and when requested by the Department.
- 19 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.

- 20 Grantees 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.
- 21 A checklist confirming compliance with funding conditions relating to the grant aid will be required upon project completion.
- 22 The Minister for Rural and Community Development retains the right to launch/open projects supported under the TVRS. The Department should be notified a minimum of six weeks in advance of the proposed date for such events.
- 23 Public Spending Code

All proposals must demonstrate detailed project costings and clear value for money. The complexity of the appraisal requirements and the methods used will depend on the size and nature of the project and should be proportionate to its scale. Further guidance is set out for information of applicants in the Public Spending Code. In particular please note the recently published [DPER Circular 06/2023](#).

It is a requirement of the Public Spending Code that every spending proposal must include a Financial Analysis with the level of detail proportionate to the level of expenditure involved.

You must detail your financial analysis for the project on one of the templates provided by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

21 Tendering

All procurement processes must be in line with EU Public Procurements Requirements (EU Directive 2014/24) and national procurement guidelines published by the Office of Government Procurement. Please refer to www.etenders.gov.ie and www.constructionprocurement.gov.ie for more details. In particular please note the recently published DPER Circular 05/2023: Initiatives to assist SMEs in Public Procurement (28th March 2023).

10 Scoring Framework

Note: All project proposals must be supported by a fully completed Application Form. Only applications submitted by the Local Authority will be considered.

Applications must be shovel ready with planning permission and all other necessary permissions in place.

Local authorities who have demonstrated a strong track record of delivery under DRCD schemes will be prioritised for funding. Similarly, local authorities with a significant levels of delays in the delivery of projects on hand may not be successful in securing funding.

The scoring framework below will be applied to all applications in order to ensure that successful projects are of a high quality.

Additional weighting will be given to projects that stem from or are aligned with a *Town Centre First* Plan from the first phase TCF Plan Initiative. (See Appendix 2 for list of TCF plan Towns)

Closing date for receipt of main scheme applications to townandvillage@drcd.gov.ie is by close of business on **10th November 2023**

Selection Criteria	Explanation
Meeting the Scheme Objectives and Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the proposal in line with the objectives of the Scheme?• Will the proposal have a positive impact on the town/village?• To what extent will the proposal support the objectives outlined in the Scheme Outline?• Will the proposal have a positive impact in terms of place making and town centre regeneration?• Will the project encourage additional footfall and attraction to the town centre?• Does the project address the issue of vacant/derelict buildings in towns and villages?• Does the proposal create remote working opportunities?• Does the proposal support active and vibrant town and village centres?• Is the proposal in line the objectives under the <i>Our Rural Future</i> and <i>Town Centre First</i> policies?• Are planning permissions / appropriate assessments in place?• Is this project for a town that has not previously been funded?
Demonstration of Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the applicant identify a clear need and rationale for the proposal?

Selection Criteria	Explanation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposal outlined address this need and to what extent? • Does the proposal include details on the public consultation to identify the need and support the rationale for the proposal? • Does the applicant explain why the funding is needed under this Scheme i.e. demonstrate that there are no other suitable sources of funding for this proposal. • Does the proposal build on any previous planning undertaken for the town – for example, does it draw on previously funded Town Centre First Plans, Town Health Checks, or Project Development Measures funded under TVRS in 2021 or 2022?
Value for Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the costings for the proposal clear and realistic? • Are the costings clearly explained and justified? • Has the applicant clearly justified the level of investment requested? • Is this project sustainable i.e. will this proposal continue to have an impact beyond the funding period in the town and village? • Overall does the proposal represent value for money?
Quality and Achievability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the proposal coherent and clearly set out in the application form? • Is the proposal realistic and achievable within the timeframes of the Scheme? • Has the project clear defined outputs and outcomes? • Are the outputs and outcomes clearly measurable?

Appendix 1 – Hub Classification Guide

Enterprise Hub

Local enterprise driver providing space, facilities and services for start-up, HPSU's, remote workers. Hosting events and acting as a connector for entrepreneur networks.

Scaling Hub

A step up from a general enterprise hub with strong focus on post start-up clients being supported through scaling and investment stages. High level services for acceleration and export development. Global entrepreneurship events and programmes.

R&D Hub

Specialist Hub usually attached to HEI with focus on clients in early stages of R&D of new products and services. Provides office or desk space and access to meeting rooms, laboratories etc. A full time manager and other staff are employed to support business development through incubation and acceleration.

Co-working Hub

Provides clients with private offices or desks with access to meeting rooms and event space. Offers clients plug & play facilities but not business support. Often co-located with other facilities and shared management.

Community & Enterprise Hub

A centre whose primary focus is to provide community services and has office space, dedicated and/or hot-desks as well as meeting rooms available to clients. The business facilities will complement the community services and provide an income for the community. These hubs are generally run by volunteers with or without the support of Community Employment staff.

Appendix 2 – Town Centre First Plan Towns

Local Authority	TCF Plan Towns - Phase 1
Carlow	Tullow
Cavan	Baileborough
Clare	Sixmilebridge
Cork	Skibereen
Donegal	Milford
Fingal	Lusk
Galway	Gort
Kerry	Milltown
Kildare	Clane
Kilkenny	Urlingford
Laois	Rathdowney
Leitrim	Carrick-on-Shannon
Limerick	Abbeyfeale
Longford	Longford Town
Louth	Dunleer
Mayo	Killala
Meath	Enfield
Monaghan	Carrickmacross
Offaly	Clara
Roscommon	Strokestown
Sligo	Tubbercurry
Tipperary	Roscrea
Waterford	Portlaw
Westmeath	Moate
Wexford	New Ross
Wicklow	Blessington