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**Slieve Divena Wind Farm Community Funds**HOW – TO APPLY GUIDE

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 **ABOUT OUR FUNDS**

**Slieve Divena Wind Farm Community Fund** was established by Greencoat with the intention of helping the communities neighbouring the wind farm to become more sustainable through the support of positive local initiatives and activities. The Fund seek to address current and emerging issues, needs and opportunities within communities, enriching lives and creating brighter possibilities for local residents.

The maximum award value is £3000 with the minimum value being £500. The suggested award value is neither a minimum nor a maximum, rather an indication of the scale of resources available annually.

The fund will prioritise applications from local community groups and organisations from within the area of benefit. However, applications from outside this area may be considered if a project directly addresses a current or prospective need / issue / opportunity of the communities nearest the wind farm.

**THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

* WHO CAN APPLY

Typically, the funds are available to community and voluntary organisations for projects, which are in the vicinity of one of our wind farms. These include, but are not limited to;

* + Registered Charities
	+ Community/Voluntary Groups
	+ Sports, and Recreation Clubs
	+ Primary schools

In order to apply these organisations must have:

* + A constitution
	+ A bank or building society account in the name of the organisation/group
	+ Charitable aims
	+ A management committee or board
* WHO CANNOT APPLY

The funds are not available to:

* + Individuals
	+ Private - Sector Organisations
	+ Organisations with that restrictive ‘members only’ conditions to access
	+ Applications on behalf of other organisations or in the name of a professional fundraiser
* WHAT WE CAN SUPPORT

We support projects which focus on the following themes;

* Education and skills.
* Health, safety and wellbeing.
* Environment and habitat conservation.
* Energy efficiency and sustainability.
* Culture and heritage.
* Recreation, sport and social inclusion.
* WHAT WE CANNOT SUPPORT

We cannot support projects;

* + Where work has commenced on a project prior to application submission
	+ Which directly replace statutory activities / funding
	+ Which do not directly benefit the local community, and are not deemed as ‘not-for-profit’
	+ Which provide unnecessary duplicate activities / services / infrastructure within the community
	+ Which impact upon, or adversely affect the sustainability of an existing facility or service that may be located and / or operating elsewhere in the area of benefit
	+ Where duplicate funding from other sources exists, however matched funding is welcomed
	+ Which conflict with or adversely affect the aim, objectives or policy of Infinis or any other associated company
	+ Which directly promote / advance:
		- any particular religion / faith
		- any particular political party
		- any type of hunting / shooting
	+ Which seek to purchase / cover the cost of the following:
		- Salaries of core staff
		- Feasibility Studies
		- Musical Instruments
		- Retrospective funding where contracts have already been signed and/or orders placed before funding approval
		- Recoverable VAT costs
		- Fundraising campaign contributions or costs

**THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

In order to make an application to one of our Funds you will need to visit our website, and follow the steps to access our online application form.

* HOW TO COMPLETE THE APPLICATION FORM

As a general point, it is important that applications are presented as cohesive projects and that applicants avoid a “shopping list” approach. When completing your application form you will need to demonstrate:

* + Proximity of project to wind farm – Is your project located within 10km of Slieve Divena Wind Farm Community Fund area of benefit? What is the distance from the wind farm? The fund will prioritise applications from local community groups and organisations from within the area of benefit. However, applications from outside area of benefit may be deemed eligible if their project directly addresses a current or prospective need/ issue/ opportunity of the communities nearest the wind farm.
	+ Evidence of Group background and proven capacity – Please include a brief history of your group, aims etc. How many people are involved with the running of your group, including people who help out with fundraising or volunteering?
	+ Proof of quality works undertaken to date – Please include details of any other projects completed by your organisation to date?
	+ Evidence of a multi-sectoral, regional and social inclusion impact of your project - If the application relates to current community infrastructure / buildings, give a brief summary as to the groups that use the facility? Who will benefit from the project, do they live locally, or does the project have a more strategic focus? How does the project plan to include minority or disadvantaged groups?
	+ Evidence of project life span and levels of users – How do you know the project is needed? Have you done any research? Has the project been requested by users of your group? How many people currently use your services and how many are likely to use any new services? Are there any people that are excluded from using your services at present, and if so why?
	+ Quality of Proposal – You should ensure that your budget is realistic and that costings are as accurate as possible. It is helpful when the project is well summarised, as this information is essential to evaluate the impact of the work of the organisations and individuals it supports, and the difference it makes to communities.
* WHAT SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION IS NEEDED

You will need to submit the following with your application:

* A copy of your organisations bank, credit union or post office account statement
* A copy of your group constitution
* Map marked with project location
* Quotations are required to verify the value of each item you wish to purchase, as follows:

Up to £2,000 – 1 quote

Up to £3,000 – 2 quotes

* For works relating to renovation / construction / refurbishment:
* Permission to proceed from land owner
* Planning permission, or a letter of exemption from the relevant Local Authority
* WHAT HAPPENS ONCE YOUR APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED

Once you have submitted your application:

* You will receive an email to confirm receipt of your application.
* We will make checks to ensure the applicant organisation and project meets the funds eligibility and criteria.

Your project will then be assessed, during which time applicants may be contacted by Omagh Forum team as part of their assessment process to discuss the project and reserve the right to ask applicants to submit further information in support of their application.

 **THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

* HOW YOUR APPLICATION WILL BE ASSESSED

The decision to award a grant depends on the fund under which the application was submitted. In either circumstance, each project is judged under a common set of evaluation criteria:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Evaluation Criteria** | **Total Marks** | **Brief Description**  |
| **Project Life-Span and Levels of Users** | 30 marks | Where that project is likely to:* still be in place after 5 years will receive the highest scores between 20-30 marks e.g. Capital Investments in Infrastructure
* still be in place for a period of 3 to 5 years will receive scores between 15 and 22  marks e.g. IT Equipment, Machinery that is essential for a group to deliver a high value service for the community -  higher marks for those projects with education and capacity building impacts
* still be valuable for a period of 1-3 years will receive a score of between 10 and 18 marks e.g. materials, tools
* have a once off valuable impact for an area will receive between 5 and 12 marks – the higher score being applied where there are multiple positive impacts especially in terms of sustainable development and education.
 |
| **Extent to which projects contributes to the objectives of the Community Fund** | 20 marks | Projects which demonstrate a clear contribution to the stated aims of the Funds impact will receive between 10 & 20 marks. Projects with a lesser emphasis will receive between 0 & 10 marks. |
| **Projects with a broader multi-sectoral, regional & social inclusion impact**  | 15 marks | Projects that receive an investment where the applicant demonstrates:* broad multi-sectoral impact (5 marks)
* regional impact (5 marks)
* social inclusion impact (5 marks)
 |
| **Quality of Proposal and proof of quality works undertaken by applicant to date** | 15 marks | High quality proposals will receive between 10 & 15 marks. Those of a lesser quality, but still demonstrate a capacity to deliver, will receive between 5 & 10. |
| **Group background and proven capacity** | 10 marks | Projects from established groups with proven capacity will receive between 5 & 10 marks, newer groups with little or no track record & proof of capacity will receive between 0 & 5 marks. |
| **Proximity of project to windfarm** | 10 marks | Projects will be placed on a scale, those within 1km of the Wind Farm will receive 10 marks; within 7.5kms will receive 1 marks and projects located greater than 7.5kms will receive 0 marks. This is will evaluated with due regard to the area of benefit. |
| **Total** | 100 marks |  |

* WHEN, AND HOW WILL YOU BE NOTIFIED OF A DECISION

Applicants will be notified in writing of a decision being made within two months from the closing date of the funds.

* Successful applicants will receive a contract and provisional grant offer letter including payment form and guidelines.
* A letter/email will be send to Unsuccessful applicants.
* IS IT POSSIBLE TO APPEAL A DECISION

***Throughout the project evaluation process, care is taken to assess all applications against criteria in a consistent and equitable way. Applicants who do not agree with the outcome of the application process can write to Omagh Forum to request additional feedback on their application.*** *Although the decisions made by the Omagh Forum evaluation committee are final and not subject to appeal, such requests enable us to learn, and may inform future strategies.*

**THE GRANT OFFER**

* HOW TO ACCEPT A GRANT OFFER

In order to accept a grant offer all contracts must be signed and returned via post to Omagh Forum within 15 working days of receipt.

* WHAT ARE THE ASSOCIATED TERMS & CONDITIONS

There are a number of terms and conditions contained within the contract, which an applicant agrees to when they sign and return. Below are some examples of the terms and conditions, which may be contained in a contract:

* Funding must be exclusively for the purposes of implementing the project as stated in the application form. Funding for one project cannot be transferred to another project and / or activity.
* All Contracts contain a closing date after which time your grant offer will become void, generally this is four 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 Omagh Forum immediately.
* Every applicant in receipt of funding must inform Omagh Forum immediately of any change to their circumstances. Any change must be reviewed, acknowledged and agreed by Omagh Forum where a specific change to the use of the grant is requested.
* In relation to works of a construction / renovation nature, an engineer’s report must be furnished when applying for your grant drawdown certifying the value of the work undertaken and confirming the work conforms to relevant planning, building and fire regulations and other statutory building / other regulations
* Works completed and or goods purchased must be adequately insured and evidence of same must be available for inspection by funder.
* Where planning permission is required, the payment of grant aid is subject to submission of relevant documentation from the relevant Council.
* Please provide evidence that you have permission to undertake the works, this should either be specified in a lease or evidence of same provided in a separate document from the owner.
* It is important that the work of the wind farm fund, Infinis and/or associated companies are acknowledged in any published materials, which relate to the grant-funded project. Therefore, if an application is successful, organisations are required to:
	1. Acknowledge the contribution of the wind farm fund, Infinis and/or associated companies in any publicity they might produce and
	2. Allow and participate in any publicity that the wind farm fund, Infinis and/or associated companies might organise.

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

* WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU BREACH THESE TERMS & CONDITIONS

In the event that Omagh Forum considers an applicant has breached the terms and conditions, Omagh Forum reserve the right to withdraw the awarded grant and all funding being returned.

Additionally, no future applications for funding will be accepted from organisations / individuals for a minimum of two years. After this period, 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.

**THE GRANT CLAIM**

* HOW DO I CLAIM THE GRANT

**All grants from our funds are made retrospectively, as such; monies will only be made available to an organisation upon completion of the proposed project.** For grant aid to be paid out you must submit all the necessary documentation. Incomplete claims will result in delays processing your claim.

* **Name of grant recipient -** When processing your grant payment Omagh Forum will make the payment to the name of the group or company stated on the Offer Contract. All the documentation required, such as receipts, invoices, Tax Clearance Certificates, etc., must be in the same name.
* **Letter / email requesting payment of grant** - The letter / email should clearly state you now wish to draw down your grant. Please also outline any differences in your actual expenditure compared to what was proposed in your original application and quotations. A template letter will be provided.
* **Invoices & Receipts** - All expenditure you wish to claim grant aid for must have supporting, independent and original documentation proving purchase and payment. Please note, all invoices and receipts must be dated within the eligible dates. (I.e. expenditure is eligible from the date that Omagh Forum received the signed Contract from you and ceases on the closing date stated in that contract.) Any expenditure incurred outside these dates will not be eligible for grant aid. After you have gathered your invoices and receipts, please list them on the Grant Claim Form, which you must also sign.
* **Cheque Payments of Invoices** - Where a payment by cheque has been made, please submit your bank statement(s) supporting the cheque number(s) being cashed
* **Cash Payments of Invoices** – Applicants are advised to keep cash payments to a minimum.
* **Debit / credit payments, and Electronic Fund Transfer** - Please provide a print out of these transaction(s)
* **Independent validation** – Over the course of your application or as part of your Grant Offer Contract, you may have been asked to provide independent validation of work done. Examples include Engineer’s Reports, etc.
* **Evidence of works completed / good purchased** - For all works of a construction / renovation nature, please take photographs before and after the work has been completed and return to Omagh Forum with your claim documentation. Alternatively, you may email electronic copies of photographs to info@omaghforum.org, if the purchase of equipment has been grant aided, please provide serial numbers and photographs.

**THE FOLLOW – UP**

* MONITORING

Omagh Forum, Greencoat and / or any associated companies reserve the right to undertake monitoring visit(s) to any of the funded applicants. In order to see how a project is progressing, or the completed project in action. Where multi-year funding is agreed, an appropriate monitoring framework will be agreed and implemented.

* END OF PROJECT REPORT

The completion and return of an End of Project Report upon the completion of your project is an additional requirement of the terms and conditions set out in the contract. It helps us understand community need and helps to demonstrate the impact of the funding at community level. Failure to submit a satisfactory End of Project Report will be considered a breach of our Fund’s terms and condition and may also affect any future funding applications.

A template End of Project Report will be provided, however the length and content of such reports depend upon the scale of the funded project.

 **FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you need further information, please contact Omagh Forum via:

**Telephone:** 028 8225 1559
**E-mail:** info@omaghforum.org
**Post:** Omagh Forum for Rural Associations, Omagh Community House, 2, Drumragh Avenue, Omagh BT78 1DP
**Website:** [www.omaghforum.org](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5COwner%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CM9IZ8POB%5Cwww.omaghforum.org)