

Fisheries Local Action Groups  
Gníomhaíochta Iascaigh Áitiúla



European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund  
(EMFAF)

# FLAG Coastal Communities Development Scheme

## Guidelines for Applicants 2025



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag  
an Aontas Eorpach

Co-Funded by the  
European Union



## Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Applicable Geographic Areas.....	5
Eligible Beneficiaries - Who can apply for this Scheme.....	5
Amounts Grant Aided .....	5
Submission Deadline .....	5
Claim Deadline .....	6
Competitive call .....	6
<b>Application and Approval Process.....</b>	<b>7</b>
When will you hear from us.....	7
<b>Things to note before starting your application.....</b>	<b>9</b>
General guidance .....	9
Specific requirements per Beneficiary Type .....	9
Individual .....	9
SSCF Vessel Owner .....	9
Blue Economy Enterprise .....	10
Charity .....	10
Fisheries Co-operative or Collective .....	11
Community Group .....	12
<b>Standard Eligibility Checks.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Evaluation Scoring Criteria.....</b>	<b>12</b>
Privacy Note .....	14
Further Information/Clarifications.....	14

1

# Introduction



## Introduction

These Guidelines for Applicants for the FLAG Coastal Communities Development Scheme provide guidance on the application process and assessment criteria.

Applicants should also read the following three documents which can be found on the scheme page of [www.bim.ie](http://www.bim.ie):

- The Scheme Description, which lays out the background to the scheme, who can apply, what is funded, and the amounts granted.
- The Letter of Offer for grantees which sets out the conditions of the awarding of grant aid and the obligations for successful applicants in accepting the award.
- Fisheries Local Action Groups, Local Development Strategies.

## Applicable Geographic Areas

This scheme is intended to support development in coastal communities, therefore only projects located within 10km of the coast (high water mark) are eligible for funding under this scheme.

In exceptional circumstances enterprises or initiatives located further inland that have a direct impact on the coast may also be supported.

The LDS for each FLAG applies to a specific geographic area

Each FLAG may only consider applications from within the area covered by its LDS.

## Eligible Beneficiaries - Who can apply for this scheme

- Individuals
- Small Scale Coastal Fishing (SSCF) vessel owners
- Blue Economy Enterprises, micro or small, specifically:
  - Seafood enterprises
  - Niche coastal tourism enterprises
  - Marine sport and leisure enterprises
  - Marine industry enterprises.
- Charities
- Fisheries co-operatives or collectives
- Community groups

## Amounts Grant Aided

Grant rates and caps have been set by each FLAG Region, based on their local priorities.

Please click on link for FLAG Region Grant Aid Rates (Link to be inserted)



## **Submission Deadline**

The Scheme will be open for applications from **midday on 22nd April 2025** and the deadline for submission of applications is **23.59.59pm on 20th May 2025**.

All applications are to be made through BIM's grants management system.

## **Claim Deadline**

All projects must be completed with a claim submitted by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025.

## **Competitive call**

The call is competitive, meaning that all eligible applications will be scored and ranked and, in the case that the scheme is oversubscribed, funding will be allocated based on ranking.

There is no right of appeal in competitive calls, since all applications must progress through the eligibility, evaluation and approval processes within fixed deadlines. Applications are assessed on the basis of the information provided, so it is critical that applicants take the time to understand eligibility and evaluation criteria and provide the required information and evidence to support their application in line with these criteria. The selection process is designed with multiple review points by differing parties to check that due process was followed.

## Application and Approval Process

This flow shows the steps involved in getting from application preparation to receiving a Letter of Offer.



- Register on BIM's grants management system.
- Prepare your application by gathering all the required information, and entering it in BIM's grants management system. The system allows you to edit the form over time, and to add additional information as you gather it. When you have completed the form, you submit it to BIM through the system. After the submission of your application, changes or additions are no longer possible, unless the administrator requires you to make edits to the application form.
- BIM carries out a series of eligibility checks, to ensure that everything you have provided us with is compliant with scheme rules.
- All eligible applications are evaluated by sub-committees of FLAG Boards (Technical Evaluation and Investment Committee) and assigned a score.
- All applications meeting the minimum score are reviewed by the FLAG Board and either approved or rejected for funding.
- Letters of Offer will be issued by BIM to the highest-ranking projects approved by the FLAG Boards until the budget is fully used.

## When will you hear from us



1. When you submit your application, you will receive an automated email acknowledging receipt. If you do not receive this email, it is because the application has not been successfully submitted. Please check your spam folder in case the acknowledgement of receipt has been directed there. *Please note that an acknowledgement of receipt email is not a confirmation of grant aid. At this point the application is being processed only.* Your application will be assigned a unique reference number, and you will be notified of this in the acknowledgement email. The unique reference number should be used in any subsequent correspondence or enquiry with BIM.

**Any expenditure incurred *after* the date of this email but *before* a Letter of Offer would be considered eligible in any claim, but such expenditure is entirely at the applicant's risk since an offer of grant aid may not be made.**

2. All applicants will hear from us at the end of this stage, but some applicants may have their form returned if it is incorrect/incomplete:
  - i. You will hear from us if there is an issue with your application. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure a full and complete application is submitted. If, during eligibility checking, it is discovered that information is missing, or is incorrect, your application may, if time allows, be returned to you describing the issue(s). Given the tight timeline for processing grant applications in a competitive call, if a grant application form is returned to an applicant for correction(s) to be made to it, applicants will be given no more than **two (2) business days** to make the corrections and resubmit their grant application. If it is still incorrect or incomplete on resubmission it will be deemed ineligible.
  - ii. Once eligibility checks are completed all applicants will be updated as follows:
    - i. If our checks show that the application is not eligible for the scheme, or if we could not validate your eligibility based on the information provided, your application will be rejected, and the reason provided.
    - ii. If our checks show that the application is eligible for the scheme, an update will be provided informing you of any caps applied, any grant rate changes or any expenditure items deemed ineligible. *This email is not a confirmation of grant aid. It is simply an update to inform you what the potential offer of grant aid could be, should the application be approved, and rank highly enough to receive an offer.*
3. Following evaluation by the FLAG Boards, BIM will inform you of the FLAG Board's decision.
  - i. The highest ranked projects, which have been approved for funding will receive a Letter of Offer, until the budget allocation for 2025 has been used up.
  - ii. Applications which have not been approved for funding will be notified, explaining the FLAG Board's reason for not approving the project for funding.
  - iii. Applications which have been approved for funding, but which did not score highly enough to receive an offer based on available budget will be temporarily held on file. Should additional budget become available (e.g. if an offer is not accepted), the next highest-ranking projects will receive an offer. When it is clear that all available budget has been utilised, the remaining applications will receive a letter of rejection.

The more complete your application is when first submitted, the more likely it is to proceed smoothly through all stages with minimum delays. We encourage all applicants to take the time to fully understand the application form, and the evaluation criteria so that they submit a quality application.

# Things to note before starting your application

## General guidance

- Applicants are advised to check that their application includes all the relevant information, as it will be evaluated based on the submitted content.
- The primary communication method used in the administration of this scheme is email. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that BIM is on their safe list of contacts, and that they regularly check their email for any updates or deadline requirements.
- All applications must be made in €

## Specific requirements per Beneficiary Type

You will be asked to provide the following information with your application form. This list is provided here to help you gather all required information.

### Individual

- The only project type individuals may apply for is training.
- The application must be submitted before the training starts, and before any course fees are paid.
- Evidence of accreditation must be available by 31st December 2025.
- Travel and subsistence costs are not eligible for funding.

### Documentation required:

- Course quotes
- Proof of home address (a bank statement header or a utility bill such as electricity, gas, telephone, mobile phone, internet or TV in your name, showing your Eircode, and dated within the last 6 months) or proof of employment address (a letter from your employer on headed paper, dated within the last 6 months, providing confirmation of the Eircode of your usual place of employment, and specifically naming you as a current employee).

### SSCF Vessel Owner

- A higher grant rate is reserved for SSCF vessel owners, but only for SSCF projects related to the catch, product (value added) or vessel.
- A separate SSCF Scheme which is a dedicated scheme for SSCF vessels is currently available under the EMFAF and administered by BIM at <https://bim.ie/funding/small-scale-coastal-fisheries-scheme/>. Applicants are advised to review this scheme in the first instance. In addition, BIM runs a Fleet Safety Scheme <https://bim.ie/fisheries/funding/fleet-safety-scheme/>. Any expenditure items listed in those schemes will not be available for funding via

### FLAG's.

- To be eligible for the SSCF grant rate the vessel owner must not have a beneficial interest in any non-SSCF category vessel or enterprise.
- The vessel must be actively fishing, and this will be validated by data held by the SFPA:
  - Vessels less than 10m LOA: vessel has registered sales notes of at least €1,000 across the last two calendar years preceding the date of this application, Dates that will be checked for Fishing Activity 1-Jan-2023 and 31-Dec-2024 inclusive.

- Vessels between 10m and 12m LOA must show logbook fishing activity for at least 60 days across the two calendar years preceding the date of this application.
  - Dates that will be checked for Fishing Activity 1-Jan-2023 and 31-Dec-2024 inclusive.
  - It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure all SFPA records are up to date. (There will be no facility to recheck Fishing Activity)
- If an SSCF vessel owner does not meet the applicant or project criteria for the higher SSCF grant rate, they may still apply under this scheme, but as a Blue Economy Enterprise.

#### Documentation required:

- Supplier quotes for all expenditure items made out to the applicant enterprise. Click here for full [BIM Quote Guidelines](#)
- Evidence of matched funding clearly indicating how you plan to finance this project
- Proof of project address: Please provide a bank statement header or utility bill such as electricity, gas, telephone, mobile phone, internet, or TV in your organisations name ,dated within the last 6 months as proof of the project address. In the case of projects such as food truck, surfing school, etc. where utility bills may not be available other proofs such as website, brochure or social media accounts showing applicant presence in the area may suffice.
- Fishing vessel licence
- If the vessel is in joint ownership, a Joint Vessel Owner Authorisation form must be completed

#### Blue Economy Enterprise

- The applicant must be a Micro or Small enterprise, as per the [EU SME Definition](#):
  - Turnover and/or balance sheet <€10m
  - <50 FTE employees
  - Autonomous enterprise
- The applicant must be active in one of the following areas of the blue economy:
  - Seafood
  - Niche coastal tourism
  - Marine sport and leisure
  - Marine industry
- If the application is in support of a fishing vessel's operations, the vessel must be actively fishing, and this will be validated by data held by the SFPA:
  - Vessels less than 10m LOA: vessel has registered sales notes of at least €1,000 across the last two calendar years preceding the date of this application. Dates for checking Fishing Activity 1-Jan-2023 and 31-Dec-2024 inclusive.
  - Vessels over 10m LOA has must show logbook fishing activity for at least 60 days across the two calendar years preceding the date of this application, D ates for checking Fishing Activity 1-Jan-2023 and 31-Dec-2024 inclusive.
  - It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure all SFPA records are up to date. (There will be no facility to recheck Fishing Activity.)

#### Documentation required:

- Supplier quotes for all expenditure items made out to the applicant enterprise. Click here for full [BIM Quote Guidelines](#).
- Evidence of matched funding clearly indicating how you plan to finance this project



## Fisheries Co-operative or Collective

- A fisheries co-operative or collective means a formally constituted group which is recognised by the Implementing Authority (BIM).

### Documentation required:

- Supplier quotes for all expenditure items made out to the applicant enterprise. Click here for full [BIM Quote Guidelines](#)
- Evidence of matched funding clearly indicating how you plan to finance this project
- Proof of project address: Please provide a bank statement header or utility bill such as electricity, gas, telephone, mobile phone, internet, or TV in your organisations name **dated within the last 6 months** as proof of the project address. In the case of projects such as food truck, surfing school, etc. where utility bills may not be available other proofs such as website, brochure or social media accounts showing applicant presence in the area may suffice.

## Community Group

- The group must be registered with the Companies Registration Office.

## Documentation required:

- Supplier quotes for all expenditure items made out to the applicant enterprise. Click here for full [BIM Quote Guidelines](#)
- Evidence of matched funding clearly indicating how you plan to finance this project
- Proof of project address: Please provide a bank statement header or utility bill such as electricity, gas, telephone, mobile phone, internet, or TV in your organisations name dated within the last 6 months as proof of the project address. In the case of projects such as food truck, surfing school, etc. where utility bills may not be available other proofs such as website, brochure or social media accounts showing applicant presence in the area may suffice.

## Standard Eligibility Checks

BIM will check the evidence provided by the applicant to ensure that all eligibility criteria set out are met, and that all required documentation has been provided.

## FLAG Board Evaluation Scoring Criteria

Each application which passes eligibility is scored against 4 evaluation criteria.

- The maximum score on each criterion is 50, giving a total maximum score of 200.
- The pass score for each criterion is 30. If an application scores less than 30 points on any criterion it will not be recommended for funding, regardless of how high the scoring is on any other criterion.
- The overall pass score for an application is 120. If an application receives a total score of less than 120, it will not be recommended for funding.
- Each of the four scoring criteria has a related page on the application form.
- Each criteria has 3 sub-criteria, and you will see related questions on the application form.
- The answers you provide on the application form are what will be used to assign a score to each sub-criterion. It is important therefore that you take the time to understand the criteria laid out below, and your answers to the related questions.

### Scoring Criterion 1: Compatibility with and contribution to the Local Development Strategy (LDS)

Max 50 points, made up of the following 3 sub-criteria.

Relates to page 3 of the application form.

Evaluation Criteria	Description	Evaluation Guidance	Score Range (Points)	Max Score
Need for the project	Does the project target a specific need or address a specific gap in the market as identified in the LDS (Analysis of Development Needs and SWOT analysis in section 2 of LDS)	Poor demonstration of link to the LDS analysis	0-5	16
		Moderate demonstration of link to LDS analysis	6-11	
		Clear demonstration of link to LDS analysis	12-16	
Fit with Local Development Strategy	Does the project fit with the FLAG Region's Goals and Objectives (section 3 of LDS)	Poor link to the LDS actions	0-5	16
		Moderate link to the LDS actions	6-11	
		Clear link to the LDS actions	12-16	
Evidence of contribution to objectives, actions and targets in the LDS	Does this project maintain or create employment within 10km of the coastline, OR help an individual to obtain or maintain their job in the case of a training application	No/low level of job creation/maintenance for the level of investment sought	0-6	18
		Moderate level of job creation/maintenance for the level of investment sought	7-12	
		High level of job creation/maintenance for the level of investment sought	13-18	

## Scoring Criterion 2: Robustness of the proposed project, and applicant capacity

Max 50 points, made up of the following 3 sub-criteria

Relates to page 4 of the application form.

Evaluation Criteria	Description	Evaluation Guidance	Score Range (Points)	Max score
Likelihood of success in delivering outcomes and outputs	Does the organisation's history, financials and management team provide confidence that the project can be successfully executed? For Individuals applying for training, does their education and career history provide confidence that the training can be successfully completed?	No/low level of confidence	0-5	16
		Moderate level of confidence	6-11	
		High level of confidence	12-16	
Likelihood of completing the project with the timeframe	Are there realistic milestones in place to deliver the project and is the proposed timeline achievable?	No/little evidence of robust project planning	0-6	18
		Moderate evidence of robust project planning	7-12	
		Clear evidence of robust project planning	13-18	
Is there sufficient evidence that displacement will not occur? *This is not relevant for Individuals applying for training. 10 marks will be given to all such applicants.	Does the evidence provided show that the proposed project will provide product/service for which there is sufficient demand that is not being met by existing suppliers. Displacement occurs when FLAG funding allows an organisation to enter a market where demand is already being met by existing enterprises or where funding to existing enterprises gives them an unfair advantage.	No/poor quality market research provided	0-5	16
		Moderate market research provided	6-11	
		Clear evidence of sufficient demand provided	12-16	

### Scoring Criterion 3: Appropriateness of finance, cost effectiveness and value for money

Max 50 points, made up of the following 3 sub-criteria

Relates to page 5 of the application form.

Evaluation Criteria	Description	Evaluation Guidance	Score Range (Points)	Max Score
Finance	Has the applicant clearly indicated that finance is in place to complete this project if approval is awarded	Low level of confidence in the evidence of financing plans provided	0-8	16
		High level of confidence in the evidence of financing plans provided	9-16	
Funding and scale of project	Does the project demonstrate cost effectiveness? Are all the items requested necessary, and could the project be completed with less funding?	No/Poor evidence of the necessity of level of expenditure to achieve the project outcome	0-5	16
		Moderate evidence of the necessity of level of expenditure to achieve the project outcome	6-11	
		Clear evidence of the necessity of level of expenditure to achieve the project outcome	12-16	
Allocation of FLAG resources and value for money	Is the scale of the investment appropriate to the issues to be addressed. This criterion assesses the project from the point of view of "is this project the best use of FLAG funding to achieve the strategic priority the project addresses?"	No/Poor correlation between the level of funding and the issues addressed	0-6	18
		Moderate correlation between the level of funding and the issues addressed	7-12	
		Clear correlation between the level of funding and the issues addressed	13-18	



#### Scoring Criterion 4: Sustainability

Max 50 points, made up of the following 3 sub-criteria

Relates to page 6 of the application form.

Evaluation Criteria	Description	Evaluation Guidance	Score Range (Points)	Max Score
Economic sustainability	Can the enterprise/service continue to operate into the future without further funding	No/little evidence of long-term planning	0-5	16
		Moderate evidence of long-term planning	6-11	
		Clear evidence of long-term planning	12-16	
Social sustainability *This is not relevant for Individuals applying for training. 10 marks will be given to all such applicants.	What impact (positive or negative) does this project have on shared use of resources on any sector or socioeconomic community?	No/low evidence of stakeholder engagement	0-5	16
		Moderate evidence of stakeholder engagement	6-11	
		Clear evidence of stakeholder engagement	12-16	
Environmental sustainability *This is not relevant for Individuals applying for training. 10 marks will be given to all such applicants.	Has the applicant demonstrated an understanding of organisational responsibilities in achieving Climate Action Targets and any impact this may have on their project?	No/Poor demonstration of understanding of Climate Action Plan targets	0-6	18
		Moderate demonstration of understanding of Climate Action Plan targets	7-12	
		Clear demonstration of understanding of Climate Action Plan targets	13-18	

#### Scoring Criterion 4: Sustainability

Max 50 points, made up of the following 3 sub-criteria

Relates to page 6 of the application form.

Evaluation Criteria	Description	Evaluation Guidance	Score Range (Points)	Max Score
Economic sustainability	Can the enterprise/service continue to operate into the future without further funding	No/little evidence of long-term planning	0-5	16
		Moderate evidence of long-term planning	6-11	
		Clear evidence of long-term planning	12-16	
Social sustainability	What impact (positive or negative) does this	No/low evidence of stakeholder engagement	0-5	16

*This is not relevant for Individuals applying for training. 10 marks will be given to all such applicants.	project have on shared use of resources on any sector or socioeconomic community?	Moderate evidence of stakeholder engagement	6-11	
		Clear evidence of stakeholder engagement	12-16	
Environmental sustainability *This is not relevant for Individuals applying for training. 10 marks will be given to all such applicants.	Has the applicant demonstrated an understanding of organisational responsibilities in achieving Climate Action Targets and any impact this may have on their project?	No/Poor demonstration of understanding of Climate Action Plan targets	0-6	18
		Moderate demonstration of understanding of Climate Action Plan targets	7-12	
		Clear demonstration of understanding of Climate Action Plan targets	13-18	

## Offers/Rejections

Once the TEICs have scored all projects, the FLAG Boards meet and decide whether to approve or reject each application for funding. All approved applications will receive a ranking. Following the FLAG Boards' determination BIM will issue Letters of Rejection to all those rejected, and Letters of Offer to the highest ranking applications until all budget is used. Any remaining applications will temporarily be held on file until all offers are accepted. Should any offers not be accepted, the next highest ranking application(s) will receive an offer. When it is clear that all budget has been used, Letters of Rejection will be sent to the remaining applicants.

Click [here](#) for BIM's Grant Privacy Note

#### Further Information/Clarifications

Requests for further information/clarifications should be addressed, by **email**, to the contact details below. Where appropriate, responses to requests for further information/clarifications will be made available to all interested parties via [grantshelpdesk@bim.ie](mailto:grantshelpdesk@bim.ie)

CONTACT DETAILS
Bord Iascaigh Mhara Dún Laoghaire Co. Dublin Email: <a href="mailto:grantshelpdesk@bim.ie">grantshelpdesk@bim.ie</a>

