COVID-19 Online Retail Scheme – Guidance Document

Q: Our company is developing online ordering App. It is click and collect. Are we qualified for the scheme?
A: You may apply to develop an App provided you fulfil all the eligibility requirements of the Scheme.

Q: If approved for the Online Retail Scheme previously can you apply for this?
A: Yes - Successful applicants in previous calls are eligible to re-apply under this call, once they have fully completed the project funded, fully claimed all eligible costs and propose a clearly different project to that undertaken under previous calls.

Q: If I intend on closing bricks and mortar and going online only am I still eligible. I had two shops and 10 employees but want to convert to online only?
A: No, you must have a retail outlet and derive the majority of revenue from the retail outlet(s)

Q: Is it essential that retailers applicable need to concentrate on exports?
A: Please look at the evaluation criteria for this Scheme where 'Ambition to Internationalise the Business' is weighted at 10%.

Q: Is this Scheme only open to retail and with a minimum of 10 employees? My business is property related, ie estate agent.
A: It is open to Irish-owned retail companies of 10 full time equivalent employees or more and which derive the majority of revenue from their retail outlet. See the full eligibility criteria on our webpage.

Q: - Can I have a mix of full time and part time employees to make up the 10 employees?
A: Yes, please see the table on our website to calculate Full time equivalent employees.

Q: How many years Accounts do I have to provide?
A: To make a valid application, companies must provide their latest statutory accounts (no more than 2 years old)

Q: Can external service provider be based outside of Ireland?
A: Yes

Q: To demonstrate need for funding through loss of profit, can this be loss of profit through brick and mortar stores?
A: Yes

Q: Is there an upper limit on the size of the applicant company?
A: No, there is no upper limit in terms of employment to be eligible to apply.

Q: Can you explain the bit about the internal champion salary and how that impacts on the daily rate of champions?
A: Salary costs of a senior project champion are covered.   This person will work with an external service provider on the project. The costs to support the salary of the project champion must not exceed the external service provider costs. A maximum of 1 internal champion per company is eligible for salary

costs.   The maximum eligible salary of the internal champion is €1000 per week (€200 per day) for a maximum of 25 weeks (125 days).   Claims for wages and salary support for the champion must be supported by payslips and proof of payment.

Q: Does the eCommerce partner agency have to be selected in advance of the application?
A: Yes, you will need to include details of the service provider in the application, together with a breakdown of tasks and activities, number of days and daily rates of your chosen service provider.

Q: Why don't you fund Google adwords?
A: We don't cover paid advertising as the objective of this fund is to assist companies to build long-term capability within the company.
Q: When you say service provider, can you provide some examples?
A: Providers which have expressed an interest to Enterprise Ireland are listed on the bottom of the webpage: www.enterprise-ireland/retail.

Q: How do Enterprise Ireland judge the skill set and expertise of the proposed agency /service provider?
A: We have compiled a list of service providers who may be interested in performing work under this initiative.   There is no obligation to use a service provider from the list to avail of this support funding. The fact that a service provider is included on the list is no guarantee of their competence or that they are suitable for your particular assignment.   Applicants are therefore strongly encouraged to properly vet any service provider they are considering employing. No liability will accrue to Enterprise Ireland, for either the company's choice or the service provider's performance.

Q: If a retailer did not get approval for a previous application are they allowed to re-apply in this round?
A: Yes, you can apply

Q: What is the Call open and closing dates ?
A: Both dates will be announced on the website.

Q: Can you elaborate on what you mean by 'not covering upgrades to existing online channels' - if a retailer hasn't invested in SEO for example, would that an eligible activity?
A: Search Engine Optimisation would be an eligible activity.

Q: How can we get placed on the service provider list?
A: Please email retail@enterprise-ireland.com with the following information:
Service provider Name, Expertise, Contact Name, Email address, Website, Phone & Location

Q: Can you please clarify if this grant can be used for the construction of a new improved website, we are moving from a website currently for just promotions to a full ecommerce solution.
A: We will cover the fees of an established external service provider(s) to further develop / enhance the company's transactional website or online presence. The grant must be used to introduce additional functionality; and Training Course fees are not eligible, however in-house training provided by an external provider to enable a company develop and maintain a robust online retail operation are

eligible. This could include training for CMS, eMarketing, catalogue management, e-commerce systems, SEO, etc.

Q: We are a food wholesaler business supplying retail and foodservices customers. Are we eligible to apply?
A: No, applicants must derive the majority of their revenue from a retail outlet(s)

Q: In the past few weeks we have invested money to position us to sell online which we are now doing. It seems that all of this cost is not applicable.
A: We will not cover retrospective costs - only costs incurred after the call open date are eligible.

Q: Are there timelines for completing the work associated with the grant? Can new development costs arising from consultation / scoping process be included?
A: Your application should give details of the workplan and its deliverability within a 12 month timeframe.

Q: Would online photography and building of in house photography studio including trading etc be included?
A: The cost of building of an in-house photography studio on your premises would not be covered. However, some costs for online photography / catalogue development may be allowed once your application demonstrates how it related to your overall e-commerce strategy.

Q: Can the service provider be somebody from our staff, ie an in-house web developer who works alongside our project champion.
A: There can only be one internal champion. An external provider must be used. The costs to support the salary of the project champion must not exceed the external service provider costs. A maximum of 1 internal champion per company is eligible for salary costs;

Q: If we are primarily a retail business but have a restaurant and cafe which is ancillary to the retail are we still eligible to apply? If the retail side of the business provides the majority of the income of the business.
A: Yes, provided that the retail side of business accounts for the majority of revenue. This should be demonstrated in the application form.

Q: Do you consider a retailer proposing to join an online marketplace as part of their online strategy, (e.g. eBay) and the costs of integration with this marketplace a valid and worthwhile online strategy?
A: A project looking at online marketplaces would be valid. Your application should demonstrate how this fits into your overall business plan and e-commerce strategy.

Q: Can project manager/internal champion be the owner?
A: Yes

Q: Typically what % do you need to achieve to be successful?
A: To be approved for funding, applicants must score a minimum of 60%.

Q: Hi we are primarily a retailer with a clear path to online and indeed export sales. We do have some ancillary hospitality business (which will not be the subject of the online business plan at all). Will this

exclude our retail online business plan from this Scheme?
A: No, not necessarily. The eligibility criteria state that you should have a retail outlet and derive the majority of revenue from the retail outlet(s) (which cannot be in the hospitality sector).

Q: Going back to the questions about the member of staff that is building the website but has other duties within the company does this mean that because we are not using an external service provider, we would be limited to only 50% of the available grant?
A: You must use an external service provider for this Scheme.

Q: If I want to move to a new SaaS based e-commerce platform, what costs can the grant cover? Is the subscription for the platform covered or just strategy, content, design, custom development and marketing costs?
A: The purchase of hardware or "off the shelf" software package licences or subscriptions e.g. for Customer Relationship Management (CRM) are not covered under this Scheme.

Q: Can Restaurants apply or is this more specific to retail?
A: This scheme is not targeted at the hospitality sector, which are not eligible to apply. You may be eligible for the Bord Bia Scheme or other supports for the sector:
https://www.bordbia.ie/industry/small-business/resources/map-grants/
https://www.bordbia.ie/industry/covid-19/
https://covid19.failteireland.ie/

Q: Is there any regional focus?
A: No

Q: Is there preference for 'New to Online' or 'Expand Our Online' - where jobs may be at risk.
A: The objective of this Scheme is to support companies in the retail sector with a pre-existing online presence (this can be a website, facebook page, Instagram, other social media). Applications will be scored on the extent to which they demonstrate additional functionality and the expected impact on the business.

Q: Does there need to be both a digital marketing implementation part of the project AND a functionality part or could the project focus on just one of these (developing both internal and external capabilities)
A: This would depend on the company itself, its size, existing capability, ambition and what its plans are over the next 12 months. See eligible costs for more details.

Q: Can wholesalers with trade retail outlets also qualify?
A: They can, so long as they can demonstrate in their application that they derive the majority of revenue from the retail outlet(s)

Q: How much of an existing online presence is required? Are only retailers with an existing website being considered?
A: The business must have an existing online presence (e.g. website, facebook page, Instagram account, other social media). Companies which do not have an existing online presence should examine the

Online Trading Voucher available through their Local Enterprise Office.

Q: Can you clarify. If we have an existing eCommerce platform but want to progress our platform and eCommerce offering can we submit? Or is this just for new eCommerce applicants?
A: You may submit an application, however, Projects which do not propose significant additional functionality to the online presence of the applicant company will be considered ineligible

Q: We have had to close three stores temporarily. But operating online only - are we eligible?
A: Yes, as long as you meet the employment criteria of employing >10 full time equivalent employees before 29/02/20. Criteria is found at www.enterprise-ireland.com/retail

Q: In terms of Quality of Application (worth 40%) what are the main success criteria?
A: Full explanation of the Criterial for Applicants is on www.enterprise-ireland.com/retail

Q: is there a maximum daily rate for the external service provider?
A: Consultancy rate is a maximum of €900 per day. Where 2 or more service providers are engaged from the same firm, the daily rate of €900 per day is applied to the firm

Q: Could internal champion allowance be split between 2 people working on digital initiatives?
A: One internal champion is eligible for funding.

Q: Does this project need to be a transactional ecommerce website or can it be a lead generation website to avail of the grant?
A: It can be either.

Q: Does the historical profitability of the business have any bearing on the approval of the applicant?
A: There is a 10% weighting in the scoring for the company's financial track record, which would include historical profitability and other financial aspects of the company's trading history

Q: If the champion currently only works part time. If he/she has to work extra days on this project can their salary be increased for the extra days?
A: The maximum eligible salary per applicant/employee of the applicant is €1,000 per week (€200 per day) for a maximum of 25 weeks (125 days). Only time spent on the proposed project by the applicant/employees of the applicant is eligible. Claims for wages and salary support for the applicant/employees of the applicant must be supported by payslips and proof of payment.

Q: Can we access the workshops from previous calls?
A: No

Q: if we need models to launch our ecommerce, are these costs covered?
A: No

Q: Does the cost of a project champion include a new hire to be made with successful application or does it need to be an existing employee promoted to the position.
A: It may be an new hire.

Q: Could you detail further the ineligible costs? Is technical development to upgrade an existing platform covered? Will redesign and rebuild of the platform be covered?
A: It may be.   This depends of what you are trying to achieve and how it fits into the overall business plan and your digital strategy.

Q: Can we proceed with our website design and get it underway before the grant is approved?
A: Costs incurred prior to submitting an application are not eligible for this grant. Should you incur costs prior to receiving formal approval from Enterprise Ireland, then this is your own responsibility. There is no guarantee that your application will be successful, as this is a competitive call where the available funding will be allocated based on the score which applications receive.

Q: I appreciate the it doesn't extend to software package licences/subscriptions, would it apply to a licence for a learning management solution if it is being deployed to implement online operations training for personnel?
A: No

Q: For a successful application, is there a deadline before which the project needs to be completed and funds drawn down, and if so what is it?
A: The project must be completed within a 12-month timeframe (from the date of the Letter of Offer).