



# ***Regional Enterprise Transition Scheme 2021***

## ***(Scéim do Thrasdul Fiontar Réigiúnach 2021)***

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### **1.0 Introduction**

#### ***1.1 Purpose of the scheme***

Enterprise Ireland's ***Regional Enterprise Transition Scheme (RETS)*** is administered by the agency on behalf of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The scheme is part of Government's programme of assistance for regional enterprise development and assistance to regions facing socio-economic difficulties and transition as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and other regional challenges associated with the UK's departure from the EU. Accordingly, the purpose of this funding scheme is to provide financial assistance to not-for-profit projects which can demonstrate an ability to deliver regional impact.

In addition to the main Scheme, separate funding is also being provided for an associated RETS Feasibility Study to support detailed evaluation of early-stage opportunities for new impactful regional enterprise development projects.

#### ***1.2 Objective of the scheme***

The objective of the Regional Enterprise Transition Scheme is to provide assistance, including funding supports, to regionally based not-for-profit undertakings that provide economic support to enterprises in sectors and regions negatively affected by Covid-19, as well as a consequence of the withdrawal of the UK from the EU (Brexit).

This Scheme aims to offer a targeted solution to both existing and new Regional and Community-based projects that can demonstrate the ability to deliver impact and execute project deliverables in the current year. These not-for-profit projects should aim to improve the capability and competitiveness of regional enterprises and encourage entrepreneurial activity, productivity, and innovative capability in that regard. **Applicants for *Regional Enterprise Transition Scheme* funding must show all project spend in 2021.**

This Scheme builds on existing regional initiatives and is aligned to national enterprise policy and related government policy initiatives, which include: Regional Enterprise Plans; Remote Working Strategy; Climate Action Plan; Brexit Impact; and Enterprise Ireland’s “Powering the Regions” regional initiatives.

The RETS Scheme has a grant budget of €9.5m available in 2021 for existing projects of Not-for-Profit clients of Enterprise Ireland and/or Údarás na Gaeltachta. These clients must have received previous support under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund or Border Enterprise Development Fund and have plans for additional activity beyond those which were previously supported.

A further €0.5m grant budget will be available for a number of substantial early-stage Feasibility Studies which will be open to new not-for-profit projects not previously supported by Enterprise Ireland and led by existing or new client applicants. The Feasibility Study will support these early-stage projects to create a pipeline of well-structured potential future enterprise development projects across the country. **The RETS Feasibility Study funding is not restricted to expenditure in 2021 only, and will support project costs incurred and claimed up until 30 June 2022.**

The Scheme and its associated Feasibility Study will target grant aid at projects which will improve the resilience and international competitiveness of enterprises<sup>1</sup> (predominantly SMEs) in the Regions in the aftermath of Brexit; Covid 19 and other market challenges, and those seeking to transition successfully in the context of climate action and digitalisation. The objectives of the *Regional Enterprise Transition Scheme 2021* are to:

- Assist not-for-profit DACs, CLGs or eligible public bodies that will deliver initiatives which have, or will have, a positive impact on entrepreneurial activity, and/or productivity, and/or innovative capability of enterprise.
- Enable these applicants to support enterprises, which are predominantly SMEs, in their response to economic and market challenges, such as the impact of Covid-19 and Brexit, as well as the transition to a low carbon economy, digitalisation and smart specialisation.
- Assist these applicants in enhancing the productivity and new product development opportunities of SMEs in order to increase internationalisation opportunities and sustain employment across all regions.

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<sup>1</sup> The term enterprise refers to start-ups, micro-enterprise, SMEs and large companies.

Specific areas of focus for these collaborative not-for-profit projects would therefore incorporate innovation, incubation of enterprises, research and development or the delivery of one or more of the following:

- Initiatives to help enterprises respond to Covid-19 and Brexit
- Digital Transformation & Digital Capability initiatives
- Climate Change & Sustainability
- Clusters and Sectoral Development activities
- Innovation and Internationalisation Capability development
- Women in Business/Entrepreneurship activities

### **1.3 Scheme Structure**

To deliver on these objectives the scheme is comprised of one main funding stream for existing projects supported under the Regional and Border Enterprise Development Funds, with an associated separate feasibility study support available for new early-stage projects. All applications will be subject to an assessment and selection process as outlined in either Section 2.9 (Scheme) or Section 3.8 (Feasibility).

#### **1.3.1 Funding Scheme for Existing Projects of Not-for-Profit Clients of Enterprise Ireland and/or Údarás na Gaeltachta**

Funding assistance for existing Not-for-Profit clients of Enterprise Ireland/Údarás na Gaeltachta that deliver existing Regional and Community based projects that can demonstrate the need to support additional activity arising from Covid-19, Brexit, and other market changes that will sustain businesses so that they will be viable after the Covid-19 outbreak. These supports will be towards capital and current costs and can include extra spacing and new air conditioning infrastructure, each of which are a direct result of the pandemic. The applicants must be able to show progress to date as well as potential positive regional impacts and strong Value for Money metrics.

The not-for-profit projects must demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Clearly demonstrate the additional impacts and deliverables the grant support will achieve in alignment with the overall objectives of the Scheme.
- Significant progress against existing KPIs/targets
- Demonstrate how this funding will help the project achieve long term sustainability
- Strong Value for Money
- Ability to utilise/drawdown additional capital funding in 2021.

The funding limit for eligible applicants will be up to a maximum of €1.8m in grant aid per project, or a minimum of €50,000 grant aid per supported project, based on 80% of eligible

expenditure for successful applicants. Applications can be made through an open call from the launch date of the scheme.

### **1.3.2 Funding for New Projects to conduct a large-scale Feasibility Study**

This Feasibility Study funding is targeted at regionally based not-for-profit applicants which meet the eligibility criteria and have plans to deliver new regionally significant and impactful projects. The purpose of such projects shall be to assist regional enterprises to innovate and/or to develop service offerings and to adjust, pivot or reposition businesses to respond to new market realities arising from the impacts of Covid-19, Brexit and other market changes as defined in the scheme objectives, including climate change/sustainability, innovation and digital transition

This funding can be used to assist early stage project development, which will enable promoters design and test their project concept and establish how the applicant would develop detailed plans to fund the design, planning and tendering costs related to preparing an application for further state funding.

The applicants should be able to demonstrate:

- Relevance to new, current, or emerging economic/industrial activity by regional enterprises
- Strong alignment with the objectives of the Regional Enterprise Transition Scheme
- Linkages to key regional/sectoral stakeholders including 3<sup>rd</sup> level/HEIs
- Outline KPIs & Metrics, with timelines for delivery
- Ability to create a clearly defined and costed project plan
- Capability to create a business plan with a clear pathway to achieving sustainability in the medium term

Applications for funding under this Feasibility Study can be made through an open call from the launch date of the Scheme. The funding limit per applicant under this Feasibility Study will be from €20,000 up to a maximum €50,000 in grant aid per project, or 50% of eligible expenditure, whichever is the lesser. The closing date for Feasibility Study applications will be 01 October 2021 or when the available scheme budget has been allocated.

Funding awarded under the Feasibility Study does not of itself confirm eligibility for funding or provide any assurance of funding under future competitive schemes administered by Enterprise Ireland.

## **2.0 Regional Enterprise Transition Scheme - Terms of Reference**

### **2.1 Legal basis**

The *Regional Enterprise Transition Scheme* shall be administered in accordance with Section 7 (1) (i) of the Industrial Development (Enterprise Ireland) Act 1998. The funding scheme shall be administered by Enterprise Ireland, using funds made available for that purpose by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment with the consent of both the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

### **2.2 State Aid basis**

The State Aid basis of the *Regional Enterprise Transition Scheme (RETS)* is Section 3.1 of the Temporary Framework for State Aid measures to support the economy in the current Covid-19 outbreak, 19.3.2020 C(2020) 1863 final, amended and prolonged until 31 December 2021. Specific conditions set out under Section 3.1 are included within the Scheme criteria and European Commission approval has been received for the proposed scheme<sup>2</sup>.

### **2.3 Eligible Scheme Applicants**

To be eligible for RETS funding applicants must be one of the following:

- Not-for-Profit clients of Enterprise Ireland or Údarás na Gaeltachta that are a registered Designated Activity Company (DAC), or a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG), that are current clients of Enterprise Ireland or Údarás na Gaeltachta under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund or Border Enterprise Development Fund.
- Public bodies, such as Local Authorities, Institutes of Technology/Higher Education Institutes, that are current clients of Enterprise Ireland or Údarás na Gaeltachta under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund or Border Enterprise Development Fund Schemes.

The constitution of the applicant DAC or CLG shall provide that:

- No payment (other than reasonable and proper payments for services rendered, vouched expenses, or rent for premises let to the Company) is transferred, or distribution is made, directly or indirectly to a member; and
- Upon a winding up or dissolution of the company, no transfer, payment or distribution may be made to a member, but that instead, all net assets shall be given up or transferred to some other institution or institutions having main objects similar to the main objects of the company and which shall prohibit the distribute on of its or their income and property amongst its or their members to an extent at least as great as is imposed on the company.

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<sup>2</sup>[State Aid SA.63264 \(2021/N\) – Ireland](#) - COVID-19: Regional Enterprise Transition Scheme

## **2.4 Ineligible Scheme applicants**

The RETS is not open to the following:

- Applications that are received by Enterprise Ireland electronically after 12:00 noon on the call close date or applications which are deemed incomplete, or with missing documentation, as at the call close.
- Applications that do not meet the minimum eligible funding threshold, i.e. minimum of €50,000 in eligible grant aid
- Applicants that are not an eligible public body or registered Designated Activity Company, (DAC) or a Company Limited by Guarantee, (CLG) with the CRO under the Companies Act 2014 prior to submission date of their applications by the call close of 12:00 noon on 08 September 2021.
- Applications from Tourism; Transport; and large infrastructural projects – e.g. Ports; Roads; By-pass; etc.
- Applications which include or relate to activities that Enterprise Ireland considers as ineligible or as involving an unacceptable reputational risk. Ineligible activities include activities relating to:
  - The gambling sector, including ‘gaming’ (as defined in the Gaming and Lotteries Act 1956).
  - Adult entertainment.
  - Tobacco products.

## **2.5 Application Process**

Enquires on this Scheme should be directed to [RETS@enterprise-ireland.com](mailto:RETS@enterprise-ireland.com). Alternatively, interested parties can contact their local Enterprise Ireland Regional Office (See Section 4.7 for contact details). Application forms are available online at [www.enterprise-ireland.com/RETS](http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/RETS).

## **2.6 What will an application consist of?**

All applicants will be required to submit a fully completed and signed Application Form which clearly addresses the required project evaluation criteria as set out in Section 2.9 and a Project Cost Workbook which sets out the proposed expenditure on the project. It is essential that all key facts are presented in the application form and costs workbook as this will form the basis of the evaluation process.

Limited support documentation may be accepted to provide clarity on the application for the evaluation committee. This-additional documentation will be restricted to building plans and or drawings, artist’s impressions, project costing and financial projections, as appropriate. However, these will not form part of the evaluation.

## 2.7 Scheme Funding

- Enterprise Ireland will grant aid up to a maximum 80% of eligible expenditure over the funding period.
- Funding will be available for Capital and Non-Capital expenditure **incurred and claimed for grant payment in 2021**. Employment Grants based on one year's salary and overhead costs, for full-time manager roles deemed essential for the project, will be paid in advance on recruitment of the person in 2021.
- The activity being proposed for funding **must be additional** to the activities currently being undertaken if any, and additional to activities if any, currently funded by the State.
- The funding is subject to justification of costs and the evaluation criteria detailed in Section 2.9. Enterprise Ireland reserves the right to reduce or disallow proposed funded costs, or to schedule some or all of the costs in stages over the term of the funding.
- Enterprise Ireland shall make no commitment to funding the successful applicant after the approved period of funding.
- Project partners can include institutions or companies in Northern Ireland (or in the European Community), but direct funding cannot be provided under this funding scheme to these international partners.

## 2.8 Eligible Scheme Costs

Funding assistance for Not-for-Profit clients of Enterprise Ireland/Údarás na Gaeltachta that deliver existing Regional and Community based projects that can demonstrate the **need for additional support arising from Covid-19**, Brexit, and other market changes. These supports will be towards capital and current costs. The applicants must be able to show progress to date as well as potential positive regional impacts and strong Value for Money metrics.

**Note:** the final cut-off for receipt of eligible applications will **be 12:00 noon on 08 September 2021**. All eligible **capital and non-capital costs** incurred in 2021 must be claimed by 12:00 noon on **17 November 2021 at the latest** for payment in 2021.

Costs in the following categories are eligible for support:

- **New Build Costs:** Additional costs related to expansion of the original project. A maximum grant of up to 80% of eligible costs towards New Build Costs is available. Eligible building and capital equipment costs must be incurred and claimed in the current year.
  - Enterprise Ireland will provide a maximum grant of 80% of eligible expenditure, towards the purchase of an existing building and modification of same to create dedicated space for the project.
  - Enterprise Ireland funding can assist the construction of a new stand-alone building or an extension to an existing building to create dedicated space for the project. Site purchase costs for the new-build or expansion are not eligible costs for grant assistance. Own labour/own management costs related to the construction are not

eligible costs for grant assistance. Eligible costs are construction costs and the related architectural and engineering design costs.

- Enterprise Ireland will fund the reasonable cost of external finishes to enable the building to meet planning conditions for the project, up to a maximum of 10% of overall project costs.
- **Renovation/Refurbishment:** Eligible costs are the building modification costs and related architectural and engineering design costs. A maximum grant of up to 80% of eligible costs towards renovation/refurbishment is available. Eligible costs for these refurbishment projects must be incurred and claimed in the current year. Enterprise Ireland will allow modification costs under the following headings:
  - Internal structural work such as manufacturing conversion to office space & vice versa
  - Test kitchen facilities
  - Upgrade of Broadband/Wi-Fi access
  - Equipment/Fit-out including hardware (including PCs and laptops) and software
  - Hot desk Facilities
  - Architectural Design costs
  - Networking facilities
  - Modifications may not include works that can be considered by Enterprise Ireland as routine/minor/wear and tear/maintenance work etc.

**Note re: Capital costs**

- Applicant groups must own the building **or** must hold a lease of not less than 15 years remaining on the lease.
- Equipment must be less than 5 years old; hardware and software must be new.
- All eligible costs exclude VAT<sup>3</sup>.
- **Personnel:** A maximum grant of up to 80% of eligible salary, or €64,000 grant aid per person<sup>4</sup> for one year, whichever is the lesser.
  - Salary (excluding employers PRSI, bonus and commission) is capped at €80,000 per annum, per person.
  - This Grant is fully payable in advance on recruitment of the person, with evidence of a signed contract and proof of the first payment.
  - Personnel must have fixed term contracts and be employed directly by a successful applicant to drive the various elements of the work programme over the period of funding.

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<sup>3</sup> Where applicants can certify through the Revenue Commissioners that they have unrecoverable VAT, it may be deemed an eligible expense under this fund.

<sup>4</sup> A maximum of three (3) personnel can be assisted with funding to drive the various elements of the work programme.

- Roles for which funding has been approved by Enterprise Ireland must be clearly assigned with responsibilities relating to the implementation of the work programme<sup>5</sup>.
  - The person must be appointed before the November 17<sup>th</sup> closing date.
  - The post(s) must be maintained for a period of 1 year from the date of recruitment.
- **Overheads:** Grant support for eligible overheads to a maximum of 30% of the total eligible salary costs.
  - **Promotional Activities:** A maximum grant of €8,000 or 80% of eligible costs, whichever is the lesser, to support communication activities required to implement its work programme by a successful applicant. This may include awareness events, promotional material and website costs (excluding design).
  - **Consultancy Assistance:** A maximum grant of €100,000 or 80% of eligible costs whichever is the lesser, over the period of funding. The maximum daily rate of up to €900 per day, (subject to agreement with Enterprise Ireland) to assist the hiring of appropriate external experts required to drive key elements of the work programme.

Applicants should be aware that there is no assurance of any kind that an eligible application will be approved. Therefore deposits/ expenditure paid prior to approval are at the applicant's own risk. Upon approval of the project, expenditure from the date of application will be eligible.

## 2.9 Evaluation Criteria and Process

### 2.9.1 Overall Scheme Evaluation Criteria

All applications will be evaluated against the following criteria:

	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
1	Track record of the project in meeting current metrics and KPIs	20%
2	Evidence of financial need/current financial position of the applicant.	30%
3	Proposed additional actions and impacts of the project plan	30%
4	Evidence of capability to drive enterprise innovation and development solutions	20%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>5</sup> Only key management personnel or key technical personnel charged with the management and delivery of the overall project or specific elements of the proposed project will be eligible for assistance.

## **2.9.2 Detailed Scheme Evaluation Criteria**

### **Track record of the project in meeting current metrics and KPIs – 20%**

- Detail the track record of the project in delivering agreed metrics and KPIs
- Outline the impact of the project on regional enterprise development to-date.

### **Evidence of financial need/current financial position of the applicant – 30%**

- Demonstrate the financial need for funding by providing detailed accounts of the projects cash flow and current financial position.
- Detail how the proposed plan will provide a pathway to financial viability and sustainability for the project and the timeframe for delivery.
- Demonstrate value for money and credible plans to drawdown funding in 2021.

### **Proposed additional actions and impacts of the project plan - 30%**

- Detail the planned actions and impacts of the proposed business plan, including climate and environmental impacts
- Outline the core services to be delivered to the target clients and the expected impacts
- Outline new proposed innovative solutions in service delivery to meet the challenges presented by Covid-19, Brexit and other regional challenges, etc. as outlined in the scheme objectives.

### **Evidence of capability to drive enterprise development solutions – 20%**

- Outline how the management structure and competency will drive capability and resilience in target clients and drive the delivery of the project
- Outline how the business plan will encourage enterprise incubation and/or innovation or R & D or intellectual property creation and protection

#### **Note:**

Applicants that are being considered for support must have attained a minimum score of 60%.

Where two or more applicants have the same score, the scores attained by each of those applicants in the following criteria, by order, will determine the ranking of the applicants:

- The applicant with the highest score under *“Track record of the project in meeting current metrics and KPIs”*.
- If the scores are still even, the applicant with the highest score under *“Proposed additional actions and impacts of the project plan”*.

### **2.9.3 Scheme Evaluation Process**

All applications for funding will be subjected to an evaluation process. The evaluation process seeks to ensure that State financial support is appropriate, proportionate, and necessary. Applications for funding from *not-for profit* DAC's or CLG's or public bodies, will be subject to evaluation through an open call and applicants can apply at any time between the launch date and the call close date. Early application is strongly encouraged.

The evaluation process for eligible applicants will be as follows:

- Regional Development Executives will liaise with eligible applicants on receipt of their application.
- Submitted applications may also be subject to a commercial evaluation.
- All applications for funding will be reviewed/assessed by an Enterprise Ireland Evaluation Committee (with external expertise as/if required)
- The Evaluation Panel will make recommendations for funding assistance of the highest ranked applicants that achieved the required standard, to the Enterprise Ireland Investment Committee. Enterprise Ireland reserves the right to reduce or disallow proposed costs detailed within the Application, or to schedule some or all of the costs in stages over the term of the funding.
- The Investment Committee will assess these projects and recommend them for approval to the Enterprise Ireland Board where necessary. The Enterprise Ireland Board will approve funding to successful applicants.
- All funding decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

Note: Enterprise Ireland will process and evaluate eligible applications received after the launch date on a first-come first-served basis. Up to €7m of the available €9.5m funds will be allocated to eligible projects which exceed the cut-off score of 60% against the defined scoring criteria in Section 2.9.1 above.

Following the Scheme closing date of 08 September 2021, the remaining €2.5m of funds will be available for allocation at the final Evaluation Committee meeting on or about 24 September 2021, providing there are eligible applications which exceed the minimum 60% cut-off score in Section 2.9.1 above..

### **2.10 Funding Approval Process**

Eligible applications received will be assessed by Enterprise Ireland in line with the stated evaluation criteria. Projects shortlisted for funding will be presented to the appropriate Enterprise Ireland approval committee.

### **2.11 Scheme Closing Date**

Applications will be on an open call basis. Applicants may apply at any point after the scheme launch on **29 July 2021**. Application Forms are available from the Enterprise Ireland website at [www.enterprise-ireland.com/RETS](http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/RETS) or from your local Enterprise Ireland Regional Office (see contact details in Section 4.7 of this document). Final date for acceptance of applications will be **08 September 2021**.

Applications forms can be downloaded from the Enterprise Ireland website and must be submitted electronically in Word format, along with the Project Costs Workbook in Excel format, to Enterprise Ireland at [GA-RETS@enterprise-ireland.com](mailto:GA-RETS@enterprise-ireland.com) **before 12:00 hrs on 08 September 2021**. **If you require advice on completion of these forms please contact your local Enterprise Ireland Regional Office** (see Section 4.7) or [RETS@enterprise-ireland.com](mailto:RETS@enterprise-ireland.com).

On receipt of an application, an email will be sent to confirm that Enterprise Ireland has received the application form. After initial checks are carried out, each valid application will be acknowledged within three working days.

Applicants who do not receive either acknowledgement should immediately contact [GA-RETS@enterprise-ireland.com](mailto:GA-RETS@enterprise-ireland.com).

### **2.12 Post Approval Stage**

Where an application for funding has been approved, a Letter of Offer will be issued by Enterprise Ireland detailing the specific eligible expenditure and the grant amounts being offered. All approved projects are subject to the following requirements:

- Projects assisted by the Regional Enterprise Transition Scheme will be required to provide updates on progress against agreed milestones (funding draw down conditions detailed within the letter of offer) to Enterprise Ireland.
- Failure to provide updates in a timely fashion or to share requested information may result in project funding being paused or cancelled.

Enterprise Ireland may undertake an internal programme review no more than 1 year after the conclusion of the Scheme. In addition, monitoring will be undertaken of each successful applicant in relation to achievement of agreed performance metrics by year end 2022.

There is a requirement for projects to:

- Supply updates, progress reports and financial information on request within 2 weeks of receiving such requests from Enterprise Ireland; and
- Meet with Enterprise Ireland, as necessary, to report on project progress.

### **3.0 Feasibility Funding - Terms of Reference**

#### **3.1 Aim of RETS Feasibility Funding**

This Feasibility Funding is targeted at Regional applicants which meet the eligibility criteria of the scheme and that have plans to deliver new transformational regional or community projects. The purpose of which will be to assist member companies adjust, pivot or reposition businesses to respond to new market realities arising from the impacts of Covid19, Brexit and other market changes as defined in the scheme objectives including climate change/sustainability, innovation and digital transition.

Funding can assist early stage project development by the not-for profit which will enable promoters design and test their project concept; deliver virtual or site-based solutions to their target audience. It can also fund the design, planning and tendering costs related to the delivery of their developmental project. The completion of design/planning/tendering, etc. may enable projects to be “shovel ready” when applying for future national funding, which in turn will enhance the potential for speedier project delivery.

The Feasibility Funding can also support the need for the provision of expanded co-working facilities, that may also accommodate new ways of working for SME employees that have emerged in response to Covid-19 induced changes to working practices/places and have become embedded as the norm. Such projects will reduce the costs of SMEs who might otherwise have to incur increased rent for larger working spaces and increased IT infrastructure costs.

#### **3.2 Legal basis**

The *Regional Enterprise Transition Scheme Feasibility Study* shall be administered in accordance with Section 7 (1) (i) of the Industrial Development (Enterprise Ireland) Act 1998. The funding scheme shall be administered by Enterprise Ireland, using funds made available for that purpose by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment with the consent of both the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

#### **3.3 State Aid basis**

The State Aid basis of the Feasibility Funding under the *Regional Enterprise Transition Scheme* shall be administered in accordance with the EU Commission State Aid De Minimis Regulation 1407/2013.

### **3.4 Eligible Feasibility Funding Applicants**

To be eligible for RETS Feasibility Study funding, applicants must be one of the following:

- Not-for-Profit Designated Activity Company, (DAC), or a Company Limited by Guarantee, (CLG), which are registered with the CRO under the Companies Act 2014 prior to the date of formal submission of their applications.
- Public bodies, such as Local Authorities, Institutes of Technology/Higher Education Institutes.
- Not-for-profit sectoral, regional, county or local entities with a purpose of benefiting the wider needs of the enterprise community and the region/sector as defined in the scheme objectives. Please note where a project is led by a public body, the submitted project must be additional to the public body's existing work programme.

The projects should have:

- Strong industry linkages with a focus on specific sector/s.
- Strong alignment with Scheme objectives
- Linkages to key regional/sectoral stakeholders including 3<sup>rd</sup> level/HEI's
- Defined KPI's & Metrics, with clear timelines for delivery
- A clearly defined and costed project plan

The constitution of the applicant DAC or CLG shall provide that:

- No payment (other than reasonable and proper payments for services rendered, vouched expenses, or rent for premises let to the Company) is transferred, or distribution is made, directly or indirectly to a member; and
- Upon a winding up or dissolution of the company, no transfer, payment or distribution may be made to a member, but that instead, all net assets shall be given up or transferred to some other institution or institutions having main objects similar to the main objects of the company and which shall prohibit the distribute on of its or their income and property amongst its or their members to an extent at least as great as is imposed on the company.

The closing date for Feasibility Study applications will be **01 October 2021, or when the available scheme budget has been allocated.**

### **3.5 Ineligible Feasibility Funding applicants**

RETS Feasibility Funding is not open to the following:

- Applications that are received by Enterprise Ireland electronically after 12:00 noon on the call close date **01 October 2021** or applications which are deemed incomplete, or with missing documentation, as at the call close.
- Applications that do not meet the minimum eligible funding threshold, i.e. minimum of €20,000 in eligible grant aid
- Applicants that are not an eligible public body or registered Designated Activity Company, (DAC) or a Company Limited by Guarantee, (CLG) with the CRO under the Companies Act 2014 prior to submission date of their application.
- Applications from Tourism; Transport; and large infrastructural projects – e.g. Ports; Roads; By-pass; etc.
- Applications which include or relate to activities that Enterprise Ireland considers as ineligible or as involving an unacceptable reputational risk. Ineligible activities include activities relating to:
  - The gambling sector, including ‘gaming’ (as defined in the Gaming and Lotteries Act 1956).
  - Adult entertainment.
  - Tobacco products.

### **3.6 Feasibility Funding Application Process**

Enquires on this scheme should be directed to [RETS@enterprise-ireland.com](mailto:RETS@enterprise-ireland.com). Alternatively, interested parties can contact their local Enterprise Ireland Regional Office (see Section 4.7 for contact details). Application forms for the RETS Feasibility Study Grant are available online at [www.enterprise-ireland.com/RETS-Feasibility](http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/RETS-Feasibility).

### **3.7 What will a Feasibility Funding application consist of?**

All applicants will be required to submit a fully completed and signed Application Form which clearly addresses the required project evaluation criteria as set out in Section 3.8, along with a Project Cost Workbook which sets out the proposed expenditure on the feasibility study. It is essential that all key facts are presented in the Application Form and Project Cost Workbook as these will form the basis of the evaluation process.

### 3.7.1 Eligible Costs for Feasibility Funding

Funding will be for eligible expenditure incurred, claimed and paid by 30 June 2022. Costs in the following category are eligible for support:

- **Consultancy Support:** A maximum grant of €50,000 or 50% of eligible project costs whichever is the lesser, on expenditure to support the hiring of appropriate external experts required to drive key elements of the work programme. The maximum daily rate is €900 per day, (subject to agreement with Enterprise Ireland).

The funding limit per applicant under this Feasibility Study will be up to a maximum **€50,000 in grant aid** per project, or **50% of eligible expenditure**, whichever is the lesser. Projects must demonstrate a requirement for a minimum grant of €20,000 to be considered eligible for funding.

Eligible expenditure can only be incurred after the date of application which will be acknowledged by Enterprise Ireland.

Applicants should be aware that there is no assurance of any kind that an eligible application will be approved, even where a deposit or expenditure has been paid. Therefore deposits/ expenditure paid prior to approval are at the applicant's own risk.

### 3.8 Evaluation Criteria and Process for Feasibility Funding

#### 3.8.1 Feasibility Funding Evaluation criteria

All applications will be evaluated against the following criteria:

	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
1	Quality of Feasibility Proposal	40%
2	Value for Money/Economic Impact	40%
3	Need for support	20%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Balance of funding of 50% may be from the private, community or public sector (including HEIs and Local Authorities). The balance of funding of 50% can be in cash or in-kind\* (with a cash minimum of 10%).

\* **Note:** In-kind contribution will only be accepted in the form of the following:

- Notional value of a premises if donated by one of the parties for use by the project; i.e. market value of potential rent over the period up to 30 June 2022 at the latest.
- Base salary costs of staff seconded full time to the project by one of the applicant group members along with associated overhead (at a max of 30% of salary).

### **3.8.2 Detailed Feasibility Funding Evaluation Criteria**

#### **Quality of Feasibility Proposal – 40%**

- Clarity of the project outlined
- The gap in the current provision that is being addressed due to the the impacts of Covid19, Brexit and other market changes as defined in the scheme objectives including climate change/sustainability, innovation, and digital transition.
- Proposed partners, stakeholders and collaborators in the project
- Target benefits of the initiative, giving special attention to:
  - Strong industry linkages with a focus on specific sectors
  - Linkages to key regional and or national stakeholders including 3<sup>rd</sup> Level and HEIs

#### **Value for Money and Economic Impact – 40%**

- Scale of the proposed project including the proposed costs
- Geographical and sectoral scope of the proposed project
- Planned economic impact and impact on entrepreneurship and enterprise
- Targets and metrics to be achieved

#### **Need for support – 20%**

- Existing infrastructure and support in the area
- Additionality to be delivered by the proposed project to leverage existing resources
- Evidence of need for the proposed project
- The business case for funding support.

### **3.8.3 Feasibility Funding Evaluation Process**

**Stage 1:** Due diligence and project evaluation will be completed on all eligible projects by Enterprise Ireland and a Commercial Evaluator. Please note Enterprise Ireland reserves the right to employ an external Commercial Evaluator to assist in this evaluation process. The output of Stage 1 will be inputted into Stage 2.

**Stage 2:** A Regional Development Executive will assess the eligible application against the stated evaluation criteria based on the application and the outputs of Stage 1. Applications which score at or above the cut-off score of 60% will be recommended for approval to the Management Approvals Committee of Enterprise Ireland.

### **3.9 Funding Approval Process**

Eligible applications received will be assessed by Enterprise Ireland in line with the stated evaluation criteria. Projects shortlisted for funding will be presented to Enterprise Ireland's Management Approvals Committee which will approve funding to successful projects. All funding decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

### **3.10 Closing Date for Applications**

Applications will be on an open call basis. Applicants may apply at any point after the scheme launch on **29 July 2021**. Application Forms are available from the Enterprise Ireland website at [www.enterprise-ireland.com/RETS-Feasibility](http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/RETS-Feasibility) or from your local Enterprise Ireland Regional Office (see contact details in Section 4.7 of this document). Final date for acceptance of applications will be **01 October 2021** or when the available €0.5m RETS Feasibility Fund budget has been fully allocated.

Applications forms can be downloaded from the Enterprise Ireland website and must be submitted electronically in Word format, along with the Project Costs Workbook in Excel format, to Enterprise Ireland at [GA-RETS@enterprise-ireland.com](mailto:GA-RETS@enterprise-ireland.com) before **12:00 noon on 01 October 2021**. **If you require advice on completion of these forms please contact your local Enterprise Ireland Regional Office** (see Section 4.7) or [RETS@enterprise-ireland.com](mailto:RETS@enterprise-ireland.com).

On receipt of an application, an email will be sent to confirm that Enterprise Ireland has received the application form. After initial checks are carried out, each valid application will be acknowledged within three working days.

Applicants who do not receive either acknowledgement should immediately contact [GA-RETS@enterprise-ireland.com](mailto:GA-RETS@enterprise-ireland.com).

### **3.11 Post Approval Stage**

Where an application for RETS Feasibility Study funding has been approved, a Letter of Offer will be issued by Enterprise Ireland detailing the specific eligible expenditure and the grant amounts being offered. All approved projects are subject to the following requirements:

- Projects assisted by the Regional Enterprise Transition Scheme Feasibility Study Grant will be required to provide a business plan or final report on the outcome of the Feasibility Study with the grant claim.

There is a requirement for projects to:

- Supply updates, progress reports and financial information on request; and
- Meet with Enterprise Ireland, as necessary, to report on project progress.

## **4.0 General Information**

### **4.1 Procurement Guidelines**

Successful Applicants should be aware that the public funding of expenditures of private bodies gives rise to procurement obligations for those bodies (*e-tenders*). This is particularly so where the public funding represents in the region of 80% of the contract costs as is the case in this Scheme. The extent of those obligations will depend on the value and type of the expenditure. In general, the higher the value of the expenditure, the greater the obligation.

For these purposes, expenditures may be divided into a number of categories. First, there is the categorisation of above or below threshold contracts. The thresholds are set out in the European Union (Award of Public Authority Contracts) Regulations 2016 (S.I. 284 of 2016)

Accordingly, expenditures (a) over €209,000 (excluding VAT) for goods and/or services contracts and (b) over €5,225,000 (excluding VAT) for construction works contracts, bring the relevant contract within the terms of the 2016 Regulations.

Where the value of the relevant works, goods or services supply contract is below the relevant threshold then less prescriptive requirements which are set out in the Government Procurement Guidelines of July 2017 apply<sup>6</sup>.

### **4.2 False Statements**

Enterprise Ireland will treat any false or misleading statements as a serious matter, which may be used in legal proceedings against the maker of any such statement or any applicant company of which they are an officer.

### **4.3 Information and Publicity and Updates of Documentation**

This Reference Document and other relevant materials may be amended and updated at the discretion of Enterprise Ireland.

### **4.4 Disclosure of information**

Enterprise Ireland will not disclose any information except as required by law, including the Freedom of Information (FOI) Acts 2014, the Data Protection Acts 1998 and 2003 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

Enterprise Ireland's Client Charter is available to read in full at:

[www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/About-Us/Services/Client-Charter/](http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/About-Us/Services/Client-Charter/)

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<sup>6</sup> <https://ogp.gov.ie/public-procurement-guidelines-for-goods-and-services/>

#### **4.5 RETS Scheme Grant Claim Process**

Details of the claim process and required documentation are available on the 'Process A Claim' section of the Enterprise Ireland Website at:

[www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/Process/Companies/](http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/Process/Companies/)

Successful applicants for RETS Scheme funding should make one (1) Grant Claim which must be submitted before 12:00 noon on **17 November 2021 at the latest** for payment in 2021.

Only RETS Scheme expenditure incurred in 2021 is eligible for support.

#### **4.6 RETS Feasibility Study Grant Claim Process**

Details of the claim process and required documentation are available on the 'Process A Claim' section of the Enterprise Ireland Website at:

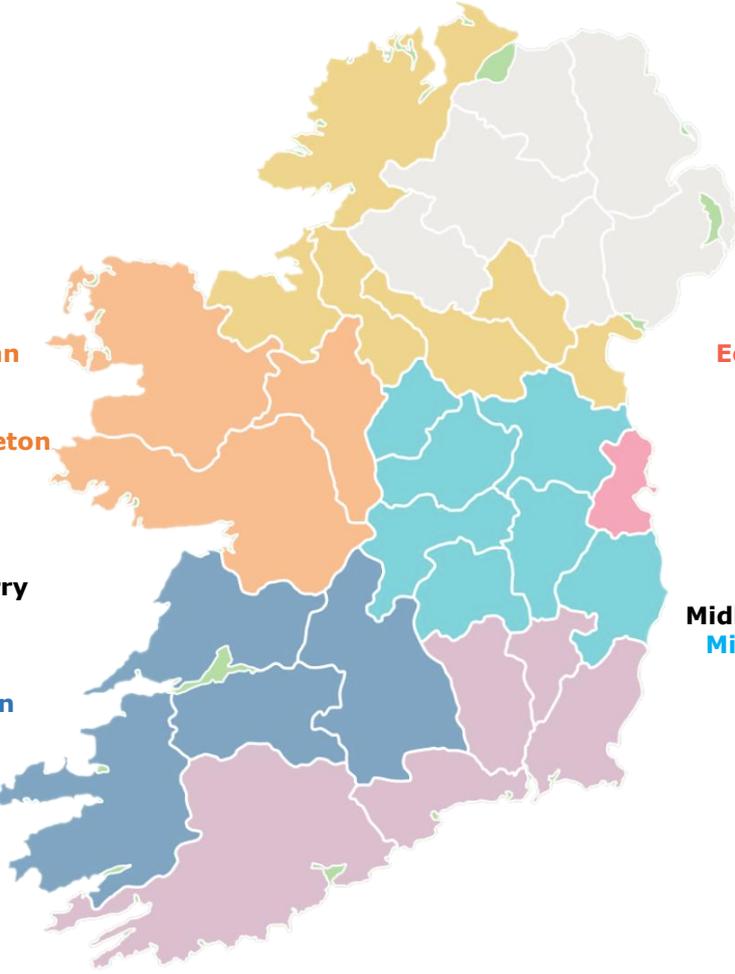
[www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/Process/Companies/](http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/Process/Companies/)

Successful applicants for Feasibility Study Funding should make a one (1) Grant Claim at the conclusion of the project. The Grant Claim must be submitted before 12:00 noon on **03 June 2022 at the latest**.

RETS Feasibility Study expenditure incurred up to June 2022 will be eligible for support.

#### 4.7 Further Information

For more information contact the Regional Funds Manager, [Brendan.McCormack@enterpriseireland.com](mailto:Brendan.McCormack@enterpriseireland.com), or any of the following Enterprise Ireland Regional Executives based on your location:



The map shows Ireland divided into several regions, each color-coded and associated with specific contact information:

- North-West** (Yellow): Aidan McKenna (042) 9354420; Carole Brennan (071) 9159726; Joan Mullen (071) 9159732
- West** (Orange): Meabh Conaghan (091) 735920; Margaret Charleton (091) 735946
- Mid-West & Kerry** (Blue): Jerry Moloney (061) 777018; Catherine Hogan (061) 777009; Gillian Slattery (091) 735936
- South** (Pink): Martin Corkery (021) 4800229; Ciara Concannon (021) 4800231; Jacqui Norton (021) 4800228
- North-East** (Yellow): Aidan McKenna (042) 9354420; Deirdre Craven (042) 9354426
- Dublin** (Red): Eoghan Hanrahan (01) 7272289; Deirdre O'Neill (01) 7272145; Ena Coleman (01) 7272787
- Midlands / Mid-East** (Cyan): Michael Brougham (0906) 487121; James Maloney (0906) 487125; Mark Atterbury (0906) 487128
- South-East** (Pink): Martin Corkery (021) 4800229; Brian Fives (051) 333537

Or your local [Regional Enterprise Ireland office](#).