

Bord na Móna

**Mountlucas Wind Farm
Community Gains Scheme 2025
Terms and Conditions**

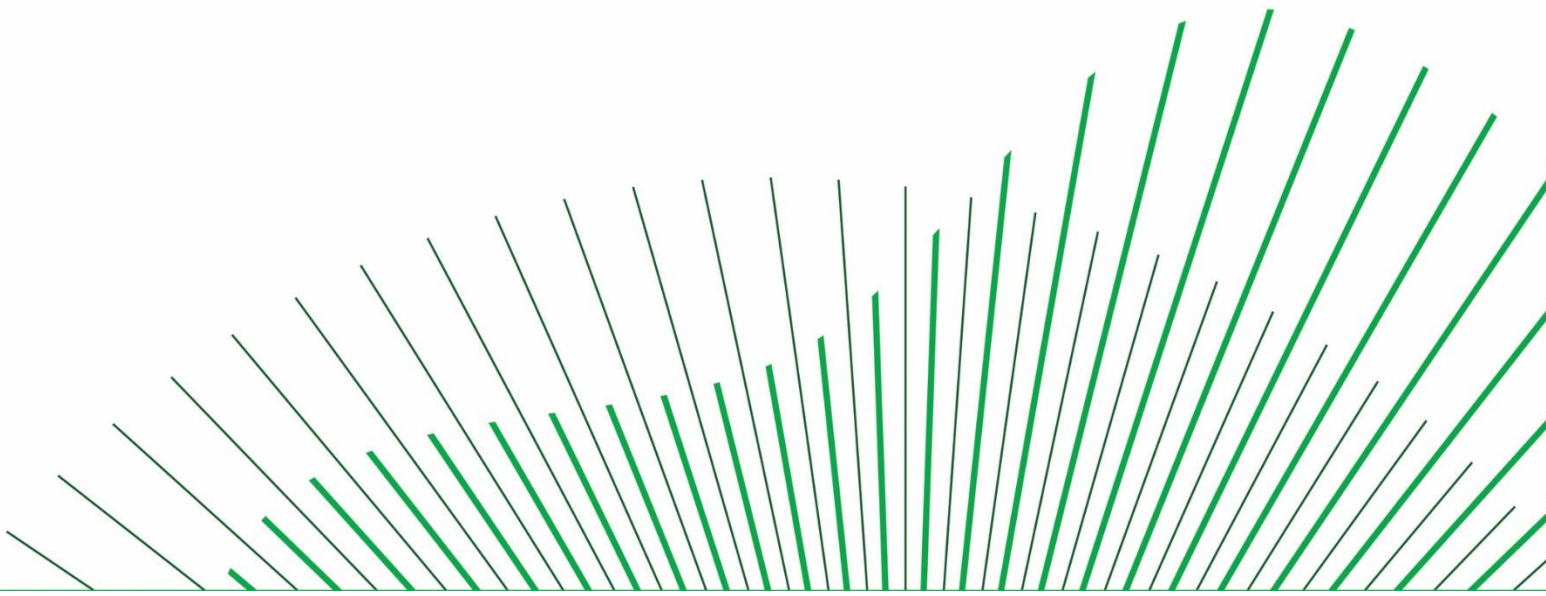


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Overview

The 2025 Mountlucas Wind Farm Community Gains Scheme (“The Scheme”) is now open for applications. The Scheme is open **from 24th February 2025 to 7th April 2025** to local community-based project groups and voluntary organisations located within, or working with, communities in the vicinity of the development. Please ensure to read these terms and conditions before beginning your application. The 2025 fund value for the Mountlucas Wind Farm Community Gains Scheme is **€101,824.59**.

Note: Submission of an application does not guarantee funding. Each funding application will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the Scheme Criteria outlined in this document. As per the Scheme Terms and Conditions, only one application per group, per year may be submitted.

Should your application be successful, in order to drawdown the grant award, each applicant group will be required to upload invoices, receipts, testimonials, project images and additional evidence to demonstrate project expenditure was undertaken in accordance with the Grant Agreement. **It is essential to note that payment cannot be made until the project is complete, the goods are in hand, and any other conditions set out in the Grant Agreement were met.** If, for some reason, the project has been delayed and will not be completed by the closing date, the Fund Administrator (Bord na Móna) should be notified immediately.

The Fund may facilitate advance payments should the Fund Committee and/or Bord na Móna/Mountlucas Wind Farm Ltd wish to do so. These projects will be decided on a case-by-case basis. However, on completion of the project the applicant group will be required to upload invoices, receipts, testimonials, project images and additional evidence to demonstrate project expenditure was undertaken in accordance with the Grant Agreement.

1. Eligibility

1.1 Eligible Funding Area

Bord na Móna’s Mountlucas Wind Farm wishes to ensure that communities adjacent to the wind farm are the immediate beneficiaries of this Fund. Projects located in the vicinity of the wind farm will be considered first and given priority – subject to the project meeting the overall terms and conditions of the Scheme and meeting all other eligible criteria set out in this document.

If there is insufficient demand for project funding within the immediate area, other projects from the wider locality may be considered. We recognise that some organisations and groups which serve the immediate communities may operate out of areas that are located within the wider locality of the wind farm. These applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

1.2 Eligible Groups

Applications are welcome from not-for-profit groups such as community and voluntary groups, charities, social enterprises and clubs and societies. A key criterion is that the Fund should be used to benefit the local community as a whole.

Groups / organisations applying to the Fund should be members of Offaly Public Participation Network (PPN) or can demonstrate that they are in the process of registering.

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Collaborative applications between groups are eligible, however your application must have a clear lead applicant and include your organisation's structure and project management structure. If the application is from a partnership or consortium, you will need to clearly identify who will 'be in charge' of the facility or project. The lead applicant will be the sole point of contact during the grant process and contract duration (if applicable).

Schools are eligible to apply for funding however you will be required to demonstrate that the fund is not a substitute for government funding.

Applications will not be accepted from groups who are currently in receipt of funding from the Clonreen Wind Farm Funds for the same project spend. Applicants will be required to indicate if they have also applied for funding for the same itemised project costs through the Clonreen Wind Farm Community Funds.

A maximum of one application can be submitted from each group / organisation per fund cycle. Note if your organisation is granted a multi-annual award in a given fund cycle then it cannot reapply to the Scheme until the Multi Annual has been fully drawn down.

The following qualifying criteria will apply:

- Benefiting entity must be satisfactorily constituted.
- Benefiting entity must be not-for-profit
- Benefiting entity must be tax compliant (where relevant).
- Membership of the benefiting entity must be open and non-discriminatory.
- Benefiting project must not espouse any political, religious, or social exclusion philosophy, doctrine or policy.
- Projects must have a clearly identifiable benefit for their community, and its local residents.

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2. Project and Grant Values

2.1 Ineligible Costs

The below costs will not be eligible to receive funding:

1. Projects operated by individuals/private sector organisations.
2. Projects which directly promote/advance any religion/faith.
3. Projects which directly promote/advance any political party.
4. Projects which provide unnecessary duplicate activities/services/infrastructure within the community.
5. Projects which do not directly benefit the local community and are not deemed as 'not-for-profit'.
6. Projects which seek to purchase/cover the cost of the following: Salaries of core staff and Operating Costs.
7. Objects that duplicate work that the sponsor or other third parties have already committed to or completed in the area.
8. Projects that may damage the reputation of the sponsor or that conflict with or adversely affect the aim, objectives, or policy of Mountlucas Wind Farm Ltd and Bord na Móna or other associated company.
9. Existing loans, debts, or retrospective supports – you must apply for future needs.
10. Applications that only benefit an individual
11. General sponsorship requests i.e. funds that are not associated with particular project costs.
12. The direct replacement of statutory funding*

**The Mountlucas Wind Farm Community Gains Scheme is not designed to support statutory or other accountable bodies unless they can provide evidence that the project is community-led, open, accessible and for the benefit of the community and is not a statutory responsibility. Therefore, if a school wishes to apply to the Fund, they must demonstrate that their project would not normally be funded by the Department of Education and Skills. If in doubt, please contact the project team via Mountlucaswindfarm@bnm.ie with your enquiries.*

2.2 Grant Values

We recognise that community groups may be at different stages in their projects and to ensure a range of community organisations can benefit from the Fund there are three strands of grant funding you can apply for:

Stand	Value	Timeframe for delivery	Maximum Grant Available
A. Small Grants	€200 - €4,999	6 months	100% - however contribution of own funds viewed favourably
B. Medium Grants	€5,000 - €10,000	6 months	90% - at least 10% contribution of own funds is required
C. Large Grants (also includes Multi Annual Funding)	€10,001+	6 months – 5 years	80% - at least 20% contribution of own funds is required

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Small Grants: Between €200 - €4,999

Applications are welcome from new and established community groups for this strand. Projects must be delivered within 6 months of the signing of a Grant Agreement by the successful applicant. Up to 100% funding can be granted under this strand.

The final date for project completion will indicatively be December 2025, however the exact date will be detailed in the letter of offer (if applicable).

Medium Grant €5,000 and €10,000

Applications are welcome from new and established community groups for this strand. Projects must be delivered within 6 months of the signing of a Grant Agreement by the successful applicant. Up to 90% funding can be granted under this strand. At least 10% contribution of own funds is required.

The final date for project completion will indicatively be December 2025, however the exact date will be detailed in the letter of offer (if applicable).

Large Grants €10,001+

For larger grants, applicants will be required to demonstrate sustainability and lasting impact including plans for maintenance, running and upkeep if the application relates to infrastructure or large equipment. Evidence that your group is well-established with experience of delivering projects will also be required. Large-scale projects that need capital, facilities and equipment must show how they will benefit the entire community and engage more than one local user group. Up to 80% funding can be granted under this strand. At least 20% contribution of own funds is required.

Depending on the volume of eligible applications, successful applicants may not be awarded the full amount applied for and instead may be awarded a percentage of their proposed budget. Applicants may be asked what they will prioritise if they do not receive the full amount.

Depending on the value of the award, Projects under this strand must be delivered within 6 months to 5 years of the signing of a Grant Agreement by the successful applicant. The final date for project completion will indicatively be December 2025, however the exact date will be detailed in the letter of offer (if applicable). The ability of applicants to deliver their project within this timeframe will be a consideration during the evaluation phase, particularly for larger projects.

Multi-Annual Funding Explained : €10,001+

As the Fund is established for the lifetime of the wind farm, there is an opportunity for transformative projects to be delivered in the area. Support to large or phased projects can also be facilitated through a multi-annual agreement. These projects will likely have strategic or legacy benefits to the area. Up to 80% funding can be granted under this strand. At least 20% contribution of own funds is required.

A Multi Annual Fund Award occurs when the funding requested by an applicant is greater than the amount of funding available (to offer) for example if a project requests a grant of €100,000 but only €10,000 is available, a multi annual fund award of €10,000 each year for 10 years may be offered. This lump sum is a guarantee of funds over a number of years. If you require bridging finance to complete the project your group can now take this offer of a multi annual fund award to a social finance

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organisation* such as Clann Credo and Community Finance Ireland who can offer you an upfront loan based on this offer.

**Similar supports may be available through your local credit union and banking institutions.*

A part of a Multi Annual a contract is issued to the group for an overall sum, which is then paid in set instalments on an annual basis over 2-10 years. For projects seeking high value multi-annual funding, clear and long-lasting benefit to the community at large must be demonstrated in their application. It will be important to demonstrate that satisfactory and appropriate governance is in place as well as a clear financial plan alongside the capacity to deliver a project at scale. The award must be fully drawn down before a group can apply for further funding.

2.3 Community Contribution

Under Medium Grants, applicants must show they will contribute at least 10% of the total project costs. While under Large Grants, applicants must show they will contribute at least 20% of the total project costs. The contribution towards the costs can come from public funding, the groups own savings, or borrowings. This demonstrates the community groups involvement and commitment to the project.

2.4 Co-Funding

Projects which are seeking co-funding from the Fund are welcomed. You will be required to outline this is your proposed budget and provide proof that you have secured, or are in the process of securing, this additional funding. If the additional funding is not secured in time for the project commencement, we recommend waiting until the next round of funding in 2026 to apply.

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3. Creating Positive Impact

The overall aim of the Fund is to increase public and environmental wellbeing in the community and support projects that will improve the area and quality of life for residents. Applications will be marked according to how well they demonstrate alignment with the Priority Themes of the Fund.

3.1 Priority Themes

Projects will also be required to demonstrate they meet at least one of the seven priority thematic areas which are detailed below: Some examples for projects are given under each of the themes.

Biodiversity

This theme includes projects which help to protect, preserve, and enhance habitats and life in your community, in particular those that contribute to ecosystem restoration in your area. For example:

- Wildlife ponds
- Community gardens
- Native tree planting
 - Living walls and green roofs
- Pollinators friendly car parks
- Biodiversity signage and walking trails
- Pollinator plants and wildflower meadows
- Native hedgerows around sports facilities
- Initiatives for education and awareness raising
- Feeders and nest boxes for birds, bugs, and bats

Environmental Sustainability

This theme includes projects which enhance the local, natural, and built environment for the community, community energy efficiency and climate action schemes, or actions as part of a Sustainable Energy Community. For example:

- Community transport
- Water efficiency projects
- Initiatives to tackle food waste
- Sustainable energy communities
- Cycling and walking infrastructure
- Solar panels for renewable energy generation
- Community building insulation and energy upgrades
- Energy efficient lighting and appliances to reduce energy use
- Circular economy initiatives which enable “reduce, reuse and recycle”

Recreation

This theme includes projects which deliver community-based recreation and sport activities. For example:

- Playgrounds
- Leisure amenities

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- Sports equipment
- Outdoor recreation space
- Art, music, and other equipment
- Developing and upgrading sports facilities
- Nature based or outdoor recreation facilities

Social Solidarity

This theme includes projects which generate greater social cohesion and/or generates health and well-being benefits at a local level. For example:

- Sensory gardens
- Community transport initiatives
- Community wellbeing initiatives
- Technology for community spaces
- Addressing dereliction in the community
- Defibrillators and other safety equipment
- Youth and active age facilities and initiatives
- Improving accessibility in community spaces
- Projects to support the integration of new communities
- Developing and enhancing community meeting space and facilities

Culture and Heritage

This theme includes projects which increase cultural awareness and preserve and promote local heritage or enhance local museums or heritage centres. For example:

- Public art and murals
- Community noticeboards
- Music and arts equipment
- Local and heritage signage
- Town and village enhancement
- Protecting/restoring local artifacts or structures
- Culture, heritage, community led tourism and festivals

Tourism

The theme includes projects which develop new, or strengthen existing, tourism initiatives, and/or which contribute to the local economy. For example:

- Signage
- Festivals
- Walking trails
- Eco-camp sites
- Water-based activities

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Education

This theme includes projects which develop new and strengthen existing education initiatives and contribute to the local community. For example:

- Recycling initiatives
- Biodiversity awareness programmes
- Training programmes and workshops
- Sustainability awareness programmes

We would also encourage groups to consider local strategies or plans that have been developed for their area which may outline local needs or projects already identified.

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4. How to Apply

Before you begin your application, **please ensure you have read the Scheme Terms & Conditions thoroughly**. Applicants should allow approximately 45-60 minutes to complete their application.

All applications must be made via on the online platform – Submit.com. The link can be accessed by visiting www.mountlucaswindfarm.ie. You will be asked to set up an account on this platform and verify your email address. No postal or email applications will be accepted.

The application portal will close **on April 7th at 5.00pm** and you will no longer be able to access the application. Once your application is submitted it cannot be amended. **Late applications will not be accepted.**

4.1 Application Requirements and Documentation

The following lists the documentation you will need to submit when applying to the fund. If any documentation is missing, your application may be rejected and not considered for evaluation. Please note any documentation supplied at application stage or thereafter should always be in the name of the group / organisation / individual applying for the grant.

Please read this section carefully before submitting your application

Constitution Document

Please submit your groups / organisations Constitution Document. Your group / organisation should be properly constituted. Your constitution should be signed and dated and should outline your group / organisation's purpose, as well as its governance and committee structure. Please note, at a minimum a constitution should include confirmation that:

- The organisation has charitable purposes.
- Is not for profit in nature; and that No directors or trustees are remunerated.

PPN Registration

It is preferred if applicants are registered with Offaly Public Participation Network (PPN). You may be required to submit your PPN number on application or evidence that you are in the process of registering. Evidence may include a record of correspondence with your PPN Coordinator or that an application is in progress.

Planning Permission

All projects work relating to renovation/ construction/ refurbishment/ structural/ ground works/ civil works the following is required:

1. Proof of planning permission or a letter of exemption from the relevant Local Authority or Local Area Engineer.
2. A lease or letter of permission from the owner/landowner to undertake the proposed works is required if the applicant group is not the owner of the premises/location. The lease must be valid for the next 5 years at a minimum. The letter of permission must be dated within 3 months of the application submission date and remain valid for a minimum of 5 years.

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If you do not have planning permissions or planning exemptions in place for your project, your project will not be funded. If you are in the process of getting planning permission, please wait until this has been granted and then apply for the next round of funding. If planning permission, planning application number, or a letter of exemption from the relevant Local Authority or local area engineer has not been uploaded with the application form then your project will not be evaluated for a grant award.

If you feel your project does not require planning permission/exemption, you may provide an explanation as to why you feel this is the case e.g. this may be detailing a conversation you have had with your local authority or local area engineer. It is important to note that it is the responsibility of the applicant group to provide the relevant permissions. If your project passes evaluation stage, and it is later determined that an aspect requires planning or exemption from planning the funding offer will be withdrawn.

4.2 Quotations

Quotations must be submitted with all applications to verify the value of each item/service you wish to purchase as follows:

1. If any individual item is less than €5,000 (i.e. Up to €4,999), – minimum **one** quote is required.
2. If any individual item costs €5,000 or more – you must provide **three** quotes from three different suppliers.
3. Where a proposed project involves the contracting of work or the purchase of materials, three quotations from three different suppliers for **each** of these should be obtained and submitted, unless exceptional circumstances exist where these cannot be provided.

All quotes must be clear and include the suppliers name and address. Quotes must be dated within 3 months of application submission.

Bank/Credit Union Account

You will need to ensure you have a bank/credit union account in the name of the group/ individual applying for the grant. All project expenditure must be made through this account and grant payments will be paid into this account. A bank/credit union statement will be requested once a grant offer has been made to your group.

Tax Clearance/Charity Status

For grant awards valued in excess of €10,000, you will need to ensure you have Tax Clearance (tax reference number and access number) in place for the duration of the grant contract. Evidence of this will be requested once grant offer has been awarded to your group. Similarly, if you are registered charity, you will need to provide proof of your CHY number (Charitable Tax Exemption) from Revenue once grant offer has been awarded.

VAT Registration Status

Please ensure you are aware of the VAT Registration Status of your group/organisation. Applicants will be asked to confirm at application stage if they are registered to claim back VAT or not from Revenue. The reason applicants are asked this, is to establish if applicants have any other way of claiming back the VAT costs related to their projects. If a group has a VAT ID and is registered to claim back VAT, then they can claim back the VAT costs on their project from Revenue. Therefore, this group

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is not eligible to claim the VAT costs on their project from this fund. If an applicant is not registered to claim back VAT and have no other way of claiming back the VAT costs on their project, therefore are eligible to claim the VAT costs related to their project from the fund.

Vat Registration Status	Can I claim my project VAT costs from the Fund
My group is registered to claim back VAT	No
My group is not registered to claim back VAT	Yes

Registration Status

Registered charities can also claim certain VAT costs through the VAT Compensation Scheme. Charities will be asked to declare whether they can claim any of the project related VAT costs through this scheme. If they can, the charity will not be eligible to claim their project related VAT costs from this fund.

When detailing your project costs, if possible, please provide a breakdown of your costs exclusive and inclusive of VAT.

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5. Support for Applicants

5.1 How to Prepare a Strong Application

The Fund Committee will judge the potential impact of your project and the capacity of your group to deliver it based on your application. In order to make sure you have put the best case forward for your project to receive funding, please make sure you:

- Have completed all questions on the application form.
- Have uploaded all supporting documentation required.
- Use photos and videos to explain your group and your project.
- Include a clear plan for how your group can deliver on the project.
- Demonstrate the positive impact this funding will have in your community.
- Refer to the priority themes and how your project will address one or more of them.
- Clearly outline who will benefit from your project, including numbers of users/participants from within the priority area.
 - If you are looking for part funding, demonstrate that you have further funds in place or a clear pathway to accessing these funds.

We advise you to avoid these common errors:

- Submitting an incomplete application.
- Not reading and adhering to the guidelines.
- Project costs that do not comply with quotes.
- Poor project description or lack of information.
- Lack of clarity around ownership or planning permission.
- No appropriate governance or committee structure demonstrated.
- Missing paperwork such as quotes, evidence of planning permission or an exemption from planning permission.
- Proposing a project that is not within the area of benefit outlined or does not provide a service to a community within the area of benefit.

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6. Evaluation of Applications

Once the application window has closed, all applications will be screened for eligibility. If an applicant does not meet any of the below criteria, it will not proceed to the next phase of evaluation.

The Fund Committee will be responsible for assessing all applications and ensuring a fair and objective distribution of grants across the funding area. This Committee, chaired by Bord na Móna, will include a representative from -Mountlucas Wind Farm Ltd as well as volunteer members of the community. Please note, canvassing or lobbying of any Fund Committee member will result in automatic disqualification.

6.1 Screening for Eligibility

Bord na Móna will undertake an initial review of the applications to determine whether any applications are considered ineligible based on both the ineligible costs and eligibility criteria outlined in the Fund Terms and Conditions. For clarification, the eligibility criteria include:

Eligibility Criteria	Objective
Qualifying Criteria/Eligibility of Project	The project meets the qualifying criteria of the Scheme and is not on the list of ineligible items and/or activities
Applicant Status	The project is proposed by a community group, not-for-profit entity, or social enterprise.
Completeness of Application	The application is complete, all questions have been provided with a response and all required documentation has been submitted with application

Any Project that does not pass this stage will be deemed invalid and will not be forwarded to the Fund Committee for consideration.

6.2 Evaluation Criteria

These criteria will be given weightings in accordance with their importance for the local community. Extra weighting will be given to the project location and also proposals that have a sustainability aspect.

- a) Proximity to wind farm (this carries the most weight).
- b) Sustainability
- c) Value for Money of the Project to the Community
- d) Range and number of people served.
- e) Range of categories served.
- f) Degree to which socially marginalised are catered for
- g) Robustness of Application
- h) Flagship project (where relevant).

The decision to award funds depends on the outcome of the evaluation process. Clarifications and additional information may be sought for applications. For Large Grant requests You may be asked for an interview (via Zoom) to further discuss the proposal.

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7. Grant Offer

Applications will be evaluated in May- June 2025 and it is expected that applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application by June 2025. Please note, if we are experiencing any delays due to application volume, we will inform you of same. All applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application through electronic communication.

7.1 If your application is successful

If your project is successful, a Grant Letter of Offer containing the terms and conditions of the offer will be issued to you. Accompanying this letter will be:

- The Grant Agreement to be signed by the successful applicant. This agreement must be entered into between Mountlucas Wind Farm Ltd and the group/ organisation /individual receiving the funding.
- An information document providing details in relation to (i) the grant process, (ii) how to draw down the grant and (iii) what documentation needs to be submitted.
- A request for further documentation:
 - Bank Account Details
 - Applicant Tax Clearance Certificate/Charity Status - Must be valid for duration of the Grant Agreement.

The Grant Agreement must be signed by successful applicants and all requested documentation returned within 15 working days. Due to this deadline, project groups should ensure all documentation is ready and available in the event of a successful grant award. The provisional grant offer may also stipulate conditions which will need to be fulfilled within the 15-day timeframe in order to finalise your grant offer. **Please note, no expenditure in relation to grant aided elements of the project should be incurred until the Grant Agreement has been signed.**

7.2 Drawdown

In order to drawdown the grant award, each applicant group will be required to submit invoices, receipts, bank statements, testimonials, project images and additional evidence to demonstrate project expenditure was undertaken in accordance with the Grant Agreement. It is essential to note that payment cannot be made until the project is complete, the goods are in hand, and any other conditions set out in the Grant Agreement were met.

If, for some reason, the project has become delayed and will not be completed by the closing date, the Scheme Administrator should be notified immediately, and the Scheme Committee can consider the matter. Successful applicants will be required to monitor and report progress in relation to the supported projects at agreed intervals.

Evaluation reports will be made available for completion. In the event a group does not complete a project in full accordance with the contract, the Scheme may seek reimbursement of the initial funding provided to the group/organisation. Inspections may take place or additional information requests may be made to ensure compliance with the Schemes obligations.

The Fund may facilitate advance payments should the Fund Committee and/or Bord na Móna/Mountlucas Wind Farm Ltd wish to do so. These projects will be decided on a case-by-case basis. However, on completion of the project the applicant group will be required to upload invoices, receipts, testimonials, project images and additional evidence to demonstrate project expenditure was undertaken in accordance with the Grant Agreement.

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7.3 Promotion

It is important that the work of the Mountlucas Wind Farm Community Gains Scheme and Bord na Móna is 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 development and Bord na Móna in any publicity they might produce, and
2. Allow and participate in any publicity that the wind farm development and Bord na Móna might organise.
3. Where applicable, permanent signage will be required to be erected acknowledging the support of the wind farm.

Appropriate signage will be supplied by Mountlucas Wind Farm Community Gains Scheme and/or Bord na Móna.

7.4 If your application is unsuccessful

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing. Throughout the evaluation process, care will be taken to assess all applications against criteria in a consistent and equitable way. There is no process of appeal on the decisions of the Fund Committee

8. Important Dates

Fund Opening Date: Monday 24th February 2025 at 9.00am

Fund Closing Date: Monday 7th April at 5.00pm

9. Contact Information

Applicants requiring help or support with their application can contact the project team via Mountlucaswindfarm@bnm.ie with their enquiries, or alternatively call our Community Liaison Specialists:

Niall on 087-9951174

Padraig on 087-0643734

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Publicity Notice

Mountlucas Wind Farm Ltd and Bord na Móna are committed to operating the Mountlucas Wind Farm Community Gains Scheme (the “Scheme”) in an open and transparent manner. Mountlucas Wind Farm Ltd and Bord na Móna will publish details about the Scheme on the Mountlucas Wind Farm project website, and the application portal. Where appropriate we will use social media and local media to highlight the benefits of the Fund to the local community.

Data Protection

Any personal data you provide to Bord na Móna Plc in connection with your application to the Community Gain Scheme will be processed in accordance with our obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018.

Disclaimer

Mountlucas Wind Farm Ltd and Bord na Móna Plc shall not be liable in respect of any loss, damage or costs of any nature arising directly or indirectly from this application or the subject matter of the application. Mountlucas Wind Farm Ltd and Bord na Móna Plc, its servants or agents shall not at any time in any circumstances be held responsible or liable in relation to any matter whatsoever arising in connection with the development, planning, construction, operation, management and/or administration of individual projects.