

Amarenco Solar Farms Community Benefit Funds

Introduction

Prior to making an application it is essential that you read this document, which sets out eligibility criteria of the Amarenco **Solar Farm Community Benefit Funds** (the 'Fund'). In particular how to apply to the fund, project criteria and payment process.

It is highly recommended to involve SECAD early in the project planning stage and before submitting an application. This will help ensure your project meets all the guidelines.

About Amarenco

Amarenco is an independent solar energy producer headquartered in Cork, Ireland, founded in 2013. The company develops and operates solar photovoltaic projects for communities, industries, and commercial enterprises, aiming to accelerate the transition to renewable energy.

With more than 300 employees and partnerships spanning multiple sectors, Amarenco focuses on sustainability and aligning with global climate goals such as the Paris Agreement. Its mission is to combine economic growth with ecological responsibility through innovative solar solutions. Their aim is to help combat climate change and accelerating a net zero future where clean energy powers our lives.

The Community Benefit Funds

The Community Benefit Funds are offered to support 'projects' that will best support the needs of a specific focus or target group, as determined locally. These 'projects' could be actions, activities or undertakings aimed to achieve these ambitions, having a positive impact on those involved, ensuring the inclusion and priority of those closest to the renewable energy asset providing these resources.

The investment could be to purchase, access or improve materials, equipment, land or buildings that are deemed critical to achieving or undertaking this activity.

When considering how to maximise the use and impact of these funds we would encourage the community to:

- Choose Sustainable and Recyclable Materials
- Where possible, prioritise local materials and suppliers
- Focus on re-usable, on-going, and legacy impact

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).

The Community Benefit Fund value is based on energy produced by the solar farm each year and will vary year to year.

What the Fund Can and Cannot Support

The fund aims to support projects and activities which clearly benefit initiatives under the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals have been set by the UN for all countries to deal with the worldwide challenge to develop sustainably now and into the next century.

Particular emphasis is placed on applicant to address challenges under **Goals 4, 7, 11 and 13**. That is, Quality Education, Affordable and Clean Energy, Sustainable Cities and Communities and Climate Action.

Goal 4 - Quality Education: Projects to support knowledge and skills needed in communities to promote sustainable development, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles.

Goal 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy: Projects to support energy efficiency projects or initiatives that encourage and deliver renewable electricity generation projects.

Goal 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities: Projects to strengthen efforts to protect and enhance the cultural and natural heritage of the local community. Funds to be used to implement projects towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation, and adaptation to climate change.

Goal 13 - Climate Action: Projects to improve education, awareness and improve capacity on climate change early warning, mitigation, adaptation and impact reduction

For further information on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, please visit <https://irelandsdg.geohive.ie/>

The Fund cannot support projects/activities, if one or more of the following apply:

- Projects operated/owned by individuals/private sector organisations
- Projects which directly promote/advance:
 - any religion/faith
 - any political party
- Projects where work has commenced prior to application
- Activities which do not directly benefit the local community or align with the funding strategy or theme
- Projects which directly replace statutory organisations/activities/funding
- Running costs of a school or state supported service

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 SECAD.

Sample Projects

- **Biodiversity:** A project to protect, preserve and enhance habitats in particular those that contribute to biodiversity and nature, such as, community allotments or bird habitats, nature trails etc.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Projects that enhances the local, natural, and built environment. Actions to deliver on recommendations from Energy Master Plans and measures that support energy savings, and the circular economy are welcome.
- **Recreation:** Projects that delivers community-based sport and recreation activities, such as, upgrades to running tracks for local athletics clubs, out-door classrooms or sensory gardens in community areas and playgrounds.
- **Social Solidarity:** Projects that generates greater social cohesion and/or health and well-being benefits. Such as, Men and Women Shed activities or inclusive community festivals or events.
- **Culture and Heritage Projects** that increases cultural awareness and preserves and promotes your local heritage.

How to make an application to the Fund

Register and login to the online application form at:

<https://solarcommunityfunds.ie/amarenco/>

Document Requirements

When submitting your application, include the following documents:

1. A copy of a recent **Bank Statement** header from your organisation's bank, credit union or post office account, showing the name on the account, BIC and IBAN.
2. A copy of your organisation's **signed and dated Constitution** (a template is available on request from SECAD).
Please note, at a minimum a constitution should include confirmation that:
The organisation has a charitable purpose
Is not for profit in nature; and that
No directors or trustees are remunerated
A community group should be properly constituted with a named Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.
3. **Quotations** to verify the value of each item / service you wish to purchase, as follows costs:
 - Up to €5,000 – 1 quote is required
 - Over €5,000 – 3 quotes are required to demonstrate that you are seeking good value for money

4. Permissions

Owner/Planning Permissions: For works relating to renovation / construction / refurbishment, the following is required:

Where the applicant group is not the owner of the premises, a lease or letter of permission from the owner to undertake to proposed works

Planning permission, or a letter of exemption from the relevant Local Authority. Please follow these links for further information on [planning](#) requirements.

5. Tax and Vat Compliance

Tax Compliance

SECAD requests that applicants, for expenditure in excess of €10,000 Tax Clearance access details must be available for both the applicant and product / service provider.

Tax Clearance details must be submitted at claim stage.

VAT Compliance

Please note, if your organization is VAT registered, no claim for payment may be made for the VAT element of expenditure. Primary schools are the exception to this, they are VAT registered and pay VAT directly to Revenue, it cannot be reclaimed.

Evaluation Criteria

Each application received by the Fund will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Completeness and robustness of application, considering the project timelines and costs
- Range and number of people the project will benefit and serve
- Range of categories addressed, as outlined in 'What the Fund Can and Cannot Support' section above.
- Project lifespan and endurance
- Positive outcome for the community as a whole, demonstrating that it is addressing a need and is delivering an inclusive and sustained benefit.

Co-Funding

Projects which are seeking co-funding from the Fund are welcomed, such as LEADER, Sports Capital etc. You will be required to outline this in your application and provide proof that you have secured, or are in the process of securing, this additional funding.

Double Funding

Duplication of Funding is prohibited, that is projects that are receiving funding from any other funding stream for items and costs you will be listing in your application.

Key dates

The key dates regarding the 2025 call are as follows:

Fund opening date:	15 th December 2025
Fund closing date:	26 th of January 2026
Notification of outcome:	End of February 2026

Once you have submitted your application

You will receive an e-mail to confirm receipt of your application.

SECAD will make checks to ensure the applicant organisation and project meets the funds' eligibility criteria. Your project application will be reviewed, during which time you may be contacted to discuss the project in more detail or provide additional clarifications.

The Decision-Making Process

The decision to award a grant is finalised by SECAD in consultation with Amarenco.

Please note the decision to award a grant is final.

Feedback

Throughout SECAD's grant-making policy and funding programmes, care is taken to assess all applications in a careful, consistent, and equitable way. SECAD can provide feedback on unsuccessful applications.

Grant Offer

Successful applicants will receive a provisional Letter of Offer and Contract, which must be accepted, signed and returned within 15 working days.

Please note the provisional 'Letter of Offer' may stipulate conditions which will need to be fulfilled within the 15-day timeframe. Such as, confirming owner's permission on a project location or additional quotations.

Successful applicants will also receive details and guidance relating to the drawdown of funds.

Please note: no expenditure in relation to grant aided elements of the project should be incurred until the signed contract has been received by the applicant group.

Project closing dates

All contracts contain a closing date after which time your grant offer will lapse and cease to be payable, generally this is 12 months from date of issue. If, for some reason, your project is delayed and will not be completed by the closing date, please contact SECAD immediately.

Breach of Terms and Conditions

In the event that SECAD considers an applicant has breached the terms and conditions of grant aid, SECAD reserve the right to request the return of the total grant awarded. SECAD may also stipulate that no future applications for funding will be accepted from the organisation for a minimum of two years and then only if the organisation can provide evidence that action has been taken to strengthen their capacity, which will include evidence of support sought from appropriate support/umbrella organisations.

Payment

If your project is successful, a Grant Letter of Offer containing the terms and conditions of the offer will be issued by SECAD to you.

Project payment is made retrospectively of works being completed.

Upon request, and on a case-by-case basis, an advance payment may be allowed.

If your application is successful, instructions will be provided to each group regarding the Claims Process. In the event a group does not complete the project in full accordance with the Letter of Offer and Contract, SECAD may not make the final payment and may seek reimbursement of the initial funding provided to the group.

No expenditure in relation to grant aided elements of the project should be incurred until the Grant Agreement has been signed by the applicant group and SECAD.

Claim for Payment

In order to drawdown the grant award, each applicant group will be required to upload 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 SECAD should be notified.

In the event a group does not complete a project in full accordance with the contract, the Fund may seek reimbursement of the initial funding provided to the group/organisation.

Bank Account / Project Payments

Each applicant to supply a bank, post office or credit union account in the name of the organisation/group and that all payments should be made through this account.

Project Monitoring

SECAD and Amarenco reserve the right to undertake a monitoring visit to any of the funded projects.

Further Information

Please get in touch with SECAD if you have any questions:

Tel: 021 4613432

E-mail: info@secad.ie

SECAD Partnership CLG

Midleton Community Enterprise
Knockgriffin,
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