**Comhar na nOileán Announce Funding Boost for Social Enterprises**

Comhar na nOileán are inviting applications from local social enterprises for the Small Capital Grants Scheme, announced this week by Mr Michael Ring TD, [Minister for Rural and Community Development](https://www.gov.ie/en/role/0df872-minister-for-rural-and-community-development/).

The scheme will provide grants of between €2,000 and €15,000 for equipment, repairs or refurbishments which will enable social enterprises to improve their service.

The scheme is an initiative under the National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2018-2022, which the Minister published in July, and will be administered through the Local Development Companies.

Along with other Local Development Companies throughout Ireland, our staff has been supporting social enterprises through SICAP, LEADER and other programmes for many years and this new fund will give the sector a significant boost, particularly by assisting early stage projects that have huge capacity for positive social impact.

Announcing the scheme, Minister Ring said:

“One of the main objectives of the National Social Enterprise Policy, which I launched in July, is to grow and strengthen social enterprises. The new small capital grants scheme will support over 100 social enterprises through funding of €1 million from the Dormant Accounts Fund. It will provide grants of between €2,000 and €15,000 to enable social enterprises to make small equipment purchases, or to carry out refurbishments to their premises to help them to improve their service delivery.

“The scheme will be of particular interest to smaller or start-up social enterprises which do not necessarily have the capacity to compete for larger grants.”

The Minister continued:

“I am pleased that the Local Development Companies have agreed to partner with my Department to deliver this scheme. The Local Development Companies provide grassroots support to social enterprises all around the country and are well placed to administer the fund.

“Today’s announcement follows on from a call for proposals for Training and Mentoring of social enterprises which I launched recently and is another important step in the implementation of the National Social Enterprise Policy.”

Full details of the Small Capital Grants Scheme for Social Enterprises, including Applications Forms and Guidelines, are available via the following link: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/9c56eb-small-capital-grants-scheme-for-social-enterprises> and by contacting us via email (fios@oileain.ie) or phone (099) 75096.

All applications must be received by Comhar na nOileán CTR by **3pm on Monday November 11th**. Whilst Comhar na nOileán will administer the fund, all decisions on grant awards will be made by the Department of Rural & Community Development. It is expected that applicants will be notified of the results of their application by the Department of Rural and Community Development by December 11th.

The country’s 49 Local Development Companies are the primary support network for the social enterprises in Ireland with over 40 staff dedicated working with the sector nationwide.

Comhar na nOileán CTR will provide assistance with the application process where possible to any group that wishes to apply.

Earlier this year Minister Michael Ring of the Department of Rural and Community Development launched the very first National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019 – 2022.

The policy defined a social enterprise as one whose objective is to achieve a social, societal or environmental impact, rather than maximising profit for its owners or shareholders. It pursues its objectives by trading on an ongoing basis through the provision of goods and/or services and by reinvesting surpluses into achieving social objectives.

For further information, contact Comhar na nOileán CTR at fios@oileain.ie 099 75096