



Varadkar seeks bids from community projects under €1M initiative

Wednesday, 17th May, 2017: The Minister for Social Protection, Leo Varadkar TD, today announced a new call for proposals from organisations seeking funding under the Community Services Programme (CSP).

The Community Services programme supports a range of local community based projects and activities to deliver a diverse range of services in the community while providing employment opportunities for people from the target groups. Projects funded by the programme are encouraged to develop and deliver a good quality service and provide good quality employment opportunities to their employees.

The call for proposals is targeted social enterprises that recruit at least 70% of workers from specific disadvantaged groups, which include:

- Long-term Unemployed;
- People in receipt of Disability Allowance, Invalidity Pension or Blind Person's Pension;
- Travellers in receipt of Jobseeker's payments or One-Parent Family payment (OFP);
- Stabilised and recovering drug misusers;
- People with convictions who are in contact with probationary services;
- People who are homeless;
- Immigrants receiving jobseeker's payments or one-parent family payment (OFP).

Announcing the call, Minister Varadkar said ***"I am delighted to be able to announce the first call for proposals on the Community Services Programme since 2008. This has been made possible by additional €1 million for the programme secured as part of budget 2017. It will allow social enterprises to provide employment opportunities for specific disadvantaged groups, such as Travellers and People with Disabilities, while at the same time delivering valuable services within their communities. The Community Services Programme continues to focus on enabling local communities to provide a vast range of essential services"***.

Under this call for proposals, social enterprises can apply to their SICAP^[1] Programme Implementer for CSP funding. The SICAP Programme Implementers will then be invited to nominate one applicant organisation per SICAP Lot in their area, to be assessed for CSP funding. The successful social enterprises will be invited

^[1] SICAP – the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme. It aims to tackle poverty, social exclusion and long-term unemployment through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies.

to work with Pobal, who deliver the Programme on behalf of the Department, to establish their suitability for CSP.

The Minister added ***“Even with the recent welcome falls in the Live Register, people in some disadvantaged groups are still finding it difficult to get jobs. By targeting this call for proposals at Strand 3 of the Community Services Programme I am hoping to assist these jobseekers in returning to employment”***.

CSP funding to service providers is expressed as a fixed annual co-funding contribution towards the costs of employing a manager and/or a specified number of full time equivalent positions (FTEs). The co-funding contribution towards employing each Full-Time Equivalent position is €19,033 per annum. Where the CSP contributes to the cost of employing a manager, this amounts to €32,000 co-funding per annum.

ENDS

Note for Editors

The Community Service Programme (CSP)

The Community Services Programme (CSP) is designed to address locally identified gaps in the provision of services to communities and to get best use from the potential of community assets and resources already in place in support of the delivery of services to improve community well-being. The Programme can play an important role in addressing disadvantage and long term unemployment.

The Programme focuses on communities where public and private sector services are lacking, either through geographical or social isolation or because demand levels are not sufficient. It also enables the benefit of other public investment to be realised as in the case of investment in community centres and resources.

A core requirement of the Programme is that service providers generate non-public revenue from their operations by charging fees for services delivered or by fundraising. Companies in contract with CSP must be not-for-profit, social enterprise or community business in nature.

Further information

Service providers in the CSP programme are approved by DSP for a three year period but within that the service is required to enter into a contract with Pobal as the manager and administrator of the programme on behalf of the Department of Social Protection. Contracts would normally mirror the DSP three year approvals but may be for a shorter duration and / or apply specific conditions for the purposes of facilitating service development or addressing service performance issues. A service provider, for example, may have to meet particular conditions in respect of governance or financial management in order to enter into contract. In other cases a contract might be limited to a period of time in order to set a milestone check on progress. As such the contract may be used as a means of mitigating and managing higher risk situations.

Pobal provides a range of funding administration, monitoring, reporting, oversight and beneficiary support service to the programme. Service providers make periodic financial and service monitoring returns to Pobal.

The Different Strands Funded under CSP

Rather than reviewing and re-contracting more than 400 services every three years, Pobal currently undertakes a rolling annual cycle of approximately a third of services, so there is a steady, manageable process of management and review. For administrative purposes Pobal has banded the services into three strands:-

Strand 1: Community owned/managed buildings and facilities that are used for community benefit. This strand can include theatres and arts centres, enterprise centres, gyms and sports clubs, various open spaces, heritage centres and visitor attractions, family resource centres, community development project, hostels, community cafes, and community halls and facilities.

Strand 2: Community Services – especially for disadvantaged. Examples include: community radio; “care and repair” / home insulation and environmental maintenance; social and other activities for people with disabilities; childcare; multitude of services for the elderly & housebound people with disabilities e.g. meals on wheels, laundry, visitation, personal security, centre based services & social events.

Strand 3: Community Social Enterprises tend to have an emphasis on employing people far from labour market, including for example people with disabilities, Travellers and some instances of recovering drug misusers. The enterprises typically involve craft, recycling, horticulture and environmental maintenance.

APPENDIX 1: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1. Who should I contact if I want more information?

A1. You should contact your nearest SICAP Programme (Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme) Implementer. SICAP Programme Implementers will propose one organisation for potential CSP funding per SICAP Lot under their responsibility. Details of SICAP Lots can be found in appendices 2 and 3 below. Details of SICAP and SICAP Programme Implementers can be found at <https://www.pobal.ie/beneficiaries/sicap/Pages/Social%20Inclusion%20and%20Community%20Activation%20Programme.aspx>.

Q2. When will this funding be made available?

A2. It is envisaged that nominated organisations will complete their assessment process with Pobal over the course of 2017 with a view to receiving funding for new positions in 2018.

APPENDIX 2: SICAP LOTS – NATIONAL



APPENDIX 3: SICAP LOTS – GREATER DUBLIN AREA

