

Disbursement Scheme 2017 - 2019

1. Introduction

The Dormant Accounts Act 2001, together with the Unclaimed Life Assurance Policies Act 2003 and the Dormant Accounts (Amendment) Acts 2005 to 2012, provide a framework for the administration of unclaimed accounts in credit institutions (i.e. banks, building societies and An Post) and unclaimed life assurance policies in insurance undertakings. The main purpose of the legislation is to reunite account holders/policy holders with their funds in credit institutions/insurance undertakings and in this regard, institutions/undertakings are required to take steps to identify and contact the owners of dormant accounts and unclaimed life assurance policies.

Dormant funds/unclaimed life assurance policies which have not been reclaimed by the original account/policy holder or their beneficiaries are transferred each year by the financial institution/insurance undertaking to the Dormant Accounts Fund (the Fund) which is managed by the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA). The transfer of monies takes place on the basis that the beneficial owner will have a guaranteed right of reclaim to their property at any time in the future.

The Dormant Accounts (Amendment) Act 2012 dissolved the Dormant Accounts Board and transferred the statutory functions of the Dormant Accounts Board to the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government. These functions were subsequently transferred to the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in 2016.

The 2012 Act provides that monies in the accounts of the Dormant Accounts Fund may be disbursed in accordance with Part 6 of the 2012 Act, from the account, but only for the purposes of programmes or projects to assist:

- 1) the personal and social development of persons who are economically or socially disadvantaged,
- 2) the educational development of persons who are educationally disadvantaged, or
- 3) persons with a disability.

The Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs must prepare and submit to Government a Disbursement Scheme of up to 3 years' duration which specifies the objectives to be achieved by making disbursements from the Fund and the strategies for achieving those objectives.

This scheme covers the period to the end of 2019 and succeeds the Dormant Accounts Disbursement Scheme 2013-2016. The Minister will prepare an Action Plan each year to give effect to the Disbursement Scheme. The Minister is required to review the Scheme within 3 years.

2. Guiding Principles

The scheme has been drawn up in accordance with the following guiding principles:

Additionality

As far as possible, disbursements from the Fund will be for purposes that are additional to and not a substitute for mainstream government spending, in particular for projects that would not have been undertaken but for this funding.

Compatibility with Government Policy

The allocation of Dormant Accounts funding will take into account Government policies and priorities in the area of economic, social and educational disadvantage.

Impact

The allocation of Dormant Accounts funding will support programmes or projects that can make a demonstrable difference and achieve discernible impacts for the benefit of persons who are economically or socially disadvantaged, educationally disadvantaged, or people with a disability.

Sustainability

Funds should be disbursed to programmes or projects that have the capacity to become self-sustainable. Cognisance will be taken of projects that demonstrate an element of local support.

Philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility Related

Projects and programmes which attract or previously attracted philanthropic funding or support through Corporate Social Responsibility programmes, will be considered under each of the three themes – social and economic disadvantage, educational disadvantage and disability.

Value for Money

Projects and programmes which receive Dormant Accounts funding should provide good value for money and should not duplicate or displace similar projects or programmes.

Evidence of Need

Applicants for Dormant Accounts funding should display a clear and identified need for the funding.

Evidence of Capacity of the Group or Organisation

It will be necessary for the group or organisation promoting a project or programme to be funded from the Dormant Accounts Fund, to demonstrate that it is capable of undertaking and managing the project to ensure its successful implementation.

Administrative Process

While the administrative process for programme/project promoters should be robust, it should not place an undue burden on the applicant.

3. Priorities by Area and Strategy for Achieving Objectives

Economic and Social Disadvantage

Strategic Objective: To assist innovative projects and programmes which are designed to counter economic and social disadvantage.

- Unemployment: Measures designed to support people who are unemployed and actions to meet the needs of the long-term unemployed.
- Suicide: Assistance for dealing with issues surrounding suicide and/or self-harm in Irish society, in particular through prevention and counselling.
- Carers: Assistance for the provision of respite care facilities, and services and measures designed to provide training and support services for family carers.
- Children: Assistance for the development and provision of programmes and facilities for children and young people, including regard for particular needs and difficulties of access for children and young people with special needs.

- Young People: Assistance for the provision of youth and community programmes and facilities, in particular programmes and facilities aimed at vulnerable groups of young people and young people in disadvantaged areas.
- Youth Employability: Assistance for youth work, work experience and other initiatives which promote youth employment, employability and entrepreneurship.
- Homelessness: Assistance for the provision of premises in respect of non-accommodation based facilities such as drop-in/day centres providing appropriate support services to people who are homeless.

Older People: Assistance for the provision of measures designed to support older people, e.g., day care centres, community resource centres and respite facilities.

- Substance misuse/prevention: Assistance for selected programmes or projects to tackle substance misuse and substance misuse prevention.
- Philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility Programmes: Collaborations with philanthropic organisations or other organisations in the context of their corporate social responsibility strategies on programmes/projects to counter economic and or social disadvantage.
- Social Enterprise/Innovation: Assistance for selected programmes or projects that can create or enhance employment or can scale up, particularly in rural communities.

Educational Disadvantage

Strategic Objective:

The strategic objective is to assist programmes or projects which overcome the impediments arising from social or economic disadvantage and which prevent learners from deriving appropriate benefit from education.

Projects will be selected from the following target areas:

- Literacy and numeracy initiatives.
- Pre-school education initiatives.
- Skills and Adult/Further Education/Training Initiatives
- Targeted educational initiatives for Traveller and Newcomer students, including inter-cultural and language programmes as appropriate, to enhance their participation in mainstream education.
- School retention programmes and initiatives including before and after-school programmes and summer and holiday programmes for learners from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Enhancement of library facilities in disadvantaged schools.
- Philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility: Collaboration with philanthropic organisations or other organisations in the context of their Corporate Social Responsibility strategies, on any programmes/projects that seek to counter educational disadvantage.
- Targeted initiatives to support participation in, and completion of, higher education for groups that are currently under-represented in higher education.
- Sports projects.
- Civic, Social and Political Education in schools.

Persons with a Disability

Strategic Objective: To give effect to the Government's objective to ensure that persons with a disability (as defined in the Equal Status Act 2000) play a more active role in society and increase their level of independence.

During the lifetime of this Scheme, to assist persons with a disability, programmes or projects from the following areas may be supported:

- Assistance with measures enhancing empowerment and promoting equality of persons with a disability;
- Provision of increased transport, access and integrated mobility options;
- Provision of independent living and assisted independent living opportunities;
- Provision of appropriate additional/enhanced services;
- Assistance to lessen the social and economic disadvantage experienced by persons with a disability;
- Collaboration with philanthropic organisations or other organisations in the context of their Corporate Social Responsibility strategies, on programmes/projects that seek to assist people with a disability or persons living with or caring for persons with a disability; and
- Assistance with measures to demonstrate, evaluate and promote innovation in the provision of person-centred supports and services.
- Additional measures to those outlined elsewhere in this Scheme, to support the employment of people with disabilities.

4. Implementation Principles for the Action Plan

At least once a year, after consultation with the Minister for Education and Skills, the Minister for Social Protection, the Minister for Health and other Ministers and persons as appropriate, the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs is required to prepare an Action Plan in order to implement the Disbursement Scheme as approved by Government.

The Action Plan contains the programmes or types of projects that may apply for disbursements from the Fund and the maximum funds available under each programme. Government Ministers may invite applications for disbursements in respect of programmes/projects specified in the Action Plan which fall under their remit.

Application Procedures

The application process should be based on the following principles:

- programmes to be advertised and eligibility criteria provided;
- application forms to be brief, simple, relevant and accompanied by clear guidance notes;
- applications to be acknowledged promptly and the acknowledgement to give a timescale for consideration of applications; and
- applications for a phased implementation to be encouraged.

Assessment/Selection Procedures

Applications for disbursements shall be assessed in accordance with the assessment criteria published in respect of each call for applications.

Assessment/selection criteria must include the following:

- degree to which project/programme addresses the objectives of the legislation as set out in section 41 of the 2012 Act, (programmes or projects to assist the personal and social development of persons who are economically or socially disadvantaged, and persons with a disability):
- sustainability potential of project/programme;
- value for money of project/programme;
- extent to which specific project/programme outcomes have been identified;
- potential lasting impact of project/programme;
- time-scale of project/programme, (although certain projects/programmes may involve recurring funding over a number of years);
- extent of co-funding or leveraging of matching private funding, with particular reference to philanthropic funding;
- extent to which delivery mechanisms have been identified;
- extent to which projects/programmes are clear and include targets, realistic costings and timescales;
- extent to which projects/programmes have the potential to make a difference to the target group;
- number of people likely to benefit directly (proposals that benefit significant numbers will be favoured);
- complementarity with Government programmes and objectives, demonstrating linkages with relevant statutory providers where appropriate;
- incorporation of evaluative processes to measure outcomes/impact of the programme over time.

Identification of Funding

It shall be a requirement for recipients that funds received must be specifically identifiable as originating from the Dormant Accounts Fund.

6. Government Accounting Procedures on disbursements

The scheme will be administered in accordance with Government accounting procedures and each Minister will be accountable for the administration of his/her own programmes and schemes.