



Tionscaldal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development

Department of Rural and Community Development

2021 Connected Hubs Call

Information note for Hub Operators

Purpose of the Connected Hubs fund

This call is intended to develop and leverage the capacity and quality of **existing remote working facilities & Broadband Connection Points (BCPs)** in support of the National Hub Network initiative. The total indicative funding available for the Connected Hubs Call is €5 million. The fund will provide grants from €10,000, up to €250,000 for multi-hub applications.

Projects seeking funding for the building of new hubs or the regeneration of derelict or vacant buildings as hubs are directed to apply to the main Town and Village Renewal Scheme or the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund which will be announced in due course.

Projects funded through this call must be completed before the end of 2021 and applications must demonstrate credible project timelines to this effect or they will be deemed ineligible.

National Hub Network Membership – Requirements and Benefits

It is a requirement that funded applicants must commit to membership of the National Hub Network for a minimum of 3 years and must also complete the National Hub Survey which is available [here](#)

Benefits for members of the Network will include;

- A Shared Connected Hubs brand identity for all member hubs
- A Centralised Connected Hubs media and promotional campaigns
- Access to the ConnectedHubs.ie suite of booking, hub management and e-commerce applications.

Hubs which commit to membership before end-2021 will not be charged for use of the platform for 36 months.

Further information on the requirements and benefits for members are contained in the main funding call document.

Eligible Activity

Applicants must be BCPs or existing hubs which provide, or will provide, remote working facilities and can demonstrate they have been in operation for 6 months (NB: this 6 months requirement does not apply to BCPs).

Where hubs have been unable to operate due to public health restrictions a short note of explanation should be provided with proof of operation prior to these restrictions.

The Department welcomes application from BCPs or existing hubs **irrespective of the ownership or legal structure of the body.**

Projects which may be funded under this call include, but are not limited to:

- Expansion of existing remote working infrastructure.
- Installation of privacy booths in existing hubs.
- Installation of access control and security systems. (Must be compatible with National Hub Network system – applicants should liaise with WDC on relevant applications)
- Conversion of existing open plan space to modular offices.
- Audio Visual upgrade facilities.
- Building Control Systems.
- Energy Efficiency Upgrades.
- Electric Car Charging Points.
- Disability Access Upgrading
- Upgrade of meeting rooms.
- IT Network upgrades, wiring, access points and a secure control system.
- Innovative measures to assist existing hubs to deal with COVID-related challenges.
- Promotion & marketing campaigns to raise awareness of improvements made to drive increased hub usage. (Must liaise with WDC on promotion & marketing on relevant applications)

These measures should not be read by applicants as anything other than a list of suggested measures and it is not a definitive list of measures that will be supported under the Call.

Grant levels

Where an applicant is applying for funding for a project solely related to an individual hub or BCP the maximum DRCD funding allowed will be €75,000.

Where an applicant is applying for funding for a project related to 5 or more hubs the maximum DRCD funding will be €250,000.

The minimum grant which is available per hub or BCP is €10,000.

Application	No. of Hub	Min Grant	Max Grant
Single	1	€10,000	€75,000
Multi-hub	5+	€10,000	€250,000

Application Process

Funding will be awarded following a competitive process and final project evaluation.

Applications for projects dealing with multiple hubs or Broadband Connection Points within a local authority area should be grouped as a multi-hub application where possible and appropriate. These applications will be treated as a single application.

As set out in the main call information document applications should ideally be developed, where appropriate, in consultation with Local Authority Economic Development Offices, Broadband Officers and Atlantic Economic Corridor Officers (if relevant). Marks will be awarded to applications that demonstrate such consultation has occurred.

The application deadline is: 17 June 2021

Applicants are asked to register their intention to apply to this scheme by the **28th of May 2021**. This should be done by email to the rdi@drcd.gov.ie mailbox. Emails should contain the subject line '**Intention to Apply: Connected Hubs Call**'.

Next Steps

Applicants who intend to apply are asked to complete the National Hub Network [Survey](#), and as set out in the main document, should consult with their Local Authority.

Regional Development and Innovation Unit