# Disability Activation Project

# INFORMATION & GUIDANCE NOTES

*to accompany the*
*Project Application Form*

# CONTENTS

## Section 1
## INTRODUCTION

The Information and Guidance notes have been developed to help potential applicants who are applying for funding under the Disability Activation Project, which is co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Department of Social Protection (DSP). The document provides background information on the Disability Activation Project and detail on each of the four strands. Information is also provided on the application process and eligibility and selection criteria.

Please read these notes in detail before making your application. Always remember to present the detail on your application simply and precisely. Finally, all documents will be made available in other formats, upon request.

# Aims and Objectives of the Disability Activation Project

The strategic aim of the ESF/DSP funded Disability Activation Project is to increase the capacity and potential of people on disability/illness welfare payments to participate in the labour market, based on a case management approach.

The objectives of the Project are to:

- Focus on capability to work in respect of Social Welfare Customers on a disability/illness payment.  Such capabilities will be identified, developed and formalised leading to a personalised progression plan for each individual participating in the project.

- Develop and implement innovative models of activation involving a case-management approach which are designed to meet gaps in employment, pre-employment or progression programme provision for people with a disability.

- Work with and/or support employers to develop initiatives to enhance people with a disability entry to, or retention in the workforce.

- Support the progression of young people with a disability.

- Support the progression and retention of people with an acquired disability.

## Overview of Policy Context

Social inclusion is a stated objective of the European Social Fund (ESF). The disability policy emphasis of the European Social Fund is to ensure that people with disability have an equal opportunity to participate in mainstream employment and progression programmes. The aims and objectives of the Disability Activation Project, which is co-funded by the ESF, reflect these objectives and are also underpinned by the strategies and goals set out in the National Disability Strategy (2004) and the social partnership agreement 'Towards 2016.' The National Disability Strategy sets out the commitment of the State to ensuring the equal participation of people with a disability in all aspects of Irish society and maximising independence.

The objective of the Disability Activation Project in promoting access to, and participation in, the labour market for people with a disability is in accordance with the Department of Social Protection's Sectoral Plan, which was produced as part of the National Disability Strategy. The aims and objectives of the Disability Activation Project also reflect and build on the findings and recommendations of the Value for Money Review of the Disability Allowance Scheme. The Sectoral Plan outlines a commitment to developing services and supports to enable people with a disability to take up relevant, work, training and educational or development opportunities.

## Funding

The Disability Activation Project is co-funded under the European Social Fund (ESF), Human Capital Investment Operational Programme 2007-2013 and will be administered by the Department of Social Protection with the support of Pobal.

## Strands

The Disability Activation Project is organised around four separate strands, all with similar eligibility and selection criteria but each having its own key focus.

**Strand 1    Improving Access to Employment**

> *Aim:* To provide people with a disability with the appropriate progression, education and development opportunities to enhance their access to employment.

**Strand 2    Progression Programmes for Young People**

> *Aim:* To support the development and delivery of customised progression programmes for young people with a disability.

**Strand 3    Support the Progression and Retention of People with an Acquired Disability**

> *Aim:* To support the progression and retention of people with an acquired disability.

**Strand 4    Innovative Employer Initiatives**

> *Aim:* To support employers in the recruitment and retention of people with a disability in employment.

## *Target Group*

The target group for each Strand is people, 16 to 65 years of age, in receipt of *disability/illness welfare payments* who reside in the Border Midlands and Western (BMW) region (See list of Department of Social Protection

Disability/Illness Schemes in Appendix 1). Projects may relate to one of the three main disability types – physical/sensory, intellectual and mental health difficulties or may have a cross-disability focus.

## Budget and Timescale

The total budget available across the four individual strands is €7 million. Support will be provided to a small number of high quality 'medium to large' scale strategic projects that are innovative and meet the objectives of the Disability Activation Project. The allocation of funding across the strands will reflect the quality of project proposals.

Projects can be funded up to the 30th April 2015.

## Section 2
## OVERVIEW OF STRANDS

## Strand 1 – Improving Access to Employment

**Aim: To provide people with a disability with the appropriate progression, education and development opportunities to enhance their access to employment**

### *Objective*

The Objective of Strand 1 is to support a **small number of innovative and strategic proposals** which fill gaps in employment and progression/education programme provision for people with a disability.

**A sample of activities which could be funded under this Strand might include:**

- Innovative Models of Activation for people with a disability involving a case-management approach which have the capacity to be mainstreamed in the future.

- Models of provision that demonstrate high progression outcomes for participants to further education, training or employment (e.g. traineeships incorporating structured work placement).

- Innovative projects which test models designed to **meet gaps** in employment, pre-employment or progression programme provision for people with a disability.

- Outreach, information, mentoring and/or wider support programmes or services to support the access and retention of people with a disability in progression programmes, education and/or the labour market.

- Projects which offer practical advice and person centred services and supports around job seeking, accessing work, starting work and retaining employment.

- Projects that encourage and support people on disability/illness payments to undertake entrepreneurship.

### *Target Group*

The target group for Strand 1 is people, 16 to 65 years of age, in receipt of *disability/illness welfare payments* who reside in the Border, Midlands and Western region.

# Strand 2 – Progression Programmes for Young People

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**Aim: To support the development and delivery of customised progression programmes for young people with a disability**

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## *Objective*

The objective of Strand 2 is to support a **small number of innovative and strategic proposals** which develop and deliver progression programmes for young people.

**A sample of activities which could be funded under this Strand might include:**

- Projects with an emphasis on progression towards economic participation.
- Direct provision of custom-designed progression programmes to the target group.

## *Target Group*

The target group for Strand 2 is young people, aged **16 to 24** in receipt of *disability/illness welfare payment* who reside in the Border, Midlands and Western region.

# Strand 3 – Supporting the Progression and Retention of People with an Acquired Disability

> **Aim: To support the progression and retention of people with an acquired disability**

## *Objective*

The objective of Strand 3 is to support **a small number of innovative and strategic proposals** which support and enable people with an acquired disability to access/return to education, training or employment**.**

An acquired disability relates to an ongoing or permanent condition that develops during an individual's lifetime, which is distinct from a disability/congenital condition that exists at birth or before birth.  An acquired disability can be the result of: an accident, injury, disease or illness (physical, mental or emotional).

**A sample of activities which could be funded under this Strand might include:**

- Projects which work towards removing the barriers to accessing and retaining employment, education or training.
- Projects that assist people who acquire a disability in adult life to return to their work or to source alternative employment.

## *Target Group*

The target group for Strand 3 is people, 16 to 65 years of age, in receipt of *disability/illness welfare payments who have an acquired disability* and who reside in the Border, Midlands and Western region.

# Strand 4 – Innovative Employer Initiatives

> **Aim:** To support employers in the recruitment and retention of people with a disability in employment

## *Objective*

The objective of Strand 4 is to support a **small number of innovative and strategic proposals** which support employers to employ and/or retain people with a disability in employment.

**A sample of activities which could be funded under this Strand might include:**

- Projects that work with or support employers to develop initiatives to enhance the target group's entry to, or retention in, the workforce.
- Measures developed to raise awareness and uptake of existing supports to both employers and the target group which may be of benefit to both parties in future participation in economic activities.

## *Target Group*

The target group for Strand 4 is people, 16 to 65 years of age, in receipt of disability/illness welfare payments who reside in the Border, Midlands and Western region.  Activities may be targeted at employers, employer networks, and **must** demonstrate tangible outcomes for the target group.

## Section 3
## ELIGIBILITY

**Eligible Area**

The project activity must be within the eligible area of the Border, Midlands and Western region which comprises thirteen counties: the six border counties of Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth; the three western counties of Galway, Mayo and Roscommon and the four midland counties of Laois, Offaly, Longford and Westmeath. See Appendix 2 for map of the eligible area.

**Who is eligible to apply?**

Applications for funding are invited from organisations that have experience of working with people with a disability.

Applications from consortia[1] are welcomed that demonstrate shared working and a co-ordinated and 'joined up' approach to the delivery of services to persons with a disability and have a wide reaching impact and the capability to influence best practice across the disability sector. The emphasis on a 'collaborative' approach underlies the Government's commitment to ensure a more efficient use of public funds in the disability sector and more streamlined service delivery. In addition, working in collaboration facilitates projects to maximise the impact and effectiveness of their interventions.

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[1] Where an application is received from a consortium, it will be necessary for the consortium to nominate a lead organisation which will accept contractual responsibility for all financial accounting and monitoring/reporting to Pobal.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**One application form <u>only</u> must be submitted whether applying under a single strand or applying across Strands 1-3.** (No additional scoring is allocated for multi-strand applications).

**If applying under Strand 4, applicants must submit a separate application.**

**What are the eligibility criteria?**

The eligibility criteria are as follows:

1. Project proposals must be targeted only at participants in receipt of disability/illness welfare payments in the Border, Midlands and Western region.

2. Completed application forms and supporting documentation must be submitted on time - i.e. on or before 13<sup>th</sup> April 2012.

3. Proposals must demonstrate **impact** within a minimum of one county within the Border, Midlands and Western region.

4. Proposals must incorporate the development of a Personal Progression Plan, to be drawn up for each project participant. The Personal Progression Plan will outline the strengths and skills level of each participant and identify their progression needs, personal targets and will include medium to long-term goals which will be reviewed at regular intervals.

5. Proposals must meet the Horizontal Themes namely:
   a. Gender Equality & Wider Equality Opportunities i.e. enabling equal access to training and other supports regardless of gender or ethnicity.

b. Sustainable Development i.e. developing actions that are capable of being mainstreamed.

6. Projects will have an end date not later than 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

**What type of activities can be funded?**

Refer to the list of sample actions outlined under each strand.

**What financial support is available to successful projects?**

Financial Support up to 100% is available to all projects.

**What type of expenditure is eligible?**

- Only direct costs (not apportioned costs) are eligible.
- Only costs actually incurred and paid during the period of funding are eligible.

Costs must represent value for money and be directly related to project activity.

**A sample of costs that may be considered:**

- **Salaries -** Salary costs including Employers PRSI. Salary scales should be commensurate with current scales within the relevant sector.
- **Travel & Subsistence -** Rates must be appropriate and justifiable, and costs should directly relate to project activity**.**
- **Overheads -** Costs directly related to project activity, e.g. mobile phone or direct telephone lines. Apportioned costs are not eligible.
- **Equipment -** Costs of equipment up to a maximum of €1,000 per item.
- **Programme Costs** – training, facilitation, venue hire, evaluation and monitoring.

- **Publicity Costs** – Costs of publicising the project, leaflets, brochures etc.

## What type of expenditure is ineligible?

Sample of costs which are not eligible for funding are as follows:
- VAT and charges such as bank interest costs, fines, financial penalties, and legal dispute costs.
- Core funding of organisations.
- Costs incurred on a project before funding approval is given.
- Redundancy and pension costs.
- Equipment costs over €1,000 per item.
- Sponsorship and charitable donations.
- Vehicles or other mobile assets, infrastructure, real estate and land costs. This includes all associated costs in the purchase of these items.
- Depreciation.
- In-kind contributions.
- Sub-contracting costs.

## What type of project or activity is ineligible?

- Any activity where there is a clear statutory responsibility, or where funding difficulties have arisen as a direct result of funding cutbacks.
- Activities related to the promotion of religion, political parties or a particular political viewpoint.
- One-off events which are not part of a larger programme.
- Projects which are based on supplier-distributor or supplier-purchaser relationships.
- Projects that seek funding to complete existing project or for continuation funding.

- Projects that seek funding to make buildings accessible.
- Projects that replicate current service provision for persons with a disability.
- Project proposals that are already in receipt of public funding (EU or exchequer) including EU globalisation funds.
- Projects that provide training only.
- Feasibility studies and seed grants.
- Bursaries to individuals.

**These are not exhaustive lists and for further clarification please contact disabilityactivation@pobal.ie**

**What period is funding available for?**

Projects can be funded up to 30th April 2015.

**When can applications be made?**

Application forms will be available from **13th February 2012.** Applications will be processed on a competitive basis.

**How to apply?**

Application forms are available **online at** www.pobal.ie and www.welfare.ie

**Information Sessions**

Pobal will offer you an opportunity to discuss the application process at an Information Session. As well as providing general information on the Disability Activation Project, if desired a meeting/clinic will be organised with you after this session (on the same day) to discuss your project proposal and provide clarifications prior to submission of your application. Details of Information Sessions and how to book a slot for a one-to-one meeting are available on the Pobal website - www.pobal.ie.

**Application Process**

- Completed application forms and supporting documentation should be submitted by email to disabilityactivation@pobal.ie, or in hard copy to Ailish Quinn, Pobal, M:Tek 11 Building, Armagh Road, Monaghan not later than 13th April **2012**. Late applications will not be accepted.
- We will confirm within 7 days that we have received your application for funding and advise you of your unique project reference number.

**Decision Making Process**

- Appraisals will be presented to the Board of Pobal and the Department of Social Protection for consideration, and we expect that decisions will be made not later than June 2012.
- If there are any changes to this timescale we will advise you in writing, and inform you of the revised timescale.

**Please Note:**

- All contracts are subject to the ongoing availability of State/ESF/EU funding, the achievement of pre-agreed annual targets and satisfactory publicity and financial management.

- During the projected lifetime of the project, promoting organisations will be required to comply with the financial and reporting and publicity requirements of Pobal, the Department of Social Protection and the European Social Fund (ESF). Failure to provide satisfactory evidence of compliance with these requirements will result in the withdrawal of funding.

**What you need to do?**

- Carefully read the guidance notes and any other information that we issue.
- Ensure that you submit your application on or before the deadline.
- Respond to any request for further information within seven days.

**This information and guidance booklet does not constitute any form of contract**. In addition to funding support, Pobal is committed to providing information and assistance to new groups and projects. These guidance notes will be reviewed and, if necessary, updated on a regular basis.

## Freedom of Information Act

Applicants should note that information included in the application process is subject to the Freedom of Information legislation in Ireland.

## Section 5
## SELECTION CRITERIA AND SCORING

Applications will be appraised against the following selection criteria:

1. Capacity of the Organisation
2. Strategic Fit
3. Need for the Project
4. Quality of the Proposal
5. Sustainability
6. Value for money

### 1. *Capacity of the Organisation or Consortium*

Applicants should demonstrate:

1. Organisational and management structures appropriate to the type and scale of the project.
2. That appropriate financial management and control systems are in place.
3. Previous experience in the delivery of project(s) on schedule, within budget and within agreed parameters, including management of EU/ESF/Exchequer funding.
4. Understanding and experience of disability issues and good working knowledge of the target group.
5. Understanding and knowledge of appropriate methods and approaches which can deliver the aim and objectives of the project.

## 2. *Strategic Fit*

Applicants should demonstrate:

1. How the proposal meets the aims and objectives of the Disability Activation Project and the specific strand(s) under which the application is being made.
2. An understanding of the labour market, both locally and more widely, and the linkage between the project proposal and the labour market.
3. How the project proposal fits with National and EU policy(s) in relation to disability and labour market activation.

## 3. *Need for the Project*

Applicants should demonstrate:

1. A clear analysis of the target group and their specific needs.
2. Objective data/relevant research to support the need for the project.
3. Engagement with the target group in the design of the proposed project.
4. How the project proposal meets the needs identified.

## 4. *Quality of the Proposal*

Applicants should demonstrate:

1. That the Action Plan is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound.
2. Innovation in terms of content, delivery mechanism and collaboration
3. How the project proposal promotes new approaches to the delivery of services and supporting people with a disability.
4. Shared working and a co-ordinated joined up approach.

5. How project participants are sourced and selected.

6. How personal progression plans will be developed and rolled out as part of the action plan.

7. How the project actions are additional to existing provision.

8. Equality of opportunity.

9. Breadth of geographical coverage.

10. A communications/publicity strategy.

## 5. *Sustainability*

Applicants should demonstrate the potential for sustainability and mainstreaming, and the value of the project to the sector post funding. This should include:

1. Compatibility and complementarity with activities currently being delivered.

2. Degree or level of strategic partnerships with statutory, voluntary or employer organisations.

3. How the project will be evaluated and the learning disseminated.

4. Potential for the project to influence policy and practice.

## 6. *Value for Money*

Applicants should demonstrate:

1. Achievement of maximum output for the proposed budget

2. That the costs are in line with market norms.

**Scoring will be as follows:**

1. Strategic Fit            20%
2. Capacity of the organisation 20%
3. Need for the Project      15%
4. Quality of the Proposal    15%
5. Sustainability             15%
6. Value for money        15%

All projects will be scored out of 100. A minimum score of 65 (65%) must be achieved in order for a project to be recommended for funding. As well as achieving an overall score of 65%, applications that are recommended for funding **must** score 65% in both Strategic Fit and Capacity of the Organisation. No additional scoring is allocated for multi-strand applications

All applications which score 65% or more will be ranked and funding will be allocated in order of ranking to prevent over-commitment of funds. Please note then that in a competitive situation a score of 65 or more is not a guarantee of funding.

## Section 6
## CHECKLIST FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

| Item required | Additional notes |
| --- | --- |
| Fully completed application form | All sections of the form must be completed in full. |
| Legal status – copy of governing document | Constitution or Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Applicant |
| Organisational structure | 1. Organisation chart showing the lead partner organisational structure;<br>2. Organisation chart for the project management structure – this may include details of staffing structure, board/steering committee structure and/or sub-committees. |
| Copies of relevant minutes | Signed minutes of board meeting authorising submission of the application form. |
| Job descriptions | If you have a staffing budget line included in the operation please include the associated job descriptions. |
| Declaration of participation / agreement with partner organizations (IF APPLICABLE) | This can be in the form of letters of support, minutes of the meeting at which the partnership arrangement was agreed, or a more formal documented agreement between the partners. |
| Audited accounts | Copies of your organisation's audited |

| | accounts for the previous year or other such accounts should be supplied. |
|---|---|
| Audit Reports | Copies of any EU or exchequer audits undertaken |
| Details on tax clearance/VAT information | |
| Any other relevant supporting documentation | |

For more information contact:

Ailish Quinn,

Pobal,

M:Tek 11 Building,

Armagh Road,

Monaghan,

Co. Monaghan

www.pobal.ie

Email: disabilityactivation@pobal.ie (preferred)

Telephone: +353 1 5117500

## Disability Allowance

Disability Allowance is a weekly payment that you may get if you have a disability that is expected to last for at least one year, and you are aged 16 to 65. To get the payment, you must satisfy a means test and be habitually resident in Ireland. You may also need to attend a medical examination.

## *Invalidity Pension*

Invalidity Pension is a payment for people who are permanently incapable of work because of an illness or incapacity. To qualify, you must satisfy both medical and social insurance (PRSI) conditions. The pension (personal rate) is not means-tested or affected by other income you may have such as an occupational pension.

## *Illness Benefit*

Illness Benefit is a payment for insured people who cannot work due to illness. You may qualify for Illness Benefit if you are unable to work due to illness, satisfy the Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) conditions, and are under age 66. The personal rate is not means-tested or affected by other income you may have such as an occupational pension.

## Blind Pension

Blind Pension is a means-tested payment for blind people and certain people with low vision. You may qualify, if you are blind or have low vision, are aged 18 years or over, and satisfy a means test.

The pension will be paid if the Department is satisfied that your visions is impaired to such an extent that you cannot perform any work for which eyesight is essential or you cannot continue in your ordinary occupation due to poor sight. Alternatively, if you are registered as a blind person with the National Council for the Blind of Ireland (NCBI), this registration is usually accepted as satisfying the blindness condition of the pension scheme.

## Disablement Benefit

Disablement Benefit is one of the payments available under the occupational injuries scheme and is divided into a single lump sum or a regular pension depending on the injury or effect of the disease. You may qualify if you work and pay PRSI at Class A, B, D, J or M, and lose physical or mental abilities because of an accident at work, a commuter accident on a direct route between your home and your workplace, or a prescribed disease contracted at work. Your payment will depend on the degree of your disablement, which a doctor assesses.

## Incapacity Supplement

Incapacity Supplement is an increase to Disablement Pension where a person is considered to be permanently incapable of work as a result of an occupational accident/disease and does not qualify for another Social Welfare benefit such as Disability Benefit.

## *Injury Benefit*

Injury Benefit is one of the benefits available under the Occupational Injuries Scheme. It is a weekly payment made to you if you are unfit for work due to an accident at work or because you have contracted a disease due to the type of work you do and your illness lasts for at least 4 days (excluding Sundays). Accidents that occur on an unbroken journey to or from work are regarded as occupational accidents.

An occupational disease is a disease that you contract in the course of your work, for example, from contact with physical or chemical agents. Diseases from an occupation are generally contracted over time but may occasionally develop from a once-off accident at work.

# Appendix 2　　　　Map of Eligible Area