

Shared Island Industrial Sustainability Challenge Fund

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1. Overview

This document provides guidance for the **Shared Island Industrial Sustainability Challenge Fund (SCF)**. It covers eligibility criteria, application process and information required.

If you are considering applying for the SCF, please read this document carefully and in full including all annex's carefully before submitting your application. This scheme will open for expressions of interest on Monday 12th October 2026 and close to expressions of interest on Friday 13th November at 12:00 noon. Invest NI & Enterprise Ireland will reserve the right to close the expression of interest process early in their respective jurisdiction at such times as it becomes apparent that the demand for support exceeds the actual budget allocation. Similarly, each agency reserves the right to extend the expression of interest window where necessary. Initially only companies who submit an expression of interest will be eligible to submit a full application pack at a later date.

The SCF is developed by Enterprise Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland and InterTradeIreland, in consultation with the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment (IE) and the Department for the Economy (NI), and co-funded via the Government of Ireland's Shared Island Fund and by the agencies.

In developing the scheme, the agencies agreed to prioritise supporting the development and deployment of demonstrative/first-of-a-kind industrial sustainability projects, alternative green energy solutions by industrial businesses, which can deliver both commercial and environmental benefits on an Island wide basis and are consistent with the policy objectives of the Government of Ireland and the Northern Ireland Executive. The scheme is aimed at large scale energy users to stimulate significant industrial decarbonisation, and Climate Tech companies to scale technologies needed to deliver industrial decarbonisation.

€26m has been allocated in total and is being delivered on a coordinated basis by Invest Northern Ireland and Enterprise Ireland.

€13m total is available in each jurisdiction to support significant, demonstrative capital projects leading to industrial decarbonisation and environmental protection, with relevance and benefit to the all-island economy. The SCF will support eligible capital projects that demonstrate the application of sustainable technologies in industrial settings, such as:

1. Flexible Electrification to: (For NI 1.1, 1.3 & 1.5 will be the areas of priority focus)

- 1.1 Decarbonise Industrial plants
- 1.2 Unlock access to lower-cost renewable electricity
- 1.3 Utilise curtailed wind energy
- 1.4 Support provision of innovative grid services that would support lower cost electricity
- 1.5 Increase innovative renewable energy generation, utilisation and commercialisation in industry

2. Hard-to-Abate / ClimateTech / Carbon Capture:

- 2.1 Carbon capture in industrial settings (*not eligible as a standalone project type in NI)
- 2.2 Innovative Green Gas Projects
- 2.3 Long duration energy storage in hydrogen, e-fuels and flexibility of electricity via the EU long duration storage mandate
- 2.4 Advanced Fuels, Sustainable Aviation Fuel
- 2.5 Innovative onsite renewable energy generation in industrial/commercial settings.

3. Water Efficiency Projects

- 3.1 Achieve high water-efficiency gains with technology and automation to support sustainable water use through reduction, re-use, recycling and recovery.
- 3.2 Improve energy performance and reduce GHG emissions.

4. Circularity, Resource Efficiency & Bioeconomy (not primary recycling)

- 4.1 Introducing recycling and recovery technologies for material, by-products and waste streams.
- 4.2 Supporting new business models for re-use or remanufacturing across Ireland.
- 4.3 Supporting supply chain resilience across the island.

Each project across the thematic areas should showcase an economical, technology-ready operating model to address hard-to-abate industrial emissions. Proposals must leverage advanced and emerging technologies to meet stringent standards while providing tangible benefits across the island. Details on how to apply and criteria to assess projects are outlined in **Section 6 – How to Apply**

Projects must be of demonstrative (ideally TRL level 8 - 9 for projects supported by Enterprise Ireland or TRL 7 – 9 for projects supported by Invest NI. Definitions of TRL are included in the FAQs) value to the company, manufacturing sectors or industrial sites and should:

- Address challenges in sustainability and/or environmental protection i.e. projects must deliver an environmental improvement to a manufacturing site or industrial site via a commercial entity
- Projects must demonstrate value to the all-island economy. This can include (though is not limited to):
- **Project Collaboration North & South** - Projects where the applicant and project lead is the Invest NI/EI client but leverages consultancy/products/services etc from or otherwise demonstrates meaningful collaboration with entities in the other jurisdiction.
- **Policy Alignment North & South** – Projects should demonstrate how they support the strategic priorities of DfE, DETE and other relevant Departments and agencies, including productivity, competitiveness, sustainability, regional development, innovation and the creation of good jobs across the island.
- **Potential benefit for North & South** - grant aided projects will be able to demonstrate information and knowledge transfer - e.g. host visits North & South, host webinars, and showcase the project on a webpage
- **“Knowledge sharing”** on an Island wide basis will be an essential component of the supported projects to aid the replication and faster market penetration of supported technologies or solutions, across both jurisdictions.
- Supported projects will be required to share knowledge on and engage in activities that facilitate scaling up to a commercial scale, accelerate deployment, and promote the commercialisation of the proposed technologies on an Island wide basis.

Emphasis will be given to the development of alternative solutions which can deliver both commercial and environmental benefits at scale, both North and South.

The SCF provides grant support for the purchase and installation of capital equipment that enhances industrial decarbonisation and sustainable practices in industry that benefit both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland.

The SCF is a reimbursement grant, the applicant must incur the capital costs of the project and then submit their claim for reimbursement. When Invest NI & Enterprise Ireland confirms capital expenditure has been incurred via a claims and vouching process, the eligible grant amount will be paid to the applicant.

The aim of this funding is to encourage businesses to deliver projects of significant demonstrative value (Ideally TRL level 8 – 9 for Enterprise Ireland Projects and 7 – 9 Invest NI Projects) in sustainability and environmental protection. The scheme is aimed at clients of Invest NI and Enterprise Ireland operating in an industrial/manufacturing setting.

Grant support will depend on incentive effect, and will be limited by GBER, business size and turnover according to the EU SME Definition ([See here](#) & *Also Annex A & B).

There is no minimum or maximum number of projects to be supported. Projects will be assessed against the eligibility checker (in the case of Invest NI), the expression of interest form (for both Enterprise Ireland and Invest NI) and then the full application process.

Applicants will be limited to one project, only one entity within a group structure of companies can apply for SCF at any one time. A Letter of Offer will be issued to successful applicants, who may begin to implement the project.

2. Business Eligibility

The SCF is open to all companies who are an Invest Northern Ireland or Enterprise Ireland client, that meet the eligibility criteria.

Find out more about becoming an Invest Northern Ireland client company [How we support business](#) or an Enterprise Ireland client company [Become a Client](#).

The following are not eligible to apply:

- Primary Agricultural Production and Horticulture (e.g., farming and/or selling live animals, growing crops).
- Fishing and Aquaculture Production (e.g., offshore activities)
- Sporting clubs/organisations and associated company structures
- Charities
- Non private health care providers
- Education – Schools, higher and further education
- Franchises which are not autonomous enterprises as defined by Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC
- Businesses already in receipt of or intending to gain other government support for the project.
- Businesses that have an outstanding liability to Invest NI or Enterprise Ireland brought about through grant clawback proceedings. If a satisfactory repayment plan is in place, the business may apply for consideration.

- Businesses or any member of senior management within the business that are subject to a current bankruptcy order, Individual Voluntary Arrangement, Company Voluntary Arrangement, County Court Judgement, or Company Director Disqualification
- Industries or businesses which may cause Invest NI or Enterprise Ireland unacceptable reputational risk, such as gambling, tobacco products, cannabis-based products which are not authorised as medicines, adult entertainment.
- Military & Defence – applicable in Ireland only.
- Government organisations and bodies and government funded bodies.
- Invest NI & Enterprise Ireland reserve the right at their absolute discretion to refuse to support businesses that bring Invest NI, Enterprise Ireland and Ministers in their associated Departmental Bodies into disrepute.
- Support will not be provided to undertakings in difficulty, please see Annex D
- Additional exclusions may be applied at the discretion of Invest NI or Enterprise Ireland as per each organisation's operational guidelines.

3. State Aid & Support Rates

This scheme will operate under EU General Block Exemption Regulations, articles 36 – 48 and the EU Clean Industrial State Aid Framework. Invest NI & Enterprise Ireland will assess assistance based on the notional thresholds highlighted in these articles – Please [click here](#) to access GBER articles 36 – 48 Environmental Aid.

Projects will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Enterprise Ireland & Invest Advisors will decide on the GBER/State Aid Mechanism which is best suited to the project and will negotiate support rates accordingly. Applicants should be aware that where state aid cover for a project does not exist, the project will be screened out and will not be supported.

For NI based projects please see [Annex B](#).

4. Eligible & Ineligible Project Costs

Only Capital Equipment costs will be deemed eligible for supported projects. You will be required to maintain an asset register of capital equipment.

Capital equipment purchased via related parties will not be eligible for support. Capital equipment via intercompany transfers will not be eligible for support (for guidance on related parties and company size please [See here](#)).

Capital Equipment to be supported must be in line with the eligible thematic areas for this scheme such as:

- Flexible Electrification,
- Hard to Abate Sectors
- Water Efficiency
- Circularity & Resource Efficiency

Ineligible costs include but are not limited to:

- Land purchase,
- Working Capital,
- Costs related to investments to comply with Union standards in force

- Value added tax (VAT)
- Work already commenced.
- Development, Consultancy
- Marketing,
- Travel
- Employment Costs

Neither agency will provide support to a project where the applicant cannot demonstrate an incentive effect.

If you are a business that is part of a group structure with the same ultimate ownership, you may only submit one application across the group. Only one application can be accepted per company which should be at a single manufacturing or industrial site.

For a worked example of eligible expenditure and costs leading to payment off grant in a potential offer issued scenario, please refer to [section 8](#).

5. Timeframe

The SCF will open for expressions of interest on Monday 12th October 2026 and close to expressions of interest on Friday 13th November at 12:00 noon. Invest NI & Enterprise Ireland will reserve the right to close the expression of interest process early in their respective jurisdiction at such times as it becomes apparent that the demand for support exceeds the actual budget allocation. Similarly, each agency reserves the right to extend the expression of interest window where necessary. Initially only companies who submit an expression of interest will be eligible to submit a full application pack at a later date.

Projects must demonstrate that they will be completed by 31st December 2030. All eligible capital costs must be incurred and paid by the business by 31st December 2030.

Failure to incur and pay for eligible expenditure by 31st December 2030, will result in grant awards being withheld.

Project extensions will not be possible under this scheme. Projects which cannot demonstrate they can complete by 31st December 2030 will not be eligible for support under this scheme.

Projects requiring planning permission

It will be the responsibility of the applicant to evidence how they can complete the project by 31st December 2030. Where appropriate, applicants will need to provide evidence that they have planning permission in place. Where planning permission is required but has yet to be granted, the scheme promoters hold the right to withdraw the application for support where they assess that there is an undue risk to a lack of planning delaying the project to the point where it may not complete by 31st December 2030.

Projects Requiring Grid Connection

Applicants will need to provide evidence that they have an offer of grid connection in place where appropriate. The scheme promoters reserve the right to prioritise applications which do not require a connect to the grid. The scheme promoters reserve the right to withdraw applications where grid connection is required but has not yet been obtained, as this increased the risk that projects do not complete by 31st December 2030.

Projects Requiring Environmental Permits & Additional Local Government/Planning Approvals

It will be the responsibility of the applicant to evidence how they can complete the project by 31st December 2030. Where appropriate, applicants will need to provide evidence that they have additional permitting and Local Government Approvals in place. It will not be the responsibility of each approving agency to liaise with issuing authorities to assist with project completion. The scheme promoters reserve the right to withdraw applications where applicants cannot fully showcase and demonstrate how additional approvals needed will be secured in time. Environmental Permitting includes but is not limited to Pollution Prevention Control (PPC), Abstraction/Discharge consent, Waste Management Authorisation etc.

6. How to Apply

Stage 1 - Applicants should complete the “Eligibility Checker” (only in the case of Invest NI) which will be available from Monday 12th October 2026. Responses will be checked initially by an Invest NI advisor in Northern Ireland. The advisor will review the project synopsis and issue an expression of interest form to eligible businesses or an email to unsuccessful businesses to state the project is not eligible. For Projects based in Ireland, the process will begin at stage 2, and you should contact your client advisor on eligibility.

Stage 2 – If you meet the eligibility criteria, you will be issued with an expression of interest form.

The expression of interest will detail:

- Company Details
- Company Financials & Employment
- Project Description
- Benefit of the project to the all-island economy & sustainability benefits
- Financial Viability & Balance of Funding
- Timeframe of Project Delivery
- Innovative nature of the project
- Signed company accounts or latest management accounts will need to be submitted with the EoI

Stage 3 – Experts in each relevant agency will review the expression of interest form to confirm a validated project concept and fit with the scheme. Where it is established by relevant experts that a project concept fits the SCF criteria, applicants will move to stage 4 budget dependent.

Stage 4 – Successful expressions of interest from stage 3 will be notified and will have approximately 3 months to complete and submit a full application pack which will consist of:

- Project & Business Plan – issued by relevant agency

- Environmental Data, Equipment & Costings Spreadsheet – issued by relevant agency
- Projected Monthly Cash Flows to December 2030 or the end of the financial year in which applicants will submit their intended final claim – P&L, Balance Sheet and Cashflows – ***Complete with Assumptions and forecast on a monthly basis**
- Signed full accounts for the previous 3 years to include P&L and Balance Sheet
- Latest in year management accounts which should be no more than 3 months old
- 3-year historical financial statements in soft copy
- Organisation Chart
- Group Structure

You should ensure you have all relevant information at hand before starting the application process. You can save a draft of your application and return to update it at any time prior to submitting before the application call closure date. Regular saving of the application form is strongly recommended. **You are encouraged to review the checklist of the business plan document** which forms part of the application pack. This section lists the documents you will need to submit with your application. An application will not be accepted unless all associated documents are included and provided with the final application.

Each agency reserves the right to assess applications as fully submitted, therefore once your application has been completed it will be checked against the initial expression of interest to ensure consistency.

Stage 5 – Each relevant agency will put the project through financial, technical and economic assessment in line with their own approvals processes.

Stage 6 – Successful applicants from stage 5 will be notified via a letter of offer issued and unsuccessful applicants via an email explaining why they were not successful.

At all stages of the process projects will need to ensure:

1. Alignment with relevant Northern Ireland or Government of Ireland Policy
2. Detail benefits of the project to the all-island economy (including environmental, social and economic)
3. Detail clearly how they lead to industrial decarbonisation or environmental protection
4. Detail economic benefits (including wider) associated with the project.

If during the **stage 2** of the process it becomes apparent that there is insufficient budget to meet demand for projects, the window for submitting expressions of interest will be closed earlier than stipulated.

Applicants should note that funding under this call is limited. In Northern Ireland, Expressions of Interest will be screened on a first-come, first-served basis, and the available budget is unlikely to meet overall demand. Applicants are therefore encouraged to apply at the earliest opportunity. Additional funding may be available to eligible applicants located within the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area through Mid South West (MSW) Region Growth Deal funding. Should funding become available, Invest Northern Ireland reserves the right to allocate available funding in a manner that maximises the number of eligible projects supported across Northern Ireland. In Ireland, Enterprise Ireland may have alternative funding available to its clients for some elements of proposed projects. Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) may be applicable to applicants in Ireland.

Additional funding opportunities may be available through other public sector programmes and initiatives in Northern Ireland and Ireland, subject to the eligibility criteria, objectives and funding availability of those schemes. Applicants should note that support under this Fund cannot duplicate funding received for the same project activities from other sources.

7. Your Responsibilities

You “the applicant” are responsible for providing accurate and true information on your application.

Providing incorrect or misleading information is an offence and any such information may be used against you in any subsequent criminal investigation. The information provided on your SCF application form may be made available to other departments or agencies for the purposes of preventing or detecting crime.

Invest NI, Enterprise Ireland and InterTradeIreland may release information relating to the participation of your business in this programme, in line with the [Invest NI Privacy Notice](#) and [Enterprise Ireland Data Protection](#), and statutory obligations under Invest NI [Freedom of Information](#) and [Enterprise Ireland Freedom of Information](#) and [InterTradeIreland Data Protection and Privacy Policy](#)

You are responsible for obtaining any legal consents and complying with any legal and statutory requirements for the implementation of your project.

This may include but is not limited to requirements in relation to building controls, planning permission, and landlord consents.

Invest NI & Enterprise Ireland will not accept responsibility for your failure to comply with any legal requirements relating to your project.

8. Submitting a claim for Northern Ireland Based Projects

Please note that all costs must be incurred and paid for by the business that is named on the Letter of Offer.

For projects based in Northern Ireland, Once the equipment for your project has been purchased and fully installed, you must submit your grant claim to Invest NI via the [Invest NI Claim Pack](#) by the date detailed within your Letter of Offer.

Proof of Invest NI receiving this claim must be retained by the applicant. Please note that all costs must be incurred and paid for by the business that is named on the Letter of Offer.

Before any claim is paid, Invest NI will verify that the new equipment has been installed. This verification process will include a site visit to inspect the equipment being claimed and the taking of photographs as evidence of installation.

Worked Example of Eligible Expenditure and Grant: (the net cost capital equipment only is eligible for grant)

Item/Cost Incurred	Gross Cost	Net Cost	Eligible Cost	*Potential Grant Rate on offer	Eligible Grant
Staff Costs	£500,000		£0	45%	£0
Consultancy	£100,000	£80,000	£0	45%	£0
5 Mw Electrolyser	£10,000,000	£8,000,000	£8,000,000	45%	£3,600,000
Sub-Contracting	£500,000	£400,000	£0	45%	£0
*Indicative grant rate as an example only, rate offered will be based on appraisal and negotiation of incentive effect with company					

9. Submitting a claim for Projects in Ireland

In the first instance, where you are in receipt of a letter of offer from Enterprise Ireland, you should contact your EI Client Advisor who will be able to assist with the Grant Payments process.

10. Data Protection and Handling

The SCF is managed and administered by Invest NI & Enterprise Ireland in partnership with InterTradelreland. Each organisation will access the information you provide as part of your application to assess your eligibility and to conduct post scheme governance assessments.

As this financial support is sourced from public funds Invest NI, Enterprise Ireland and InterTradelreland will, in the interest of openness and transparency, proactively publish limited information on beneficiaries under the scheme including:

- name of successful applicant
- project title
- amount of assistance.

Invest NI & Enterprise Ireland will handle your data in compliance with applicable laws including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). For further details on the data handling practices please see the [Invest NI Privacy Notice](#) and [Enterprise Ireland Data Protection](#).

In the event of information being shared with InterTradelreland, your information and details will be managed in accordance with the [InterTradelreland Data Protection and Privacy Policy](#).

11. Right to Amend

Dependant on future funding availability and uptake, Invest NI & Enterprise Ireland reserves the right to amend the scheme eligibility criteria, which may include grant rates, eligible technologies and funding priorities.

12. General Enquiries

If you have any enquiries about the scheme or the application process, you can email scf@investni.com if your project is based in Northern Ireland.

For projects based in the Ireland you can email your Client Advisor or contact the Sustainability Solutions team green@enterprise-ireland.com

Should you require a copy of these guidance notes or the FAQs in an alternate format, e.g. braille, then please contact equality@investni.com or [Enterprise Ireland Contact](#)

Annex A – SME Definition & State Aid Articles

European Union Notification and Business Size Definitions State Aid Notification:

For all businesses the scheme will be delivered under [EU GBER Articles 36-48](#)

Business size definitions:

A small enterprise is defined as:

- An enterprise that has fewer than 50 employees and has either an annual turnover and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding €10m.

A medium sized enterprise is defined as:

- An enterprise that has between 50 employees and 249 employees and has either an annual turnover not exceeding €50m or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding €43m.

A Large Enterprise will be anything else that does not fall into either the smaller or medium-sized categories.

If a company is part of a group, then the employee, turnover, annual balance sheet and ownership limits apply to the group. In all cases, if the enterprise is more than 25% owned by one or more enterprises or itself has a holding of more than 25% in any other enterprise, it will be necessary to consult the full definition in the Official Journal ([See here](#)).

Excluded from the holding company threshold in the above definition are public investment corporations, venture capital companies and institutional investors provided that they do not exercise control.

However, an enterprise cannot be considered as meeting either definition if 25% or more of the capital or voting rights are directly or indirectly controlled, jointly or individually, by one or more public bodies.

*Annex B – Expenditure, Grant Limits & Project Assessment, Additional Funding Streams in Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, significant project costs have been defined as a minimum of €6m/£5m capital expenditure.

In Northern Ireland, the maximum grant award on a single project basis will be €8.77m/£7.5m

Grant Rates will be capped based on company size: **50% Small, 45% Medium, 30% Large** sized company. It is not envisaged that the upper cap limit per company size will be offered and project rates of support will be negotiated based on need to deliver. Therefore, project applicants should clearly demonstrate the incentive needed to bring forward their project.

For validation of a project concept and to ensure it aligns with the SCF criteria, the following will be reviewed by internal experts at the expression of interest stage:

- Company Details
- Company Financials & Employment
- Project Description
- Benefit of the project to the all-island economy & sustainability benefits
- Financial Viability & Balance of Funding
- Timeframe of Project Delivery
- Innovative nature of the project
- Signed company accounts or latest management accounts will need to be submitted with the EoI

In the event that additional funding becomes available through the Mid South West Growth Deal or other public funding sources, Invest NI may support additional eligible projects on a case-by-case basis.

Funding will still be allocated under the same terms, conditions and criteria as the SCF including:

- Thematic Areas
- Timeframes
- Grant Rates
- Maximum Grant Awards
- Sustainable and Economic Benefits to the all-island economy
- TRL levels
- All other terms and conditions as outlined in the Guidance & FAQs

Where Mid South West Growth Deal funding or other public funding is granted, it may enable additional projects including those with a specific regional focus within Northern Ireland to be approved and issued with a separate Letter of Offer. Any additional funding will be allocated on a first come, first served basis, subject to budget availability and compliance with all applicable scheme criteria. Invest Northern Ireland reserves the right to allocate any additional funding in a manner that maximises the number of eligible projects supported across Northern Ireland.

Annex C – Appeals Process

If an applicant is unhappy with the outcome of the decision, they can seek feedback on their application. It is hoped this feedback will be taken on board and used to strengthen any future application made to any calls that may be opened.

Should an applicant still be unhappy with the outcome and want to progress further then this can be considered under each agencies Appeal Procedure. A copy can be provided on request.

Annex D – Undertakings in Difficulty

Assistance under SCF will not be granted to undertakings in difficulty, including:

- i. In the case of a limited liability company, where more than half of its subscribed share capital has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses.
- ii. In the case of a company where at least some members have unlimited liability for the debt of the company, where more than half of its capital as shown in the company accounts has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses.
- iii. Where the undertaking is subject to collective insolvency proceedings or fulfils the criteria under its domestic law for being placed in collective insolvency proceedings at the request of its creditors.
- iv. Where the undertaking has received rescue aid and has not yet reimbursed the loan or terminated the guarantee or has received restructuring aid and is still subject to a restructuring plan.
- v. Where, for the past two years: (i) the undertaking's book debt to equity ratio has been greater than 7.5; and (ii) the undertaking's EBITDA interest coverage ratio has been below 1.0. This will be assessed as part of the project and business appraisal conducted by each agency.