



Ag tacú le daoine óga
atá faoi mhíchumas barr
a gcumais a bhaint amach
Supporting young people
with disabilities
reach their potential

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

3 October 2017

Version 1



EUROPEAN UNION
Investing in your future
European Social Fund



An Roinn
Gnóthaí Fostaíochta agus Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of
Employment Affairs and Social Protection



Ability is co-financed by the Irish Government and the European Social Fund as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020.

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Introduction

The Ability Programme is co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

Pobal has developed this guide to help applicants prepare their application forms before they apply online. The online application form will be available from Monday 4 December 2017.

This document provides background information about the Ability Programme. It also provides information about the application process and how we will appraise and score applications.

Please read through this document before you decide to apply for Ability funding.

More application guidance will be provided about completing your online application form on 4 December 2017.

Pobal Helpdesk

If you require this guide or any other documents in another format or if you have any questions about the Ability programme, please contact us at:

Email: onlinesupport@pobal.ie

Telephone: (01) 511 72 22

Key Dates

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| 3 October 2017 | Call for Ability Applications is launched on the Pobal website |
| 17 October 2017 | Information event, Cavan |
| 19 October 2017 | Information event, Limerick |
| 25 October 2017 | Information events, Dublin |
| 4 December 2017 | Online application process opens on www.pobal.ie |
| 31 January 2018 | Online application process closes at 12pm |
| April 2018 | The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection announces decisions |

Overview of the Ability Programme

Up to €10 million funding is available for the Ability Programme.

The Ability Programme is focused on promoting the **employability** of young people with disabilities.

Employability relates to the general skills a person needs to enter, stay in and progress in the world of work.

The term 'employability' recognises the importance of an individual's skills, competencies and experience when they are looking for work.

The Ability Programme will promote **employment prospects** and **meaningful social roles** for young people with disabilities and particularly, for young people who are distant from the labour market.

A **meaningful social role** refers to any employment or volunteer role that supports a young person to realise their potential. A meaningful social role will facilitate a young person with a disability to contribute to economic life or to their community to the extent of their ability.

The programme will promote positive pathways into education, training and employment for participants.

The Ability Programme will support projects that demonstrate **person centred approaches**. This type of work assists young people to identify and follow progression routes based on both their potential and their needs.

Person centred planning focuses primarily on the person rather than their disability or a service.

This approach may be defined as a way of discovering:

- how a person wants to live their life,
- their ambitions and aspirations, and
- what is required to make that possible.

The programme will raise awareness of the target group's capacity to obtain and retain employment.

The Ability Programme will also support projects to address societal barriers to progression. In addition to supporting young people, Ability projects may also deliver complementary actions with families, employers and key service providers working in education, training and employment.

The programme will prioritise projects that demonstrate strategic collaboration and 'joined up' approaches to project planning and delivery.

The programme will support project of different scales. This includes local, county-wide, regional and national projects.

- **Local** projects cover one area or a small number of areas within a city or a county.
- **County-wide** projects will cover a wide range of locations in a county.
- **Regional** projects will cover more than one county.
- **National** projects cover the whole country.

Aim of the Ability Programme

To bring **young people with disabilities** who are not work-ready closer to the labour market using a range of **person-centred supports**.

Objectives of the Ability Programme

- To assist young people with disabilities to **develop the confidence and independence** required to participate in education, training, employment.
- To assist young people with disabilities at **key transition points** between education, training and employment.
- To support young people with disabilities who are not in education, employment or training **to access and participate in education, training, employment.**
- To **build the capacity of mainstream employment services, education and training providers** to support the progression of young people with disabilities.
- To **build the capacity of employers** to recruit and retain young people with disabilities within their workforce.

How do you define young people with disabilities?

The Ability Programme defines **young people** as individuals who are between the ages of **15 to 29 when registering for Ability supports.**

People with disabilities

For the purpose of the Ability Programme, this term refers to people with physical or sensory disabilities, mental health conditions, acquired disabilities, intellectual disabilities, hidden disabilities and people on the autistic spectrum.

In order to qualify for support, Ability participants must also be:

- in receipt of disability allowance or invalidity pension; or
- in receipt of illness benefit for more than three months; or
- an existing service user or client of your organisation or your project partner's organisation; or
- referred to your project by relevant organisations or services supporting young people with disabilities.

For example, referrals will be accepted from:

- the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS),
- Primary Care Teams,
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS),
- Community Mental Health Services,
- residential or day services,
- special schools.

Other referrals may be accepted on a case-by-case basis;
Referrals from GPs and mainstream schools will not be eligible.

Who can apply?

- Community, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations with a legal structure that **support for people with disabilities as part of their organisation's objectives.**
- Community, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations with a legal structure that provide **training, pre-employment and/or employment supports as part of their organisation's objectives.**
- Non-Statutory Bodies funded under Sections 38 and 39 of The Health Act 2004.
- Employer networks with a legal structure.
- Networks of non-statutory bodies with a legal structure.

We will only accept one application from each individual applicant and each lead applicant. However, local and regional branches of the same organisation may apply for funding if they have their own governing documents.

Partnership Applications

Partnership applications are welcome where there is evidence of a strategic and a 'joined-up' approach.

Each partnership application must nominate a '**lead applicant**'. Other organisations that are officially involved in the planning or delivery of your project are '**project partners**'.

The lead applicant will be the contract holder and will have responsibility for project management, financial reporting and project monitoring.

Statutory bodies and schools may participate as project partners in partnership applications.

Who cannot apply?

Individuals cannot apply for Ability funding.

The points below **only apply to individual applicants or lead applicants.**

You cannot apply if your organisation:

- Is a **for profit** organisation.
- **Does not have a legal structure.**

All applicants must have a **legal structure**. This means that your organisation must have a legal identity that is separate from people who manage your organisation or your membership.

- **Does not provide support for people with disabilities; or**
- You **cannot demonstrate** that **support for people with disabilities is consistent with your organisation's objectives** in your governing documents; **or**
- **Does not provide training, pre-employment and employment supports; or**
- You **cannot demonstrate that training, pre-employment and/or employment supports is consistent with your organisation's objectives** in your governing documents.

How much can we apply for?

We are inviting applications for €200,000 to €750,000.

How long will Ability projects be funded for?

You may apply for funding for a minimum of two years and a maximum of three years.

What types of activities can be funded?

- **Projects demonstrating a person centred planning approach** where project workers and/or job coaches will support young people to identify pathways for progression to education, training and/or employment.

(Project workers or job coaches may also support young people to access mainstream education, training and employment services. They may also co-ordinate the delivery of tailored initiatives.)

- **Specialised vocational assessments** to assist young people in identifying their work capabilities and support needs.

A **specialised vocational assessment** is a tailored assessment that assists individuals to identify their work capability and support needs.

Under the Ability Programme, expertise and in-depth knowledge of the specific disability should inform the design and implementation of the vocational assessment.

Tailored training and/or youth work approaches promoting the **development of the soft skills, confidence and independence** required to participate in education, training and employment.

- **Tailored transition programmes** that enable **students** to progress to further/higher level education, training and/or employment.

For example: planning, skills development, orientation initiatives, youth work approaches or wider support programmes.

- **Outreach, information and advice, mentoring, pre-employment supports** that empower young people with disabilities **to access and participate in education, training and/or the labour market.**

For example: CV and interview preparation, wider support programmes and services.

- **Work preparation initiatives** for young people with disabilities.

For example: work sampling, work experience placements, work shadowing, volunteer placements and place and train schemes.

- **Capacity building programmes for mainstream employment services and education and training providers.**

For example: information and advice, mentoring, training and tailored initiatives that assist staff and management to support the participation and progression of young people with disabilities within their services.

- **Capacity building programmes for employers**

For example: information and advice, mentoring, training and tailored initiatives that assist employers to recruit and retain young people with disabilities within their workforce.

This list provides a broad outline of the type of actions that the Programme will fund.

If you have questions about other types of actions, please contact us at:

Email: onlinesupport@pobal.ie

Telephone: (01) 511 72 22

What type of activities or projects cannot be funded?

- 'Stand alone' **projects that do not provide person-centred supports for young people with disabilities** but focus instead on: families, employers, mainstream service providers, training providers and/or education providers.
- Projects that provide training only.
- Projects that fund only social activities.
- Projects that only fund equipment or assistive technology.
- Projects that seek funding to make buildings accessible.
- Projects or project actions that are already receiving ongoing funding including public funding from the Government or the EU (and EU Globalisation Funds).
- Projects that fund rehabilitation services.
- One-off events that are not part of a wider programme of work.
- Feasibility studies and seed grants.
- Bursaries to individuals.

What costs are eligible?

This represents an indicative but not exhaustive list.

Salary costs for workers assigned to project delivery (direct staff)

- **Project workers**
- **Job coaches**
- **Occupational therapists assisting with specialised vocational assessments.**
- **Career guidance professionals.**

Salary costs can include: recruitment costs, employers' PRSI and pension contributions. Salary scales should be commensurate with current scales within the relevant sector.

You must demonstrate that the direct staff you are applying for are **directly linked to Ability project activities.**

Programme Costs

- **Training and accreditation costs** including:
 - Tutors
 - Facilitators
 - Course materials for participants
 - Room hire.
- **Specialised vocational assessments** including:
Costs for occupational therapists undertaking vocational assessments

Go to the **Equipment and Assistive technology** to find out about additional items that can be funded to assist with specialised vocational assessments.

- **Facilitation costs**
- **Career guidance costs**
- **Venue/room hire**
- **Travel costs for participants**
 - Accessible bus hire for groups
 - Valid taxi receipts for individuals where group transport is not possible.

Your project must provide evidence that public transport options are neither available nor accessible.

- **Publicity Costs** for your project including:
 - Leaflets
 - Brochures
 - Website development etc.

- **Travel and subsistence for project workers**

Rates must be appropriate and justifiable. Costs should directly relate to project activity.

Equipment and Assistive Technology

Assistive technology refers to any electronic device, software or piece of equipment that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities¹ (e.g. screen reading software, voice output communication solutions, personal navigation aids/apps, memory aids).

Aids and appliances (for example hearing aids, mobility aids) and rehabilitation equipment are not eligible for Ability funding.

¹ World Report on Disability, p.101, World Health Organization, The World Bank, 2011

The Ability Programme will fund equipment or assistive technology for the following purposes:

- **Specialised vocational assessments**
 - Design/purchase of vocational assessment tools/packages/materials.
 - Assistive technologies to aid vocational assessments may be considered for funding where a strong justification is provided.

We will appraise all applications seeking assistive technology for vocational assessments on a case by case basis.

Your application must clearly demonstrate why assistive technology is **essential** to vocational assessments.

- **Small scale Equipment/Assistive Technology Libraries for participants**

The programme will pilot the funding of small scale equipment/assistive technology libraries.

You may apply for funding to operate small scale equipment/assistive technology 'libraries' that support young people with disabilities to participate in job hunting, education, training or employment.

All funded projects will be required to follow Ability Programme rules relating to equipment.

- **Small scale equipment to facilitate project worker or job coach**

Up to €1,000 (inclusive of VAT) is available per project worker/job coach.

Equipment may include a laptop or a mobile phone. Equipment must be essential for the delivery of the project, and will be considered on a case by case basis.

The **total sum of equipment/assistive technology for each project** will be capped on the following basis:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Local projects / County-wide projects | €12,000 |
| Regional projects | €28,000 |
| Nationwide projects | €63,000 |

Indirect Costs

There are two categories for indirect costs:

- **Overheads**
 - Rent and rates
 - Insurance
 - Water charges
 - Light and heating bills
 - General office supplies
 - Cleaning
 - Audit and accountancy fees
 - ICT supports
 - Telephone costs.
- **Indirect staffing**

Indirect staff are any staff members who **supervise** or **provide support** for your Ability project:

 - Managers or supervisors
 - Human Resources
 - Financial managers or financial administrator
 - Administrators

You can apply for funding for **indirect costs** at a rate of **up to 7% of total direct costs (excluding equipment costs)**.

A clear justification for indirect expenditure against specific categories must be provided at the application stage.

What costs are not eligible?

- Medical or health assessments.
- Occupational therapy equipment or rehabilitative equipment.
- Aids, equipment and assistive technology funded through the Housing Adaptation Grant, Mobility Aids Grant Scheme, Equipment grants for students with disabilities, Fund for Students with Disabilities, Workplace Equipment/Adaptation Grant, or any other grants or schemes funded by the Irish Government or the European Social Fund.
- VAT is an ineligible cost for applicants who are registered for VAT.
- Charges such as bank interest costs, fines, financial penalties, and legal dispute costs.
- Core funding of organisations.
- Costs incurred on an Ability project before funding approval is given.
- Redundancy costs.
- Sponsorship and charitable donations.
- Vehicles or other mobile assets. This includes all associated costs in the purchase of these items.
- Building or refurbishment costs.
- Depreciation.
- In-kind contributions.
- Notional costs e.g. lost opportunity.
- Costs not directly related to the project.
- Costs for staff, actions, equipment and programmes already supported by statutory and public funding.

- Fuel costs or mileage for the transport of participants.
- Project level evaluations.

Programme Outputs and Outcomes

The Ability Programme will provide supports to a minimum of **1,000 young people with disabilities**.

The programme has identified key quantitative indicators to measure the number of young people supported (**outputs**).

These indicators will also chart their **progression** into education, training and employment (**outcomes**). We will report on these indicators to the Irish Government and the European Social Fund.

Your application must demonstrate how it will meet relevant programme outputs and outcomes.

Programme Outputs

The project outputs will measure the number of:

- Young people with a disability supported by the programme.
- Young people with a disability participating in accredited and non-accredited education/training programmes.
- Young people with a disability participating in work preparation initiatives.
- Employers engaged with the Ability programme (if applicable).
- Families supported (if applicable).
- Service providers supported (if applicable).

Quantitative Outcomes - Immediate and Long Term Results

The quantitative outcomes will measure the number of Ability participants who are:

- Engaged in job searching upon leaving the Ability project.
- Participating in NFQ accredited education courses upon leaving and six months later.
- Participating in accredited training courses upon leaving and six months later.
- Participating in non-accredited training courses upon leaving and six months later.
- Have gained a qualification upon leaving.
- Volunteering in their communities upon leaving and six months later.
- Part-time employed/self-employed (less than 8 hours a week) upon leaving and six months later.
- Part-time employed/self-employed (more than 8 hours a week and including self-employment) upon leaving and six months later.
- Full-time employed/self-employed upon leaving and six months later.

Qualitative outcomes will be captured under the programme level evaluation.

The Application Process

All applicants must apply for funding using the **online application form**. The online application form will be available from **4 December 2017**.

From 4 December onwards, the Pobal Ability webpage will have a dedicated webpage with instructions on obtaining your username and password for the online application form. When you have set up your username and password you can start your online application form.

The online form may be saved as a draft application as often as required.

As part of the application process you will be directed to download specific templates which you must complete offline and attach to the application form where applicable.

The online application form will automatically close at **12pm on Wednesday 31 January 2018**.

The Appraisal Process

We appraise applications in two stages:

1. Eligibility
2. Meeting the selection criteria

Eligibility

The eligibility section relates to individual applicants and lead applicants only.

All **lead applicants and individual applicants** must demonstrate that their applications are eligible for Ability funding before we can progress to a full appraisal.

Your project must meet the following criteria to demonstrate that it is eligible for funding:

1. You must **complete the online application form** and submit all the relevant documents by the closing date.
2. You are applying for **€200,000 to €750,000**.
3. You can demonstrate that your **organisation meets one of the following criteria:**
 - a. your organisation provides supports to people with disabilities; **or**
 - b. supporting people with disabilities is consistent with the aims and objectives in your organisation's governing documents; **or**
 - c. your organisation provides training, pre-employment or employment supports; **or**

- d. providing training, pre-employment or employment supports is consistent with the aims and objectives in your organisation's governing documents.

If your application meets the eligibility criteria, it will progress to the next stage of the process.

Meeting the Selection Criteria

Your application will be scored against the following **selection criteria**:

1. How your application **meets the programme criteria and priorities**
2. The **need** for your project
3. Your organisation's **capacity** to manage and deliver the project
4. **Value for money**

Meeting the programme criteria and priorities

Your project must demonstrate how it will:

- Meet the **aim and objective(s) of the Ability Programme**.
- Create a **discernible impact on the employability and/or progression of young people with disabilities** within the project timeframe.
- Incorporate a **person centred approach** that includes the development of **personal progression plans** for participants.
- Incorporate **participant exit strategies** into the design of the project.
- Meet the **ESF Horizontal Principles of gender equality, equal opportunities and non-discrimination**.

Gender equality and equal opportunities are core features of ESF funding.

All Ability projects must demonstrate how gender equality and equal opportunities are integrated into the **design and delivery** of their project.

Your application must demonstrate that:

- a. Both **women and men** will have **equal opportunities** to access and participate in your Ability project; and
- b. Your project **will not discriminate against young people with disabilities from disadvantaged backgrounds.**

Priority will be given to proposals which demonstrate **strategic partnership approaches** to the delivery of the project.

Your application will also be appraised in terms of the **overall quality** of your proposal.

The need for your project

Your application should demonstrate:

- **Why** there is a need for your project.
- **How** that need was identified.
- How the **proposed project actions will successfully address this need.**

Your capacity to manage and deliver your project

Your application should demonstrate that your organisation (and your partnership) has:

- Relevant **experience** and knowledge of working with **people with disabilities; and/or**
- Relevant **experience** and knowledge of providing **training, pre-employment or employment supports.**
- Previous **experience** of managing and delivering **similar actions or projects.**
- A **robust governance structure** for the management and delivery of your project.
- Adequate **financial management controls** and systems.

When appraising partnership applications, there will be a particular focus on the **lead applicant's capacity.**

Value for money

Your application should provide a **clearly defined budget. Project costs** should be clearly explained and **justified.**

Your application should also demonstrate that:

- The **social and economic benefits** of your project justify the cost of your project.
- Your project adds value to mainstream service provision.
- Your project will not **duplicate funding.** This means that you will not use Ability funding for activities that you already receive **ongoing or open-ended funding** for.

We will also ask you if any **learning and/or actions can be sustained** beyond the timeframe of your Ability project.

Scoring Framework

We will score each project out of 100.

Applications that achieve a score of 60 or more will be considered for funding. However, due to the competitive nature of the process, not all applicants scoring above 60 may be awarded funding.

We will score each selection criteria on the following basis:

| Selection Criteria | Weighting |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Meeting the programme criteria | 40% |
| Evidence of need for the proposal | 20% |
| Capacity of the organisation | 20% |
| Value for money | 20% |
| | 100% |

The Decision Making Process

We will submit a report on the applications and appraisals to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. The Department is the final decision maker on all applications.

Grantee Obligations

If your application is successful, your organisation will sign a grant agreement for your project. This agreement will include a number of standard conditions and some specific conditions that relate to your project.

- Your Ability project will be required to follow European Social Fund guidelines on all publicity and acknowledgement of funding.
- Your project will also be required to collect data on participants in accordance with ESF and Pobal requirements.
- Your project may be audited by Pobal, the ESF or representatives of the ESF.
- You will be required to contribute to the programme level evaluation by participating in networking events or providing data to the programme evaluator.
- You will be required to provide monitoring reports in line with Pobal's and the ESF reporting requirements.
- You will also be required to submit financial returns every six months and report against project actions.