

Access , Skills and Content (ASC) Initiative

This is the second Call for Proposals under the Initiative.

GUIDELINES & CRITERIA

Purpose of the ASC Initiative

The ASC (Access, Skills and Content) Initiative was established in 2006 to assist voluntary, not-for-profit organisations and service providers to support the participation of late adopters of technology in an inclusive Information Society.

The intention is to target those who are at greatest risk of being left behind in the move to the Information Society, including older people and people with disabilities, by exploiting the potential of technology to foster communities of common interest through on-line services and networks. These groups have been identified as two of the most vulnerable sectors in society.

Applications may also be considered for other target groups¹ and evaluated based on the criteria below.

The information in these Guidelines is intended to provide general information to assist applicants understand the requirements for funding and to complete the application form. For any future Call for Proposals applicants are advised that these guidelines and requirements may be subject to change to comply with Government requirements.

Qualifying projects

Projects will be selected for funding based on their relevance to and support of the priority areas for action in the Government's eInclusion Implementation Strategy, which are to

1. Promote ICT (Information & Communication Technology) Access, Learning and Skills
2. Build the ICT capacity of the Community and Voluntary Sector
3. Measure inclusive Information Society development
4. Mainstream Information Society issues
5. Raise Awareness

Projects should focus on digital content and skills development, rather than on site construction (i.e. projects will avoid costs of developing websites by using the *MoBhaile* template)

¹ The 5 target groups are – women with home duties; retired people; tradesmen/skilled workers; workers in agriculture, forestry or fishing; and the unemployed. (eInclusion: Expanding the Information Society in Ireland, Information Society Commission, October 2003)

(<http://www.mobhaile.ie/html/community.htm>). The goal is to increase awareness and relevance of ICT through the availability of relevant content and to promote ICT skills development.

Ineligible expenditure

The following costs may not be considered eligible for funding. However, you may outline them in terms of explaining your project clearly. This list is not exhaustive and each application will be judged on its merits.

- purchase of premises or sites
- core running costs and overheads of the project promoter
- ongoing costs (eg broadband charges, other than initial connection)
- purchase of personal equipment
- purchase of upgraded equipment to replace existing equipment
- retrospective funding
- interest owed, bank charges, fines or financial penalties or litigation costs
- publicity charges

Application Process

- There will be a national Call for Proposals, from Voluntary, local Community and Not-for-Profit organisations, by an advertisement in the national newspapers.
- It is vital that you show that you have thoroughly researched your project and explain it fully in your application. Projects will be judged on their merits, but there will be a limited number of projects funded.
- All applications will initially be assessed and appraised by the Information Society Policy Unit, Department of the Taoiseach. Short-listing will take place.
- No single factor will determine the outcome of any application. Projects that rate highly against the criteria will also be assessed in terms of a balanced geographical spread of funding.
- The initial evaluation summary report of all proposals received will be circulated to the Interdepartmental eInclusion Sub Group of Assistant Secretaries Implementation Group (The Sub-Group). The Sub-Group will have access to all proposals and it will make the final recommendations to the Department of the Taoiseach on projects to be funded.
- Following approval, the Department of the Taoiseach will notify all applicants of the outcome of their applications and successful applicants will be contacted regarding arrangements for the payment of the approved funding.

How to Apply

You can get an application form in the following ways:

- Download and save a form, in Rich Text Format, from our website [http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/attached_files/RTF%20files/ASCApplicationForm.rtf] to your computer which you can then fill in, or you may print the form and fill it in by hand,

Or

- Request that we send you an application form by contacting us at:

Joan Perry
Information Society Policy Unit
Department of the Taoiseach
Government Buildings
Upper Merrion Street
Dublin 2
Phone: +353 1 6194333
email: asc@taoiseach.gov.ie

You can submit your application in two ways:

- electronically by email to asc@taoiseach.gov.ie
- The subject matter in the email must be clearly marked 'ASC Initiative 2007 Application Form'
- by posting your application form to us at the above postal address with the envelope clearly marked 'ASC Initiative 2007 Application Form'

Make sure you keep a copy of your completed application form and supporting documentation for your own records.

Whether electronically or by post, your application, including supporting documentation must reach us by noon (12.00pm) on Thursday 22nd March, 2007.

If you submit your application electronically, please also send us a signed copy by post.

Freedom of Information Act

Under the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 and 2003, we may release details contained in applications and supporting documents, on request to third parties. If there is information contained in your application which is sensitive, please identify it

to us and explain why it should not be disclosed. If we are asked for sensitive information, we will consult you before making a decision. However, if you do not identify any information as sensitive and provide supporting reasons, we will disclose it without any consultation with you.

Important

If you are found to have submitted false or fraudulent documentation or be purposefully misleading the Department in any way, we will withdraw the funding and bar you from applying for future funding.

Our Criteria for assessing projects:

When assessing applications we use a number of criteria, some of which are more important than others. We score each application according to how well it meets these criteria and then rank it in order of priority.

Your application will be assessed and scored on the following criteria:

- The extent to which the project is relevant from a content and/or skills perspective, for example,
 - improving digital literacy
 - supporting independent living
 - supporting communities of common interest
 - supporting access to relevant life-style and health information
- Whether the project will demonstrably assist the Governments strategy of removing barriers in the Information Society by promoting greater engagement with ICT.
- Whether the proposed project sets out clear *aims, objectives and targets*, in terms of inputs and expected measurable outputs, outcomes and impacts
- Whether there will be a significant impact on the numbers of people engaging and benefiting from access to the project
- Whether the proposed project has been fully costed and prioritised and is realistic in terms of scale, costs and funding sought
- Whether you have demonstrated the capacity that currently exists in your organisation to successfully deliver and manage the proposed project
- Whether the proposal incorporates new, innovative approaches that are capable of being replicated elsewhere.
- The extent to which project will focus on addressing the needs of older people and/or people with disabilities – however, projects focussed on other target groups may also be considered.

- Whether the project is area-based, integrated and maximises the use of existing resources
- Whether the proposed project is viable and sustainable
- Whether you have shown that you have a proven history that will allow you to complete the project within a realistic timeframe.

Fund Timescale

- The deadline for receipt of applications for funding from the Second Call for Proposals under the ASC Initiative is **noon (12.00pm) on Thursday, 22nd March 2007.**
- Projects must be implemented and all project expenses, for which funding is being sought, incurred before the end of December 2007.

How Funding Allocations will be paid

Allocations less than €6,500:

If your funding allocation is less than €6,500 you must **confirm that your own tax affairs are in order** and supply us with your tax reference number and details of the tax district dealing with your affairs.

Allocations which are €6,500 or more:

If your funding allocation is €6,500 or more you must have a current tax clearance certificate at all times during payment of the funding.

Equipment

If your application is in respect of funding for the purchase of equipment only please note that we will require 3 quotations from suppliers.

If your funding allocation is for equipment valued at more than €6,500, you must get a tax clearance certificate from the equipment supplier or suppliers.

Stage Payments

- We will pay your funding in stages as your project proceeds.
- We will pay up to 30% of the funding allocated on receipt of the tax clearance details as outlined and the remaining 70% of the funding allocation will be paid by reimbursing your costs when you submit original, paid, valid invoices to us. We will only reimburse you for works for which we have approved funding.

How the Department Monitors projects

Along with our requirement that you only provide original, paid, valid invoices we monitor projects by requiring that you:

- Return a signed acknowledgement after you receive each payment before you can apply for another payment.
- Keep all documents relating to your project for at least three years after the project is completed.
- Include an evaluation stage in your project.
- Facilitate an inspection of your project by representatives of the Department who may visit it.