



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

## Dormant Accounts Fund Disbursement Scheme 2023 - 2025



ciste na  
gcuntas díomhaoin  
the dormant  
accounts fund



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## Section 1: Introduction

The Dormant Accounts Act 2001, together with the Unclaimed Life Assurance Policies Act 2003, provide a framework for the administration of unclaimed accounts in credit institutions (i.e. banks, building societies and An Post) and unclaimed life assurance policies in insurance undertakings.

The main purpose of the legislation is to reunite account or policy holders with their funds in credit institutions or insurance undertakings. In this regard, these bodies are required to take steps to identify and contact the owners of dormant accounts and unclaimed life assurance policies.

Dormant funds or unclaimed life assurance policies which have not been reclaimed by the original accounts/policy holder, or their beneficiaries, are transferred each year by the holding institution to the Dormant Accounts Fund which is managed by the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA). The transfer of moneys takes place on the basis that the beneficial owner will have a guaranteed right of reclaim to their property at any time in the future.

However, the legislation also introduced a scheme for the disbursement of funds that are unlikely to be reclaimed. These funds which are unlikely to be reclaimed can be used only for the purposes of programmes or projects to assist:

- the personal and social development of persons who are economically or socially disadvantaged;
- the educational development of persons who are educationally disadvantaged or;
- persons with a disability.

The legislation established an administrative framework around the disbursement of these funds, of which this disbursement scheme is part. Since July 2017, responsibility for the disbursement of funds from the Dormant Accounts Fund rests with the Minister for Rural and Community Development.

## Section 2: Ministerial Responsibilities

The key elements of the administrative framework established within the Acts are the preparation of:

- (i) a disbursement scheme for the approval of Government
- (ii) action plans to give effect to the disbursement scheme, and
- (iii) annual reports to be submitted to Government and published.

The legislation states the disbursement scheme shall specify (i) *“the objectives to be achieved by making disbursements from the account”*, and (ii) *“the strategies for achieving those objectives”*. The previous disbursement scheme covered the period 2020-2022, and this disbursement scheme covers the period 2023-2025.

The Minister must also prepare Action Plans (at least annually) to give effect to this disbursement scheme. The Action Plans identify the actual projects and programmes to be funded from the Dormant Accounts Fund. Each relevant Government Minister/Department identifies suitable proposals. These are assessed by the Minister and a decision made on those proposals to be funded. The Action Plan is then noted by Government, laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas, and published.

It is important to note that the Action Plans, which are usually annual in nature, mainly identify funding for subsequent years. For example, the 2022 Action Plan was published in November 2021 and mainly identified measures to be funded in 2022. This means that it was prepared in the context of the 2020-2022 Disbursement Scheme in place at that time. The Action Plan prepared in 2022, which will mainly identify measures to be funded in 2023 will be in accordance with the 2023-2025 Disbursement Scheme.

Finally, the legislation requires that Annual Reports are prepared, submitted to Government and published each year.

### Section 3: Disbursement Scheme Objectives and Strategies

Previous disbursement schemes before the 2020-2022 scheme set out relatively complex funding frameworks. A review, published in July 2018, identified that this was an overly complex approach, and could potentially restrict projects that emerge from new policy priorities.

To address this issue, the Disbursement Scheme 2020-2022 detailed high level objectives and strategies to be implemented over that period. The exact areas for funding or types of projects proposed should be decided on by the Departments putting forward proposals. This allowed policy priorities to be addressed as they emerged, but within the high level framework identified. The simplified approach has proved successful with greater engagement from Departments and increased utilisation of the fund. Following a review of the 2020-2022 Disbursement Scheme it is proposed to continue with this approach for the 2023-2025 Disbursement Scheme.

Where assessment of applications for funding from Government Departments is required, this assessment by the Minister will take place in terms of alignment with these objectives and strategies.

#### **Objectives:**

The types of projects and programmes approved in Dormant Accounts Action Plans developed over the 2023-2025 period will align with one or more of objectives 1-3 below:

**Objective 1:** To assist programmes/projects designed to counter economic and/or social disadvantage.

**Objective 2:** To assist programmes/projects designed to address issues (e.g. socio-economic or other disadvantage such as disability, literacy difficulties, ill health etc.) preventing children and adults from deriving appropriate benefit from education.

**Objective 3:** To assist programmes/projects designed to give effect to the Government's objective to ensure that persons with a disability (as defined in the Equal Status Act 2000) play a more active role in society and increase their level of independence.

In assessing applications for funding from Government Departments, the Minister will ensure alignment with at least one of the above objectives, and also consider objective 4 below.

**Objective 4:** To maximise the overall impact of the fund and to ensure an appropriate spread of projects and programmes both in terms of the socio-economic objectives and geographic spread.

## **Strategies:**

The Dormant Accounts Acts require that the Disbursement Scheme sets out the strategies for achieving the above objectives. Following the recent review and consultation with other Government Departments, it is clear that each Department is best placed to decide on the specific strategies to be adopted within their own policy areas.

However, a number of general strategies will be considered in terms of developing Action Plans over the period, and the assessment of applications for funding from relevant Government Departments:

- **Strategy 1:** Funding those projects which have the strongest direct impact on disadvantaged individuals and communities.
- **Strategy 2:** Seeking to maximise on-the-ground delivery of services or amenity – including, where appropriate, delivery through community and voluntary organisations.
- **Strategy 3:** Aiming to increase the total impact of the fund, for example, through match funding from philanthropic sources or use of corporate social responsibility resources within projects or programme.
- **Strategy 4:** Aiming to increase funding for supports for the Traveller and Roma Community.
- **Strategy 5:** Working to ensure a good flow of new and innovative projects and programmes are funded – with ongoing measures that have proven successful moving to normal Exchequer funding, if possible and more appropriate.
- **Strategy 6:** Measuring and demonstrating the impact and outcome of measures supported by the Fund.
- **Strategy 7:** Increasing awareness with the public on the benefits of the Dormant Account Fund and how the funding is utilised.

An interdepartmental group on the Dormant Accounts Fund was established in 2018, and this group continues to work to ensure projects and programmes are developed and delivered in line with the above objectives and strategies. Information on how proposed projects or programmes align with the above objectives and strategies will be required in applications for funding from Government Departments so as to enable assessment of proposals in line with this scheme. The application form to be used by Departments seeking funding in Action Plans will be amended to reflect the above strategies (see Appendix II)

It should also be noted that where Government Departments are utilising Dormant Accounts Funds to operate further competitive funding calls, specific procedures must be followed in accordance with the legislation governing the use of the funds. These are summarised in Appendix I to this document.

## **Administration of the Funds**

Finally, with regard to proper use of public funds, each Government Department is responsible for delivery and administration of their own projects and programmes approved in any Action Plan. All money from the Dormant Accounts Fund must be treated in exactly the same way as other public moneys and, as such, funding stemming from this disbursement scheme must be administered in accordance with Government guidelines and accounting procedures.

## ***Appendix I: Further Application Processes through the Dormant Accounts Fund***

Some measures approved for funding in Annual Action plans involve the Minister/Department inviting applications to further disburse the approved moneys to individual projects or programmes. This usually involves a relatively large amount of money being approved for a broad measure which then involves further small grants to community or other organisations.

The legislation states that when a Minister decides to invite applications for disbursements as part of a measure specified in an Action Plan, he/she (or the delivery agent acting on their behalf) must:

- Publish a notice inviting applications and setting out assessment criteria, the types of projects or programmes covered, the application procedure, the criteria governing the classes of persons who may make an application and the closing date;
- Assess applications in accordance with the assessment criteria;
- Prepare a report on the result of the assessments setting out a list of the applications received, a recommendation in relation to each, the reasons for same and the amount of disbursement recommended.

The Minister shall then:

- Prepare a list of the applications that he/she recommends for disbursal and the amounts recommended for disbursal;
- Submit the list to the Minister for Rural and Community Development for approval.

## ***Appendix II: Dormant Accounts Fund – 2023 Action Plan Funding Application***

### **1. CONTACT DETAILS**

**Department:** [Click here to enter name](#)

**Unit Name:** [Click here to enter name](#)

**Contact Phone:** [Click here to enter text](#)

**Contact Name:** [Click here to enter name](#)

**Contact Email:** [Click here to enter email](#)

### **2. MEASURE DETAILS**

**Name of Measure:**

[Click here to enter text](#)

**Brief Description of Measure and Disbursement Scheme Objectives & Strategies it applies to (see appendix)**

[Click here to enter text](#)

**Maximum Amount Sought in 2023 Action Plan:**

**2023 €** [Enter amount](#)

Do you plan to request money for this measure in future DAF action plans?

Yes

No

**How will awareness that DAF funding is being utilised for this measure be raised with the Public: e.g. DAF Logo, Press Release**

[Click here to enter text](#)

**Status of Measure:**

New Proposed Measure

Continuation of Existing Measure (please specify previous actions plans which approved funding for this measure)

If it is a continuous measure, how is it planned to assess the impact of this measure: [Click here to enter text](#)

**Measure will involve further competitive application process, with additional Ministerial approval therefore required:**

Yes

No

### 3. DISBURSEMENT SCHEME OBJECTIVES MET BY THE MEASURE

Please specify which Disbursement Scheme objectives the measure will address:

TO ASSIST PROGRAMMES/PROJECTS DESIGNED TO COUNTER ECONOMIC AND/OR SOCIAL DISADVANTAGE

DESIGNED TO ADDRESS EDUCATIONALLY DISADVANTAGED

TO ASSIST PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY

### 4. LOCATION

An objective of the Disbursement Scheme is “To maximise the overall impact of the fund and to ensure an appropriate spread of projects and programmes both in term of the socio-economic objectives and geographic spread.” In that context is the proposed measure:

**National**

**Regional**

[Click here to enter county](#)

**Date of submission:** [Click here to enter date](#)

**Submitted by:** [Click here to enter name](#)



