



National
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An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

ORGANIC FARMING SCHEME INFORMATION DAY FOR HORTICULTURAL GROWERS

1-Day Free Information Session &
Workshops
with DAFM, OGI, Teagasc, ACA &
Leading Small Growers

Thursday February 29th
10.00am - 4.00pm
County Arms Hotel,
Birr, Co Offaly

www.nots.ie



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
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Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

The Scheme of Investment Aid for the Development of the Commercial Horticulture Sector

Sinead Mulcahy

29th February 2024

Scheme Overview



- The Scheme is intended to assist in the development of the horticulture sector (excluding potatoes), including beekeeping, by grant aiding capital investments in specialised plant and equipment including renewable energy.
- The Scheme is open to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) active in the primary horticulture production sector (including beekeeping).
- Aid will be payable at the maximum rate of 40% (at a maximum rate of 50% in the case of young farmers) on the accepted net cost of investments approved.
- The minimum investment which will be considered for grant aid is €10,000 excluding VAT, except in the case of beekeeping where a minimum investment of €2,000 excluding VAT applies.
- The upper cumulative limit, per applicant, for investments under the scheme over the period 2023 - 2027 is €5m (maximum grant aid €2m).
- Budget for the 2024 Scheme is €10 million. It is funded through the National Exchequer. This scheme falls under State Aid in accordance with the Guidelines for State aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas.

Scheme Application Process



- The Scheme launches in October each year with a closing date for applications in mid-December.
- Complete the Application Form.
 - Signed by approved adviser (Approved FAS Advisor or Teagasc Hort Adviser)
- Submit Supporting Documentation:
 - Business Plan (Application Form contains Template)
 - Most recent set of accounts.
 - Quotations for investment items (x 1)
 - Planning permission/ Letter of exemption (if applicable).
 - Lease / ownership documentation (if applicable).
 - Yard layout map/sketch (if applicable).
- Completed application form & supporting documentation submitted in hardcopy to DAFM Backweston.

Scheme Application Process



- Applicant must be registered as a Food Business Operator.
- Applicant must be an approved participant in the appropriate Bord Bia Quality Assurance Programme(s), or a recognised equivalent. However, requests for an exemption from that requirement for small scale producers who only directly supply a local non-wholesale market will be considered by DAFM.
- Eligible investment items:
 - **Capital investments** in specialised plant and equipment including renewable energy, as well as technology adoption **specific to commercial horticulture production.**
 - In general items such as second-hand equipment /quads / general tractors / teleporters / generators / general purpose – storage/machinery sheds / investments for personal use / Pilot projects / Track machines / Office equipment etc are **ineligible.**

Scheme Application Process



- Each application is assessed and evaluated considering the investment applied for, information contained in the business plan, the accounts (turnover / sales), previous application & claim history.
- Aid for each investment will be decided based on the availability of funds and the ongoing priorities for each sector within the industry.
- Aid for investment will, always, be subject to the condition that, in the opinion of the Department, the investment is justified.
- In some cases, only part of an investment may be approved for aid.
- Selection Committee meeting is held once all assessments are completed, and recommendations are then made as to whether the investment is approved / not approved / part approved or ineligible.
- Some investment items will have conditions attached e.g veg boxes
- Notifications regarding application outcome usually start to issue from mid-March.

Scheme Application Process



- Approved investments must be completed and the claim for payment submitted to the Department before the end of October.
- Claim for payment:
 - Receipts / invoice for investment items.
 - Proof of payment.
 - Own labour is eligible (TAMS Rate)
 - Applicant (€10,000) & Contractor (> €650) Tax Clearance Certs required.
- All investment items claimed are subject to a pre-payment inspection.

Further Information



- Terms & Conditions and Application Form from previous years are available on the DAFM Website.
 - Schemes & Services - Horticulture
 - [gov - Schemes and Payments \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)
- Email: HorticultureGrants@agriculture.gov.ie
- Phone: 01 5058886

Organic and Small Grower Survey



- **The National Strategy for Horticulture 2023-2027** was launched in June 2023.
- Provides a road map for the horticulture industry.
- Designed to address the challenges and opportunities to sustain and grow the industry.
- Key Strategic Action 1.2 of the Strategy called on more supports for smaller and or organic growers to enable them to reach markets directly.
- However, there is a lack of data on smaller and organic horticulture growers.
- DAFM are therefore launching a survey to capture the value of and challenges for the smaller and organic grower and help inform future policy decisions.
- The more growers that complete the survey the more visible smaller and organic growers will be and the better-informed future policy.
- The survey will go live from Friday 8th March at <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/Smallgrowerandorganicsurvey>

