



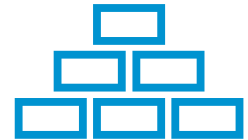
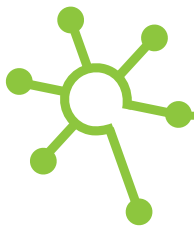
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Local  
Enterprise  
Office

# Financial Supports Available from Local Enterprise Offices





## How do Local Enterprise Offices help businesses financially?

Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) can help to establish and develop new and existing enterprises provided that the enterprise is capable of becoming commercially viable. These financial supports include:

- Priming Grants
- Business Expansion Grants
- Feasibility Study Grants

These financial supports are designed to provide a flexible suite of supports to LEO clients and potential clients.

LEOs can assist in the establishment and development of new and existing enterprises (Limited Companies, Designated Activity Companies, sole traders, cooperatives and partnerships) provided that such enterprises are capable of becoming commercially viable.

There are also other criteria to be met and these are listed in the bullet points below.

The enterprise must:

- not employ more than 10 people;
- be established, registered and operate within the area of the Local Enterprise Office;
- operate in the commercial field;
- show that there is a market for the product or service;
- have the potential for growth in domestic or export markets; and
- have potential for job creation.

Within the above criteria, there are certain priorities and restrictions. For example, priority will be given to:

- only enterprises in the manufacturing or internationally traded services sectors which, over time, can develop into strong export entities and graduate to Enterprise Ireland;
- unique tourism services enterprises that target generating revenue from overseas visitors. These tourism services should not take business from other existing players in the market or give rise to deadweight (where projects would have proceeded anyway). Such unique tourism services may be offered salary supports.

With regard to restrictions, retail enterprises, personal services (such as hairdressers, gardeners, creches, and so on), professional services (such as accountants, solicitors) or construction and local building services **are not eligible** for grant aid.

Any costs incurred before you apply are not eligible for grant support.

## Eligible costs

Financial Supports may cover business costs directly attributable to starting a new business or growing and development of a business, or for carrying out a Feasibility study.

## Amount of Grant Aid

Overall, the total grant paid to an eligible enterprise must not exceed €150,000 over a three-year period. All grant payments will be subject to the enterprises reaching agreed business targets as set out in their business plans. The enterprises must also be in compliance with the conditions of the Letter of Offer they receive from their LEO.



## Priming Grants – for businesses trading less than 18 months

A Priming Grant is a business start-up grant available to micro enterprises within the first 18 months of start-up. Micro enterprises (Limited Companies, Designated Activity Companies, sole traders, cooperatives and partnerships) can apply for a Priming Grant to help them get the business started within the first 18 months of start-up.

The maximum Priming Grant payable is 50% of the investment or €150,000 – whichever is less.

Grants between €80,000 and €150,000 are the exception. Only enterprises that clearly demonstrate a potential to graduate to Enterprise Ireland can be awarded grants of this size. In all other cases, the maximum grant is 50% of the investment or €80,000 – whichever is less.

## What does the Priming Grant cover?

A Priming Grant may be paid to buy new equipment, help with direct business costs such as salary, rental costs, utilities, marketing, consultancy costs, and so on. Grant assistance is **not** available for the purchase of a building, land or mobile assets.

Grant expenditure may be considered under the following headings:

- **Capital items** – including fit out of workspace, office equipment, machinery, fixed technology costs, and so on.
- **Salary Costs** – for the first year of employment.
- **Consultancy, Innovation, Marketing Costs** – these may include packaging, brochures, business cards, trade fairs, website development, consultancy fees and other marketing initiatives.
- **General Overhead Costs** – these include, for example, utilities and rental or accommodation costs

There is an element of refundable aid in Priming Grants (grant money that you have to pay back). The LEO's Evaluation and Approvals Committee will determine this amount.





## Business Expansion Grants – for businesses trading over 18 months

The Business Expansion Grant is designed to assist the business in its growth phase after the initial 18-month start-up period.

Micro enterprises (Limited Companies, Designated Activity Companies, sole traders, cooperatives and partnerships) can apply for a Business Expansion Grant to help them to expand the business after the first 18 months of trading.

The maximum Business Expansion Grant that can be paid is 50% of the investment or €150,000 – whichever is less.

Grants between €80,000 and €150,000 are the exception. Only enterprises that clearly demonstrate a potential to graduate to Enterprise Ireland can be awarded grants of this size. In all other cases, the maximum grant is 50% of the investment or €80,000 – whichever is less.

If a business received a Priming Grant (start-up grant), it cannot apply for a Business Expansion grant until 12 months after the date of approval of the Priming Grant.

## What does the Business Expansion Grant cover?

Grant expenditure may be considered under the following headings:

- **Capital items** – including fit out of workspace, office equipment, machinery, fixed technology costs, and so on.
- **Salary Costs** – for the first year of employment.
- **Consultancy, Innovation, Marketing Costs** – these may include packaging, brochures, business cards, trade fairs, website development, consultancy fees and other marketing initiatives.
- **General Overhead Costs** – these include, for example, utilities and rental or accommodation costs.

There is an element of refundable aid in Business Expansion Grants (grant money that you have to pay back). The LEO's Evaluation and Approvals Committee will determine this amount.





## Feasibility Study Grants

The aim of a Feasibility Study Grant is to help start-up companies or individual entrepreneurs with the cost of researching their proposed business or new business idea to see if it could be viable and sustainable. The study should help the promoter to reach firm conclusions about their business idea and give them the information they need to draw up a full business plan. LEOs will consider making Feasibility Study Grants to applicants whose potential new business or service may be eligible to apply for further grant assistance from the LEO if the business goes ahead.

Only businesses or individuals intending to explore the feasibility of a manufacturing or internationally traded service sector business may apply.



## What does the Feasibility Study Grant cover?

Feasibility Study Grants are designed to assist the promoter with researching market demand for a product or service and to examine the sustainability of that product or service. The grant helps with innovation costs including specific consultancy requirements, hiring expertise from third-level colleges, private specialists, design, patent costs and prototype development.

Grant expenditure may be considered under the following headings:

- **Market Research Costs** – to develop the business proposition.
- **Consultancy Costs** – to include design fees, architect fees and legal fees.
- **Technical Development/Prototype/Innovation** – to include prototype development, innovative design, research costs and third-level college consultancy.
- **Salary/Own Labour Research** – costs include own labour involved in carrying out the Feasibility Study. The maximum amount chargeable under this category is €400 a week, subject to the overall maximum not exceeding 20% of the overall grant.
- **Miscellaneous Costs** – includes telephone costs, mileage costs at €0.26 per kilometre, subsistence and overnight costs, air travel, and so on. The maximum amount for these costs should not exceed 20% of the overall grant level.

The maximum Feasibility Study Grant payable is 50% of your eligible expenditure or €15,000 – whichever is less.

Please note that the grant is 60% in the BMW region [Border, Midlands, West] but 50% in all other regions.



If you want to apply for LEO financial support, you need to contact your local LEO. They will assess your eligibility. Applications are considered on a case-by-case basis and the level of funding will be decided after the assessment.

If you receive grant aid, you will be included in the list of beneficiaries under Art. 115 [2] of Regulation [EU] No 1303/2013 [Common Provisions Regulation]. This list will be updated every six months and can be accessed on the Regional Assembly websites.

#### Freedom of Information

The Local Enterprise Office will not release any information received as part of this application unless it is required by law, including the Freedom of Information Act 2014. If we receive a Freedom of Information request, we will tell you so that you have reasonable time if you want to contest a disclosure.

#### Data Protection

The Local Enterprise Office is committed to protecting and respecting your privacy. Our Data Protection Notice tells you about your privacy rights and sets out how we, as a Controller, collect, use, process and disclose your personal data relating to your interactions with us. Please refer to [www.localenterprise.ie/legal](http://www.localenterprise.ie/legal) for copies of our privacy notices.

For details of your LEO visit

[www.localenterprise.ie](http://www.localenterprise.ie)