

# Mayo Sustainability Fund

## Criteria & Grant Eligibility

### Programme: Project Plus

## About Community Foundation Ireland

Community Foundation Ireland and its partners believe in equality for all in thriving communities. We work with individuals, families, businesses, other trusts, foundations, and the Government to turn one-time giving into long-term, meaningful support. We use over 25 years of experience to help donors turn their goals into effective action.

We work with our partners to find solutions to both old and new challenges. Through these partnerships, we aim to build an Ireland where barriers are removed, and communities can succeed. Working with you, other non-profits, and donors, we are dedicated to achieving this goal.

## About Sunflower Charitable Foundation

The Sunflower Charitable Foundation, established in 2021, has a mission to support the growth of resilient communities – with a particular focus on the wellbeing of children and young people – and to contribute to environmental sustainability in Ireland and overseas.

## About the Mayo Sustainability Fund

The Mayo Sustainability Fund supports local efforts to promote sustainability in Mayo communities.

In 2023, the Sunflower Charitable Foundation and Community Foundation Ireland commissioned a scoping study from UCD to assess the potential for a Sustainability Fund in Mayo. This study, along with a follow-up community consultation, showed that Mayo has a strong network of organisations working in various areas of sustainability that could benefit from dedicated funding.

The study identified key challenges such as limited knowledge of funding sources, lack of flexible and long-term funding, and limited time and resources for applying for funding. It also highlighted gaps in funding for core operations, capital needs, networking, peer learning, deep community engagement, and project scaling.

In 2025, Community Foundation Ireland, Sunflower Charitable Foundation, and other donors in the Community Foundation's network are working together to pilot the Mayo Sustainability Fund to address these challenges. While we cannot address all challenges, we aim to help by providing funding that supports cohesion in the sector through networking, growth, and development. In 2025, the Fund will offer flexible funding to help organisations collaborate, learn, and expand. As this is a pilot year, we will continue to listen to the community and adjust our support accordingly.

### **Grant Making Programmes**

There are two grant programmes available through the Mayo Sustainability Fund. Organisations can apply to one or both:

1. **Project Plus** – small to medium-sized grants to support your organisation's projects or programmes.
2. **Collaboration for Sustainability** – medium and large grants to support joint efforts, networking, and shared services.

You can submit **one application per programme**, provided each application meets the eligibility criteria.

### *About the Project Plus Grants Programme*

The Project Plus programme was created in direct response to a clearly identified need among Mayo's sustainability organisations: access to flexible, core, and scaling funding. Groups told us they are eager to expand their sustainability efforts but are constrained by limited resources, inflexible grants, and lack of funding for the organisational infrastructure that enables them to deliver their work and create impact.

In response to this, Project Plus offers funding that not only supports the delivery of sustainability-focused projects, but also acknowledges and supports the broader organisational needs — like staff time, administration, and planning — that are essential to meaningful, long-term work. This flexible model gives organisations room to grow, build capacity, and innovate, rather than simply deliver short-term outputs.

We have designed this programme so that sustainability organisations across Mayo can become stronger, more resilient, and better connected — enabling them to deliver deeper and more lasting environmental and social impact. By resourcing both projects and the people behind them, we aim to strengthen the sustainability sector as a whole and ensure long-term benefits for the people, communities, and natural environment of County Mayo.

Project Plus supports a wide range of sustainability efforts, including (but not limited to):

- **Climate Action:** Climate resilience and reducing emissions
- **Climate Justice:** Tackling the social and economic impacts of climate change
- **Biodiversity:** Habitat restoration, species protection
- **Environmental Education:** Raising awareness and encouraging environmental stewardship
- **Sustainable Agriculture:** Soil health, local food systems, food sovereignty

- **Water Conservation:** Efficient use of water and pollution reduction
- **Local Energy:** Promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency
- **Climate, Arts, & Heritage:** Projects that promote awareness, engagement, and/or action through the arts and heritage, with a focus on climate crisis, sustainability, and environment

Both small-scale local initiatives and larger county-wide projects will be considered. The goal is to support diverse initiatives that contribute to Mayo's environmental and community resilience. This programme recognises the context- and site-specific work that needs to be supported in order for community groups in Mayo to achieve their goals.

## Eligible Costs

Funding can be used for:

- Planning, designing, and delivering projects/programmes
- Staff wages and salaries
- Overhead and administrative costs (up to 50%)
- Training and skill development
- Small capital items essential to project delivery
- Contingency (up to 10%)
- New or existing projects/programmes
- Match or supplementary funding for underfunded existing projects

## Funding Priorities

Priority will be given to proposals that:

- Incorporate the voices of beneficiaries
- Clearly articulate the project's impact on Mayo's sustainability
- Demonstrate how impact will be measured
- Show clear rationale for either solo or collaborative delivery

Put simply: we want to fund the projects that will make the biggest difference. Show us why yours does.

## Funding Levels

This is the first year of the Mayo Sustainability Fund. While we hope to grow it in future years, only **one year of funding is currently guaranteed**.

However, we will accept multiannual applications with budgets outlined per annum. For example, if your organisation is eligible for up to €75,000 annually, you may submit a two-year request totalling €150,000. These multi-year requests help us plan for the future, though we cannot guarantee funding beyond the first year.

## Funding Limits by Organisational Income

Organisation Income (previous financial year)	Maximum Amount Awarded
Up to €10,000	Up to 60% of your annual income with a maximum of €6,000
€10,001 - €75,000	Up to 60% of your annual income with a maximum of €25,000
€75,001 - €300,000	Up to 60% of your annual income with a maximum of €50,000
Over €300,001	Maximum application of €75,000

If your organisation has a low income but a strong track record and robust governance, you may contact Ailbhe McEntee at [amcentee@foundation.ie](mailto:amcentee@foundation.ie) to discuss applying for a larger grant.

## Project Duration

Funding must be used within 24 months. Applications must include clear deliverables within the first 12 months, regardless of the total project timeline.

## Eligibility

This is a competitive round. Meeting the criteria does not guarantee funding.

Eligible projects must:

- Be based in County Mayo
- Align with the Mayo Sustainability Fund's goals

Lead applicant organisations must:

- **Have sustainability, climate, or biodiversity as a core object in their constitution**
- Have at least two years of financial accounts
- Be not-for-profit and based in County Mayo

Ineligible applicants/projects include:

- Schools, sports clubs, statutory bodies, for-profits, or new/unregistered groups
- Projects eligible for Community Foundation's Biodiversity Fund
- Religious, political, or animal welfare initiatives
- Completed projects
- Building purchases or construction of any scale

## Timeline:

Applications open:	Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> May
Applications close:	Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> of June @ 4PM
Grant awards:	August
Projects start:	October 2025

### Application Scoring and Assessment

Applications will be assessed on:

- Fit with programme criteria
- Evidence of need
- Budget and governance
- Projected impact

Additional considerations will include project diversity (themes, geography, community groups, and reach).

A strong application will clearly show:

- The project's aims and anticipated impact
- A well-costed budget
- How it contributes to long-term sustainability goals

### Reporting Requirements

Grant recipients must submit brief progress reports in February 2026 and a final report in October 2026. Reports must be submitted through our grants portal.

### How to Apply

Apply via our online application form on the [Grants Portal](#).

Resources to help you use the portal are available on our website.

### Webinar Support

We are hosting a support webinar at 10am on Friday May 9th to help applicants. This webinar covers both the Project Plus and Collaboration for Sustainability grants, including criteria, the form, and application tips. Sign up on [here](#). A recording will also be available after the event.

### Contacts

For questions, please contact Ailbhe McEntee at [amcentee@foundation.ie](mailto:amcentee@foundation.ie)