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



An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council

2026 TRADITIONAL FARM BUILDINGS GRANT SCHEME

APPLICATION GUIDANCE

APRIL 2026

THIS DOCUMENT TELLS YOU WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR FUNDING, WHAT YOU CAN APPLY FOR, WHAT YOUR APPLICATION MUST SHOW, THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND DEADLINES. IT ALSO CONTAINS OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION.

THE SCHEME TERMS & CONDITIONS ARE A SEPARATE DOCUMENT AND MUST BE READ.

This Scheme is funded under State Aid in accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) 2472/2022 of 14 December 2022 (on the basis set out in Article 36) declaring certain categories of aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

INTRODUCTION

The Heritage Council administers the Traditional Farm Buildings Grant Scheme for the conservation and repair of traditional farm buildings **and other related structures** in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The Heritage Council has prepared this document to assist you in completing an application for this grant scheme.

OBJECTIVE

The principal objective of this scheme is to ensure that traditional farm buildings **and other related structures** that contribute to the character of the landscape, and are of significant heritage value, are conserved for agricultural use.

The grant scheme is highly competitive, and it is expected that in 2026 40 projects will be supported. We hope to support more than 40 projects as we intend to ringfence a portion of the overall funding allocation for the repair of other related farm structures. **You do not have to apply for a building.** In 2026, we again encourage applications for the repair of traditional farming structures other than buildings-

It should be easy and cheap for you to make an application but it will take time to complete. It will be an objective of the scheme that a reasonable geographical spread of projects is achieved.

WHO CAN APPLY FOR THIS SCHEME?

The Scheme is **ONLY** open to farmers participating in and accepted into the following Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine schemes:

1. Approved participants in ACRES.
2. Approved participants of the Organic Farming Scheme

and

Are the owner of the building/other related structure for which funding is sought or are acting with the permission of the owner (in which case the owner must provide written consent).

WHAT YOU CAN APPLY FOR

NB: Buildings and other related structures must be located on a participating holding (that is, the relevant Department scheme that you participate in).

Eligible Buildings

- Traditional farm buildings constructed before 1960 for a use associated with agriculture, **and** built using traditional methods and materials of the time such as timber, brick, stone, earth, slate or thatch and which were, or still are, used for an agricultural purpose;
- Other traditional buildings **ONLY** where it is clearly demonstrated they are in long established active agricultural use;
- Reinstatement of previously existing features which were removed (such as a building which has lost its roof) will **ONLY** be considered where the Heritage Council deems exceptional circumstances apply **and** if there is strong evidence, e.g., old photographs, of their former appearance **and** is necessary **and** they complete an otherwise intact environment.
- The buildings should be in fair condition. If in poor condition they must be repairable and have surviving materials that contribute to their character.

Eligible Other Related Structures

- Other related structures constructed before 1960 for a use associated with agriculture, **and** built using traditional methods and materials of the time such as stone, timber, brick, earth, and which were, or still are, used for an agricultural purpose; including:
 - Cobbled yard surfaces
 - Walled orchards
 - Piers and/or wrought iron gates to fields and farmyard
 - Farmyard arched entranceways
 - Farmyard and field boundary masonry walls
 - Masonry built dungsteads
 - Millraces
 - Farm bridges

- Reinstatement of previously existing features which were removed will **ONLY** be considered where the Heritage Council deems exceptional circumstances apply **and** if there is strong evidence, e.g., old photographs, of their former appearance **and** is necessary **and** they complete an otherwise intact environment.
- The other related structures should be in fair condition. If in poor condition they must be repairable and have surviving materials that contribute to their character.

Ineligible Buildings and Other Related Structures

- Farmhouses, residential or domestic buildings, currently in occupation or intended for occupation;
- Buildings already converted to a non-agricultural use, for example, to a residential or non-agricultural business use;
- Traditional farm buildings which are intended to be converted to a non-agricultural use within 5 years of payment of grant;
- Traditional farm buildings/other related structures that will not be in your ownership and/or control for the life of the relevant Departmental scheme agreement;
- Buildings in ruinous condition
- Corrugated iron hay barns;
- Post 1960 farm buildings such as slatted sheds or milking parlours.
- Entrance Gates and piers to House
- Limekilns
- As traditional dry stone wall maintenance is a general action available under ACRES, dry stone wall applications **from ACRES participants** will **not** be eligible for consideration for a grant on this scheme.

Eligible Works

Conservation works are those that maintain the character and integrity of the built heritage using compatible repair or construction techniques. The works should not be designed to modernise the appearance of the buildings or other related structures as, in many cases, the wear and tear of the years contributes to their character. Instead, the works should be the minimum

necessary, carrying out a repair to fix what is wrong but not setting out to do too much work. Works should be carried out using traditional building techniques and materials. For further advice on conservation works carried out on this scheme as well as presentations please consult the resources section available here: <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/projects/traditional-farm-buildings-grant-scheme#tab-resources> and a selection of previous grant aided projects on this grant scheme are available to view here: <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/projects/traditional-farm-buildings-grant-scheme#tab-featured-projects>

The following is a list of the types of work envisaged:

- Repair of a wrought iron field gate using the traditional skills of a blacksmith;
- Re-pointing of stone walls of building, farmyard, walled orchard or field boundary wall in earth or lime mortar;
- Repair of a slate, thatch or small-scale corrugated iron roof including its structure;
- Repair of stone and earthen walls, or parts of walls;
- Re-plastering of stonewalls in lime plaster
- Structural repairs to prevent walls leaning over/ensure structural stability;
- Repair or re-instatement of timber doors or windows where necessary;
- Repair or renewal of lintels;
- Repair of loft where it is required to ensure structural stability;
- Repair of rainwater goods where they are pre-existing; and installation where deemed necessary.
- Drainage works where they are necessary to ensure structural stability;
- Repair and relaying where necessary of cobbled yard surface
- work undertaken by you or by workers on your farm in the conservation repair of buildings built of traditional methods and materials of the time using compatible repair or construction techniques

Ineligible Works

- Interior works, other than those that are required to ensure structural

stability;

- Alterations and improvements unless the Heritage Council deems them necessary;
- Routine maintenance and minor repairs;
- Replacement of functioning elements of any date
- Works already carried out or underway;
- Works that cost below the threshold of the minimum grant;
- Any works resulting from an event which would normally be insurable;
- Reinstatement/restoration works unless The Heritage Council deems exceptional circumstances apply;
- Any capitalised works' (on the basis set out in Article 36) undertaken by you personally or by workers on your farm, that create an asset
- Any works that are not eligible under the terms and conditions of this grant scheme

FUNDING AND FINANCING

This Scheme falls under State Aid in accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) 2472/2022 of 14th December 2022 (on the basis set out in Article 36) declaring certain categories of aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas compatible with the internal market in application of articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

The Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine has allocated **€750,000** to this scheme in 2026.

The minimum grant amount offered will be €4,000 and the maximum, €30,000. The grant will not be for more than 75% of the cost of the approved works. (**Some grants will be for less than 75% of the cost of the approved works**).

As the minimum grant available is €4,000 the smallest project that could be funded would cost in the region of €5,400.

The balance of funding may not be from any other State source. LEADER funding cannot be obtained for the conservation works in addition to a grant under this scheme.

Grant aid will only be payable on the VAT **exclusive** costs, regardless of

whether you are VAT registered or not.

For grants of €10,000 and over the registration number and certificate number of current Tax Clearance Certificate in your name will be required prior to payment of grant.

If you received a grant under previous tranches of this scheme you **are** eligible to reapply in 2026. However, if you received the maximum grant of €30,000 under previous tranches of the scheme **(2023-2025)** you are **NOT** eligible to reapply under this scheme.

The rates for own labour and use of own machinery must be costed within current Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine national reference costs. In September 2025, the rate for own labour was €16.74 @hour.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

How to apply

You must apply online for this grant scheme. You can apply from **9th April 2026** through the Heritage Council's online grants management system located here: <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/funding/funding-schemes>

We will **only** accept applications submitted online. We will not provide or accept paper forms. To consider your application, we must receive your online application along with required supporting documents by **Monday 18th May 2026 at 5pm**. You cannot submit an application or required supporting documents after this time. Full responsibility for the information contained in the application and for the receipt of the application by the closing date rests with you.

Required Supporting Documentation to be submitted online:

You **must** upload the following documents in support of your application by the stated closing date:

1. A location map so that we could get to your building/other related structure from a Regional road
2. Clear and current photograph(s) of the exterior;
3. Clear and current photograph(s) of the interior (**if applying for building**);
4. Clear and current photograph(s) of any parts in need of repair;
6. Clear and current photograph(s) of public view (if your answer to question

on application is yes)

7. A quotation, or cost breakdown, detailing materials and costs (You must upload copies of quotations, estimates or other evidence to support the figures and costs you provide in the budget table of the online application form.

8. Consent of owner (as appropriate).

You can submit additional information not included in this list **only** if it is relevant.

Stick to the knitting please!

SCREENING

All applications are screened first to ensure eligibility and completeness as follows:

- Is the application fully complete?
- Are you eligible to apply?
- Is the relevant supporting required information attached to the application?
- Is the building/other related structure eligible for consideration?
- Is the proposed use/work eligible?

Important: Applications that do **not** meet the above requirements will be rejected on these grounds and will not be assessed further. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine will determine eligibility as to your participation during the assessment process.

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

If your application passes the Screening Stage it will be initially reviewed by the Heritage Council and recommendations presented to a panel comprising of internal and external expertise for grant assessment. An officer from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine will serve as observer. All applications will be assessed under the following weighted selection criteria:

Score

1. Cultural heritage interest of the building/other related structure 20

2. Project that will best demonstrate public benefit, including landscape value	20
3. Habitat value or potential	20
4. Climate Change Mitigation/Environmental Sustainability	20
5. Best Value including value for money	20

60 is the minimum qualifying mark. As this is a competitive application process the highest priority projects will be chosen in line with the available funding budget. Standardized scoring may be applied if deemed necessary. Weightings *may* be applied to the criteria in order to promote those applications with the highest biodiversity, landscape and environmental benefit.

Please see Appendix 1 at end for further information on the selection criteria.

If the panel shortlists your project for a grant you *may* be written to, requesting that further additional information (such as a conservation specification by a conservation consultant and/or revised costs etc.) be provided. You will be given a deadline to submit any additional information requested and if not provided your application will be closed unless agreed otherwise.

The recommendations of the expert panel will be presented to the Heritage Council Board for final approval. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine will be reported to, following which you will be notified of the decision.

Any cost incurred in relation to any aspect of the application process shall be borne by you.

OFFERS OF FUNDING INCLUDING INFORMATION ON TERMS AND CONDITIONS

We will contact you to advise you of the outcome of your application **by late June 2026**. If your application is successful, you will have to agree to Terms and Conditions. Please refer to

<https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/projects/traditional-farm-buildings-grant-scheme> for a copy of the standard Terms and Conditions of this grant scheme.

If your application is successful, you will be responsible for all costs related to your project. You will have two weeks to inform the Heritage Council of your decision to accept or reject a grant.

You will have until **the first week of December 2026** to complete your project unless wildlife considerations or special circumstances apply (e.g., bats) when a short extension *may* be granted.

HOW THE GRANT IS PAID

The Heritage Council will make all grant payments under this scheme on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. All agreed works must be completed, conditions complied with and verified by The Heritage Council before payment of grant funding can be made to you. That recommendation will be based on:

- Heritage Council selective inspection and review of compliance of conditions
- Certification of conservation consultant on compliance with conservation ethos and certification of costs being claimed
- Your detailed final report submitted by deadline
- Copies of all payments relating to the project submitted by deadline

Under Department of Finance rules, we are obliged to seek **proof of payment** from you. Clear proof of payment in the form of receipts for all costs associated with the approved works must be submitted.

In accordance with EU regulations, all EU payments to farmers can only be made to a bank, building society or credit union accounts held with the State. You must have a current bank/credit union account in your name to accept electronic payment of the grant. You are considered the payee, and funding will only be transferred into this bank/credit union account

CANVASSING

Canvassing by TDs, Senators or City/County Councillors on your behalf will automatically disqualify your application. This does not preclude you from seeking advice or letters of support from your farm planner, local Heritage Officer or any other relevant body

INFORMATION WEBINAR

We will host a short information webinar for applicants interested in applying to the 2026 traditional farm buildings grant scheme on **Friday 17th April 2026 at 12pm**. Please register in advance at www.heritagecouncil.ie

AND PLEASE REMEMBER....

We must receive your online application along with all required supporting documents **by 18th May 2026 at 5pm**.

If you have questions after reading this guidance, please telephone 056 7770777 or email: ameenan@heritagecouncil.ie or alternatively telephone: 086 0259202.

We wish you the best of luck with your application.

The Heritage Council, Áras na hOidhreachta, Church Lane, Kilkenny R95 X264
Tel: 056 7770777

Scoring Matrix

All eligible applications will be reviewed by a panel comprising internal and external expertise, which will make its decisions based on the following criteria and assign scores accordingly. **Each of the criteria has a top score of 20.** 60 is the **minimum** qualifying mark. This is a competitive application process. Applications will be ranked highest to lowest and **the highest priority projects will be chosen in line with the available funding budget.** Standardized scoring may be applied if deemed necessary. Weightings may be applied to the criteria in order to promote those applications with the highest biodiversity, landscape and environmental benefit.

1. Cultural Heritage Interest

If you have any information on the building or other related structure that you think is important, please let us know. It may, for example, be typical or rare, curious, or an outstanding example of a local type in the area in which it is located. Perhaps it is ornamental or architecturally designed for example, found on a model farm, or in parklands or designed landscapes? A wrought iron field gate may have the signature of the blacksmith who forged it; a stone pier may be of a distinctive local type. Although the grant scheme can generally not include works to the interior of a building, there could be internal features (such as loose boxes for horses) that contribute to its unique nature. The Heritage Council is particularly interested in farm buildings with thatched roofs. The heritage interest of a building or other related structure may be adversely impacted if it has not been regularly and well maintained. Photographs can help highlight aspects that are of interest and where previous maintenance has been carried out.

2. Project that will best demonstrate public benefit, including landscape value

The grant scheme endeavours to raise public appreciation of heritage and your application must show that your project will have strong public benefit. It may be in a view of the countryside that is accessible to the public. It should add to the area's landscape character. If your farm has hosted a regular series of public events over the years and continues to, please let us know.

You may be willing to host a traditional skills demonstration day on your farm or an event for heritage week. If so, please say so. Are you willing to contribute an article or an interview to your local or national newspaper or other media source, or write a blog or feature in a short film? If so, please let us know. Further advice on communicating and engaging the public and planning events or projects can be found here: <https://www.heritageweek.ie/> Applications that best demonstrate **all** the above will score highest.

3. Habitat Value or Potential

Traditional farm buildings often provide important wildlife habitats that are not easily replicated if the old buildings are destroyed. Bats and owls are often found in farmyard buildings. Please tell us about the birds that nest in your building or if bats roost in it. Walls and stonework can be a refuge for many plant species which were once common and are now rare. Your farm may be in an area designated as a natural heritage area, a special protected area, a special area of conservation, a nature reserve or have a wildlife designation. Have you carried out any pollinator friendly actions? If so, we would like to know. If you have done anything to enhance the habitat value of your building or farm (such as installed bat/bird boxes, retained birds' nests in a building or any other wildlife friendly work) please let us know. Photographs can help highlight any wildlife friendly work you have carried out. **Actions that go above and beyond the measures specified in various plans will score higher.**

4. Climate Change Mitigation/Environmental Sustainability

Keeping, using and repairing existing buildings and other related structures reduces waste generation, conserves the energy embodied in the original materials and construction, and so is in the wider interests of sustainability. Good use of the building or other related structure for the farm matters. Perhaps you have long used an old byre or dwelling as a farm workshop. Perhaps you have saved an old field gate from lying in a ditch to standing upright at an entrance to the farmyard. The continued use of old space and structures makes excellent use of frugal resources. A comparatively high proportion of the materials used in conservation are sourced in Ireland. Stone should always be taken from the nearest appropriate source, and fat lime and earth can be sourced in Ireland. Thatching materials can also be sourced locally. Virtually all new slate used in Ireland for roofing is imported but the reuse and repair of much of the roof slate on the existing farm building is often possible. The reuse of existing materials where this can be

done is generally an excellent use of existing resources and will be preferable to replacement. Actions that go above and beyond those noted here will score higher.

5. Best Value including value for money

Those projects which best represent the above four criteria and the principal objective of the scheme will score highest here. The principal objective of this scheme is to ensure that traditional farm buildings and other related structures that contribute to the character of the landscape, and are of significant heritage value, are conserved for agricultural use. Buildings and other related structures that have fallen into disrepair and/or have an uncertain use may require larger sums of money in the future. The benefit of the initial funding may thus be lost very quickly and not represent good value for money. A well-used building is more likely to be looked after. A gate in use is more likely to be painted. A walled orchard planted for fruit and vegetables or other crops is more likely to be minded. These can be sustained in the long term with limited funds and represent a good investment for grant aid. The Heritage Council will also consider whether this grant scheme is the most appropriate grant for conserving the building/other related structure.