

S&E Regional Operational Programme 2014 – 2020.

Implementation Plan: Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme

Operational Programme	S&E Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020
Priority	4: Low Carbon Economy
Thematic Objective	4: Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors in the S&E Region.
Investment Priority	(c) Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructures, including in public buildings, and in the housing sector.
Scheme	Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme
Categorisation Code	014
ERDF Certifying Body	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
Managing Authority	Southern Regional Assembly
Intermediate Body	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment previously the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
Beneficiary	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
Grant Rate	Up to 100% of approved costs
EU Co-Financing Rate	50% of eligible public expenditure

Objectives of Intervention.

The objectives of the Scheme are to improve the energy efficiency of households at risk of energy poverty and in the process reduce the amount of expenditure that is required to be spent on energy. Other secondary objectives are to improve health and well-being, while reducing the amount of disposal income spent on energy. A reduction in spend on energy will also make a positive contribution to reducing poverty in at-risk households.

Description of Intervention.

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) is Ireland's national energy authority established under the Sustainable Energy Act 2002. Its mission is to play a leading role in transforming Ireland into a society based on sustainable energy structures, technologies and practices. To fulfil this mission SEAI aims to provide well-timed and informed advice to Government, and deliver a range of programmes efficiently and effectively, while engaging and motivating a wide

range of stakeholders and showing continuing flexibility and innovation in all activities.

The Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme (the “Scheme”) is delivered by SEAI on behalf of the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment. The Scheme is targeted at low-income households at risk of energy poverty.

The Scheme delivers a range of energy efficiency measures to households that are vulnerable to energy poverty. The Scheme is delivered through a combination of private contractors appointed through public procurement which was augmented in 2014 by SEAI-appointed Community Based Organisations (CBOs), in order to ensure national coverage. Measures typically installed in eligible households include dry lining, draught proofing, attic insulation, lagging jackets for hot water tanks, low energy light bulbs and cavity wall insulation.

A technical survey is carried out by an independent company hired by SEAI to assess the suitability of each home to receive measures. All energy efficiency works will be undertaken in accordance with SR 54 - Methodology for the energy efficient retrofit of existing dwellings. This code does not set a minimum standard for energy performance requirements however the targeted housing units shall undergo an ambitious and all-at-the-same time comprehensive energy efficiency improvements resulting in at least an improvement in one energy efficiency grade rating to be fit for purpose.

Responsibilities of Intermediate Body.

DCCAE is the Intermediate Body will manage this initiative through SEAI’s Delivery Department which is responsible for the delivery of the Scheme, selection of households and related information and publicity. It works closely with SEAI Corporate Services for payments to SEAI, the Beneficiary DCCAE provides an annual budget allocation to SEAI for the delivery of the Scheme and is responsible for the ongoing monitoring of the scheme during the funding period. In so doing, DCCAE ensures that a clear audit trail exists for external independent auditing of projects.

An administrative agreement has been signed between DCCAE and the Managing Authority, Southern Regional Assembly setting out the respective roles and responsibilities of each.

SEAI and DCCAE have agreed annual work plans that guide administrative work DCCAE will ensure that the beneficiaries are provided with a grant award document setting out the conditions of support for each operation, including the specific requirements concerning the products or services to be delivered under the operation, the financing plan, the time limit for execution and the conditions for use of the Structural Funds IT System 2014-2020.

DCCAE will be responsible for ensuring that all payment claims for European Structural and Investment Fund expenditure, submitted by the relevant beneficiary Institutions are supported by receipted invoices and audit documents, and that a clear and sufficient audit trail exists.

DCCAE will also be responsible for ensuring in respect of co-financed Intervention/projects, that only eligible expenditure actually incurred is submitted to the Managing Authority. DCCAE is responsible for the certification of all expenditure incurred by SEAI.

Responsibilities of Beneficiary

The Scheme is managed by DCCAE and delivered by SEAI, the Beneficiary. An emphasis on outsourcing for delivery elements (retaining strategic management internally) is important to many activities in the context of programme growth and the importance of market engagement.

SEAI's main role involves programme management of the Scheme in relation to administrative and financial best practice through promotion, contractor selection, delivery, inspections, payments, monitoring and reporting.

All communications and public relations opportunities will be availed of. In accordance with the regulatory requirements, SEAI as the Beneficiary is required to ensure that:

Only eligible expenditure actually incurred under the terms of the operation approved is claimed; A clear audit trail exists in relation to ERDF co-funded expenditure: all claims are supported by receipted invoices or where this cannot be done, by accounting documents of equivalent probative value; Original supporting documentation is retained in accordance with the document retention period communicated by the Managing Authority; Annex III data is recorded on the system required by Art. 125, 2, d); Information & Communication requirements have been complied with in accordance with the 'Information & Communication Guidelines for European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020. Where appropriate, physical checks should be carried out, and documented, on the project to ensure that project delivery is in line with financial progress.

Integration of Horizontal Principles.

- The principles of equality, environmental sustainability and social inclusion are included as objectives of the initiative.
- The principles of equality and social inclusion are included in project selection criteria.
- SEAI consults with client groups including the Department of Social Protection and other stakeholders operating with vulnerable households.
- SEAI promotes equality of access for all qualifying households (there are no barriers to access to the scheme arising from gender, equality category or disability).
- SEAI will capture the impact of the Scheme on the number of energy poor households (including gender, disability etc.) and the impact of the Scheme on the environment (performance indicators).

Selection Process and Criteria

SEAI as Beneficiary receives an annual Budget Allocation from DCCAE, the Intermediate Body to deliver the Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme. A letter of Offer / Budget Allocation letter issues giving details of the amount of funding being allocated to SEAI each year as this is the funding period agreed within the Revised Estimates for Public Services.

SEAI appoint private contractors via an open and transparent procurement process, which is fully in compliance with public procurement rules (etenders.ie reference: 83171). Contractors then sign a framework agreement to work to the terms and conditions of the scheme. Households apply either directly to the SEAI or via a network of community-based organisations. Each household is deemed eligible if it meets the minimum specification

Selection Process

There is not selection process required because there is only project which is the Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme in this case and the funding for the Scheme comes from the Exchequer.

Selection Criteria

The Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme is available to homes which meet the following criteria

- Owner occupied non-Local Authority homes
- Constructed before 2006
- The owner is in receipt of one of the following:
 - Fuel Allowance as part of the National Fuel Scheme
 - Job Seekers Allowance for over six months and with children under 7 years of age
 - Family Income Supplement or
 - One Parent Family Payment

Households are individually (and independently) surveyed to assess what measures are appropriate. Applications are then batched, generally on a geographical basis and allocated to individual contractors. Following completion of works, SEAI undertakes a Building Energy Rating of the dwelling. Contractors are paid once SEAI receives appropriate confirmations that the works are done and pass the relevant audit and quality controls.

Appeals.

SEAI's appeals procedures is published on its website www.SEAI.ie

There is no appeals process required at IB level as the project consists of only one Beneficiary who receives a Budget allocation on an annual basis and there is no competitive process.

Performance Indicators.

Priority-level Output Indicators Investment Priority 1(a)

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Fund	Category of Region	Target Value	Source of Data	Frequency of Reporti
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CO3 1	Energy efficiency: Number of households with improved energy consumption classification	Households	ERDF	More developed	19,497 .00	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.	Annual
CO3 4	GHG reduction: Estimated annual decrease of GHG	Tonnes of CO2eq	ERDF	More developed	8,945. 00	Department of Environment, Community and Local Government	Annual

Programme-Specific Result Indicators Investment Priority 1(b)

ID	Indicator	Measurement Unit	Category of Region	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Target Value	Source of Data	Frequency of Reporting
4(a)	Increase the average thermal performance of households in the S&E Region	kWh per m2	More developed	210 kWh per m2	2014	185 kWh per m2	DCE NR and SEAI	Annual

Financial Management.

DCCAE is responsible for the financial management of the Scheme. However, the day to day operations are managed by SEAI the Beneficiary.

The funding used in relation to the Scheme is separately identified and has its own budget code for reporting purposes.

Checking and verification of the individual invoices for works carried out by contractors is carried out by an outsourced organisation and SEAI's finance team prior to payment.

As part of this Programme DCCAE as the Intermediate Body will be required to carry out verification checks before a claim for ERDF funding is declared to the Managing Authority.

Document Retention.

In accordance with Article 140 of the Common Provisions Regulation (EC) 1303/2013 all supporting documents regarding expenditure, verification checks, certification and audits on operations for which total eligible expenditure is less than €1,000,000.00 will be kept available for the EU Commission and Court of Auditors for a period of three years from 31 December following the submission of the accounts in which the expenditure of the operation is included. In the case of operations over €1,000,000.00 all supporting documentation shall be kept for a 2 year period from 31 December following the submission of accounts in which the **final** expenditure of the completed operation is included.

Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements.

The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment will provide reports and data in the required formats as required via the IT System and by the Managing Authority for onward reporting to the OP Monitoring Committee.

Information and Publicity.

The contribution of the Irish Exchequer and the EU Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020 will be acknowledged in all promotional material, annual reports, letters of offer etc. and by use of appropriate logo and text references. The relevant Structural Funds regulations and Information and Publicity will be complied with in this regard.

DCCAE will ensure that the Beneficiary will comply with section 2.2 of Annex XII of Commission Regulation 1303/2013 and with Articles 4 and 5 of Commission Implementing Regulation 821/2014.