

## National Home Retrofit Scheme 2020

### (One Stop Shop Development Call)

#### Application Guidelines

##### IMPORTANT NOTICES

- It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that they have read and fully understood, the Application Guide, the Application Form and complete the accompanying Technical Workbook before submitting the signed Application Form. Failure to fully adhere to the provisions of this Application Guide and the Application Form will result in application being rejected, grant offer revocation or grant claim refusal, depending on the particular status and stage of the application.
- SEAI accepts no liability or responsibility, whether for breach of contract, negligence or otherwise, in respect of any claim or cause of action arising out of, or in relation to, any equipment, product, work, system or installation in respect of which grant approval was given by SEAI.
- The National Home Retrofit Scheme 2020 is subject to any State aid clearances required from the Commission of the European Union and any consents, clearances or licenses which might be required from any other competent body. SEAI reserves the right to alter or amend any aspect of this programme as a consequence of any directions, conditions or requirements of any such consents, clearances or licenses.
- SEAI reserve the right to update this document. For the avoidance of doubt, the applicable version is the one which published on the SEAI website on the closing date for receipt of applications.

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## PREFACE

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) is delighted to announce the launch of the National Home Retrofit Scheme 2020 (One Stop Shop Development Call).

The Programme for Government and the Climate Action Plan set ambitious goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings, including our homes, with targets to retrofit 500,000 homes to a Building Energy Rating of B2 and to install 400,000 heat pumps in existing buildings over the next 10 years.

These targets represent a very significant increase in both the volume and depth of retrofit activity. A half million homes equates to almost 30% of all residential buildings in Ireland. In order to achieve these targets, we must transform the way we deliver retrofits by scaling up existing approaches that work and developing new, innovative solutions.

In this regard, the Government envisages one stop shops as being a critical. One Stop Shops will make retrofit easier to do and more attractive to homeowners. They will facilitate larger more efficient aggregated projects and will bring benefits for homeowners and for the supply side. They will combine the different components associated with retrofit projects including demand generation, home assessments, grant application, contractor engagement, project management, quality assurance and finance provision. The scale of our targets offers a tremendous opportunity for the development and growth of one stop shops, project co-ordinators, contractors and other elements of the supply chain with significant job growth potential.

In light of the above, this new scheme

- will support the Climate Action Plan and Programme For Government targets of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by retrofitting 500,000 homes by 2030
- is designed to help transition to the new retrofit model being developed by the Retrofit Task Force by encouraging and supporting the development of new one stop shops as well as the growth and scaling up of existing one stop shops.
- is in line with the EU and National Recovery Plans.

The following guidelines aim to help interested parties to create the best applications for their projects by outlining the necessary criteria and documentary requirements, as well as offering helpful advice, contacts and resources for those preparing to apply.

Contact details for the organisers are available on page 31 of these Guidelines. Please do not hesitate to get in touch about prospective ventures. SEAI would be delighted to discuss the feasibility and financing possibilities of all proposals and look forward to working with you to make good ideas become great projects.

## National Home Retrofit Scheme 2020

### 1.0 About SEAI

SEAI has a mission 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. SEAI's actions will help advance Ireland to the vanguard of the global green technology movement, so that Ireland is recognised as a pioneer in the move to decarbonised energy systems.

SEAI is financed by the Government of Ireland and through and Ireland's Structural Funds Programme, which is co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Union (EU). The funding for this scheme is Irish Exchequer funds and no element of EU funding is provided to support this programme.

### 1.1 National Home Retrofit Scheme Objectives

This scheme is aimed at engaging groups of private households, registered Housing Associations and Local Authorities and Energy Utilities or other organisations who wish to participate in delivering a "One Stop Shop" type service for energy efficiency works. SEAI wishes to help build working relationships directly with Residential service providers and Project Co-ordinators (One-Stop-Shops), Housing Associations and Local Authorities in order to facilitate large scale residential energy upgrades and provision of the type of service envisaged for One Stop Shops.

The Objectives of this scheme are to:

- a. Upgrade homes towards achieving the All of Government Climate Action Plan and Programme for Government home energy retrofit targets.
- b. Test, develop and grow the One-Stop-Shop model in Ireland, referenced in the Climate Action Plan to inform the Retrofit Task Force developing the new retrofit delivery model.
- c. Upgrade housing stock in accordance with Part L of the Building Regulations 2019 and in doing so facilitate high standards of energy efficiency and renewable energy usage, thereby reducing fossil fuel usage, energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions.
- d. Promote a building fabric first approach in line with the SEAI definition and order of priority to:
  - be as energy efficient as possible (fabric first approach),
  - decarbonise heat,
  - improve ventilation,
  - adopt smart technologies as/if appropriate.

- e. Test the opportunity to capture the supply chain efficiencies and promote the retrofitting of private homes in the vicinity of the areas targeted under the local authority Midlands retrofit programme
- f. Work to develop the supplier market for delivery on government home energy retrofit targets. Build strategic and working relationships directly with owners or managers of larger quantities of domestic units.
- g. Empower Housing Associations & Local Authorities to lead energy efficient upgrades on the housing stock under their control.
- h. Encourage the retrofitting of rental properties<sup>1</sup>.
- i. Build and maintain energy awareness and knowledge. This will be achieved by showcasing the benefits of energy projects to the wider public.

## 1.2 Eligible Projects

The National Home Retrofit Scheme aims to fund a comprehensive suite of projects that deliver energy savings to homes. An eligible application must target one of the following:

- a nationwide or regional delivery application (no geographical limitations). Offering a One Stop Shop type service to homeowners, or
- a **companywide or finance provider district led application**. Where applications are submitted by a company or financial institution on behalf of their employees or members/customers in a cohesive district/set of districts; the application may consist of homes across multiple counties. An example of a finance provider led submission may be an application, supporting members of a specific Credit Union district and managed by a Project Co-ordinator. See section 2.2 for further details, or
- Midlands Retrofit application – private upgrades must be linked to a specific Local Authority (see section 1.3).

The National Home Retrofit Scheme funding has ring fenced financial support for **Midlands Retrofit** strand, as defined within these guidelines. A single application can only be associated with one of these two strands, i.e. a National Home Retrofit Scheme standard application delivery or the Midlands Retrofit – Private Homes Integration delivery, and not both. However, applicants are free to submit more than one application for funding.

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<sup>1</sup> The landlord is the homeowner in the case of rental properties not the occupant. Grant funding provided to landlords is subject to the de minimis regulation (see point 29 of the terms and conditions) and the landlord will be required to sign a declaration in relation to their de minimis funding.

### 1.3 Midlands Retrofit Strand

The Climate Action Plan calls for the aggregated retrofit of homes in the Midlands. The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government have launched a programme to support the energy retrofit of local authority homes to a minimum B2 rating in the eight Midlands Local Authorities. While this focuses on Local Authority owned homes, there are private homes in the same estates or nearby / community areas whose occupants would also obtain multiple benefits from an energy retrofit.

The eight Local Authorities in the Midlands are selecting clusters/aggregated homes in housing estates for retrofit, SEAI are seeking proposals from applicants on their approach to collaborate with the Local Authority to deliver retrofits of private homes linked to these estates / community areas and deliver the benefits of aggregated delivery. Applicants should provide details of any confirmed plans showing collaboration with any of the Midlands Local Authorities, with regards to;

- allocating resources to complete energy efficiency surveys in privately owned homes, (including privately rented properties) and
- completed energy efficiency surveys in privately owned homes,

The One-Stop-Shop approach is encouraged in all applications. The Midlands strand of the scheme is open to applicants who have all or part of the elements of One-Stop-Shops and can demonstrate partnership and collaboration with the Local Authorities to deliver efficiencies by aggregating retrofit works.

Applicants will qualify for marks, as tabled below, if their submission clearly demonstrates efforts to liaise with these Local Authorities with a view to providing a mechanism to ensure private homes in these areas are offered the opportunity to have a home energy retrofit.

The eight Midlands Local Authorities are:

- Galway
- Kildare
- Laois
- Longford
- Offaly
- Roscommon
- Tipperary
- Westmeath

It is intended that a maximum of two contracts will be awarded grants for projects in each of the Local Authority areas in the Midlands under the Midlands call.

Preferred feasible areas of work must be numbered in order of preference as detail in the application form. Where earlier submissions fulfil the 2no contract limit in a Local Authority area, subsequent applications will be awarded their next preference.

An applicant may request approval to complete private home upgrades, in one of the eight Local Authority regions, outside the locations stated in their contract, once prior approval has been

provided by SEAI. This is only seen as arising in the event that the approved marketing plan has been implemented but sufficient demand in the target area has not been developed.

Additional support for the Midlands Retrofit strand only, SEAI will provide;

- support to a maximum of 80% of the cost of a pre-BER (using the new advisory report) up to a maximum cost of €175 (excl. VAT) per home. This would be an eligible cost, whether or not the homeowner goes ahead with works. The number of Pre BERs and advisory reports supported, under these circumstances, will be capped at 10 times the number of homes supported in the application (based on the final number of homes upgraded).
- grant support of up to 80% of the total eligible costs associated with upgrading an energy poor home as defined under section 3.1 of this document
- an overall maximum % funding available per project of 50%, which includes the Project Management fees. It is up to the applicant to ensure that the overall blended rate for the project is 50% or less i.e. if an application is a blend of different residential projects with varying funding rates between 35% and 80% overall for that application, the maximum funding rate available for the project is 50%. (Example: Project costs of €1,000,000 can attract a maximum grant of €500,000: 50%. Where an application is received above this maximum % the application will be rejected)

[Please complete the Midlands Retrofit Application Form \(which includes the technical workbook\), on the SEAI website, if you are seeking funding under the Midlands strand.](#)

#### 1.4 Grant Amount Available

The maximum grant available per application is €2,000,000. We recommend applicants consider grant applications of at least €100,000 due to the level of set up and administration costs involved in this programme.

#### 1.5 Evaluation Process

Applications will be evaluated once submitted but must meet the minimum criteria as set out below before SEAI could commit to supporting. Funding will be awarded on an ongoing basis to qualifying completed applications, based on the time and date they are submitted, until the available budget is allocated. The indicative end date for submission of applications is the 1st of December 2020 at 5pm. It should be noted that depending on the number and quality of applications received the full funding allocation could be allocated prior to this date.

Applications will be assessed, and if successful based on the minimum criteria, will be put forward for further approval.

[SEAI, in undertaking the evaluation process, accepts no responsibility for the Applicant's design and any errors or omissions that might be contained therein.](#)

Subsequent to the SEAI evaluation and granting of a letter of offer, if the Applicant's design/proposal is found to contain material errors or omissions, SEAI reserves the right to cancel the Application or recalculate the grant amount.

The evaluation process can only commence once a valid application is received. SEAI deem a valid application to be received when we have Participating Energy Supplier Declaration Form B and a completed Application Form containing the technical workbook are received. Once these two documents are received an evaluation is possible. Once SEAI send a project for evaluation, no additional documentation may be submitted until the evaluation is complete.

Where the evaluation is unsuccessful or does not meet the minimum score the National Home Retrofit team (the team within SEAI responsible for managing this scheme) will send the project coordinator the evaluator's comments and allow the project coordinator to re-submit a revised submission which allows changes to the Application Form and technical workbook. The applicant's place in the evaluation queue will remain as per the original application time and date. The resubmission must be received within 5 working days of the notification and must be submitted to [housingretrofit@seai.ie](mailto:housingretrofit@seai.ie)

Where a second submission is received, the team will ask the same evaluators to re-evaluate the new submission. If the new submission meets the criteria it will move along to the next phase in the evaluation process. If it does not meet the criteria the application will be closed, marked unsuccessful and no further evaluation will be allowed on this application. Any further submissions from the project coordinator will be treated as a new submission and will rank accordingly in date order.

Projects must score at least **65 Marks** to qualify for funding. Projects that do not reach this minimum score will be rejected with comments provided. We encourage applicants to self-score from the guidance below in advance of submitting, so that they have a sense of their place in the quantitative elements of the scoring.

The evaluation criteria are:

#### Value for Money (30 marks)

The project's value for money will be assessed in terms of energy savings (Primary kWh savings as per SEAI Energy Credits table) relative to the cost of implementation and the cost of the project / floor area (m<sup>2</sup>).

Energy credits for individual domestic works are based on a published table available on SEAI website. The credits assigned to the project on completion shall be those listed on the published table on the date of your application to this scheme. Please see additional detail on Participating Energy Suppliers on page 17 below.

SEAI will at evaluation stage review all prices against a set pricing schedule. SEAI will (as noted under funding levels section) look for evidence that a competitive procurement process has been followed. In addition, SEAI will at evaluation stage review all prices against its pricing database (incorporating pricing data from across SEAI's domestic programmes) for reasonableness. There will be one-average unit rate, e.g. €/m<sup>2</sup> for external wall insulation, per measure accepted, for a specific

grouping of upgrades (as illustrated in the Application Form). Note: SEAI will assess all costs and details submitted against current market rates and adjust if required during evaluation.

SEAI will grant support all technologies, with the exception of fossil fuel-based measures, on the energy credits table. In addition, solar PV will also be grant supported

For Island homes and the associated upgrade costs, the value for money mark will be factored by 1.2

Total Cost (€)/ Primary kWh saving

<1.76	15 Marks
1.76 - 1.90	14 Marks
1.91 - 2.05	13 Marks
2.06 - 2.20	12 Marks
2.21 – 2.35	11 Marks
2.36 – 2.50	10 Marks
2.51 – 2.65	8 Marks
2.66 – 2.80	6 Marks
2.81 – 2.95	4 Marks
>2.95	2 Marks

Total Cost (€) / Total Floor Area (m2)

< 381	15 Marks
381 - 440	13 Marks
441 - 500	12 Marks
501 - 560	11 Marks
561 - 620	10 Marks
621 - 680	8 Marks
681 - 710	6 Marks
711 - 740	4 Marks
>740	2 Marks

### Technical Proposal (20 marks)

This section of the evaluation assesses the technical solutions proposed based on the average energy uplift per home in the submission. This is calculated based on the total deemed credits generated by the application divided by the total floor area of the dwellings (m2) being upgraded.

Average Energy Uplift

> 300 kWh/m2/year	20 Marks
300 - 250	18 Marks
249 - 200	16 Marks
199 - 150	13 Marks
149 - 130	9 Mark

129 - 100	4 Marks
< 100	0 Marks

Quality and Delivery (50 marks – minimum score requirement 25 marks)

The quality of the proposal for the delivery of the project and how it demonstrates a commitment to ensure that the full value of the project is realised for the customer will be assessed.

Consideration will be given to the viability and robustness of the project plan through an analysis of the;

- project management,
- demonstrated organisational commitment,
- commitment to quality assurance,
- evaluation of potential project risks and mitigation measures, and
- the capacity to deliver the project to programme standards and by the deadline.

Demonstration of skills and previous experience in delivering similar projects, or evidence of capacity to do so within a set timeline, should be provided.

Project Coordinators who previously failed to meet previous SEAI community energy or housing scheme project deadlines will be deducted marks under this section, except in cases where project delays have been shown to have resulted unavoidably from the COVID-19 situation.

Where Local Authorities (or any organisation subject to public tendering) are participating they must provide clarification on the status of any tenders required to complete the proposed works.

Projects will be assessed on whether homes are identified, and the level of assurance provided confirming full participant buy-in (provide 3<sup>rd</sup> party written confirmation if available).

Demonstration of an engagement plan to capture homes should be provided where in place e.g. has a target market been identified and has a route to creating awareness, promoting the need to scale up, and securing homeowner engagement been outlined as well as a marketing plan.

The types of applications that may be supported include:

- **Private homes** – applications should describe if there is a pipeline of private homeowners already engaged and their approach to engaging homeowners and providing a “One Stop Shop” service. What is the targeting strategy supporting long term scalable energy retrofit objectives.
- **Local Authorities/Housing Associations** – applications should describe the approach and engagement with tenants residing in the properties being retrofitted. How does the application fit into their longer-term scalable energy retrofit objectives.
- **Midlands Retrofit**– applications should describe their plans showing collaboration with any of the defined Local Authorities in their region and their approach to engaging private homeowners in local authority and surrounding estates
- **Salary Incentive** – applications should indicate if an employer has already signed up to a pilot salary incentive scheme within their organisation or how advanced discussions are with any identified employers

Applicant’s should describe the nature of the One Stop Shop service (aiming at an end to end service for the customer) they will provide and how they will;

- ensure a high standard of customer service and engagement (end to end), including their customer feedback complaints process.
- manage the participant’s expectations with respect to understanding the planned retrofit process,
- ensure the participant understands how to operate any new technology to optimise performance and receives necessary handover documentation.

### Quality and Delivery Scoring Breakdown

<p>Robustness of Project Plan (15)</p>	<p><b>10 - 15</b> = Project tendered. Key dates identified; stating 20%, 50% and 70% completion dates and actions/assurances to ensure targets are met. Budgetary planning is robust. Set QA procedures in place. Risks identified and mitigated.</p> <p><b>4 - 9</b> = Project is in reasonable state to commence. Budgets provided, approved to proceed to tender. 20%, 50% and 70% delivery dates provided. Risks identified and at least partially mitigated.</p> <p><b>1 - 3</b> = Simple or no plan in place or evident. Insufficient detail provided on risks, budget, quality assurance.</p>
<p>Project Team Competence &amp; relevant experience (15)</p>	<p><b>10 – 15</b> = Delivery, Financial, Marketing and Administrative Team identified with relevant experience and competency. CVs /short biography provided for key team members. Project Team have successfully delivered similar upgrade projects or convincingly demonstrate capacity to do so within set deadlines.</p> <p><b>4 - 9</b> = Partial Team Identified and /or Project Team have delivered similar projects with assistance</p> <p><b>1 - 3</b> = Partial Team Identified and /or Limited or poor experience in delivery such projects</p>
<p>Customer Engagement (14)</p>	<p><b>10 – 14</b> = Fully engaged with participants through an engagement or marketing plan and has a high level of assurance or 3<sup>rd</sup> party written assurance * that confirms participant/stakeholder buy in (ref. note 1 below). Fully developed and integrated plan to capture proposed number of homes as part of a long-term scalable delivery strategy. Defined and tested end to end customer service processes. Established and proven supports / assistance provided to the homeowner / tenant removing retrofit uptake barriers.</p> <p><b>4 - 9</b> = Has engaged with participants through an engagement or marketing plan, reasonable level of assurance with respect to participant buy in. Developed a plan to capture homes as part of a long-term scalable delivery strategy. End to end customer approach partially considered. Developed supports / assistance provided to the homeowner / tenant removing retrofit uptake barriers.</p> <p><b>1 - 3</b> = Limited participants identified. No evidence of an engagement or marketing plan. Limited assurance with respect to participant buy in. End to end customer service not fully considered. Limited long-term scalable delivery strategy or participant assistance considered.</p> <p>*Attach confirmation as pdf with application submission.</p>
<p>Integrated Finance (6)</p>	<p><b>6</b> = An fully integrated delivery model which includes an attractive low-cost financing product.</p> <p><b>3 - 5</b> = An integrated delivery model where finance is on offer as part of the offering to householders.</p> <p><b>1 – 2</b> = A model where there are specific links to energy related finance products available in the market.</p>

For **Local Authorities and Housing Associations**, who predominantly self-fund upgrades works, in this section consideration will be given to how the submission plans to achieve cost effective delivery.

1. In evaluating applications for large scale grants ( i.e. in excess of €1M) SEAI will consider contract volumes in line with previous delivery history, over 24 months, across all SEAI programmes, with an additional allowance for growth and contract timeline, indicatively in the range of growth of 25%. An exception to this is where a project coordinator provides written confirmation of a strong pipeline (e.g. addresses of homes) for delivery with confirmation from the third party and or demonstration of an ability to manage and deliver large volume home retrofit.
2. A contractor’s ability to deliver the proposal will be assessed across all SEAI programmes and awards of contracts will take account of a coordinators work commitments and point 1 above.

## 1.6 Funding Levels

Listed below are the maximum available funding levels based on the home type.

National Home Retrofit Scheme	Home type	Grant
	Private	Up to 35%
	Local Authority homes	Up to 35%
	Housing Association homes	Up to 50%

Midlands Retrofit Strand	Home type	Grant*
	Private - Non-Energy Poor	Up to 35%
	Private – Energy Poor Reference section 3.1 for energy poor definition	Up to 80%

\* Pre- BER (with Advisory Report) will be awarded 80% grant support (maximum project cost per BER is €175 excl. VAT)

Please note that **all homes** require a pre- and post-works [Building Energy Rating \(BER\)](#) to be completed and published. Local Authority Homes are exempt from publishing a **pre-BER**, however they must be able to demonstrate the minimum BER uplift required.

A BER rating of B2 must be achieved. In certain cases with prior SEAI written agreement, homes may be allowed to achieve cost optimal levels if it is shown that achieving the B2 level is cost prohibitive.

[All domestic buildings completed must deliver a minimum primary energy BER uplift of at least 100 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/yr.](#)

Single Measure projects should be directed to the SEAI general [Home Energy Grants Scheme](#). Fossil fuel boilers are not supported in any way by this scheme and their installation is actively discouraged by SEAI.

SEAI reserve the right to conduct 100% pre works inspection of all domestic sites in advance of any contract award.

Public bodies must comply with public procurement. All other Beneficiaries receiving funding will need to adhere to procurement rules regarding a competitive tendering process. Where a competitive tendering process is not completed at application stage this needs to be highlighted. This poses an additional risk to delivery and SEAI, and the project will be scored accordingly. If there is no mitigation offered, then the project is unlikely to be supported.

SEAI requires applicants to ensure that an open and transparent tender process has been engaged by the Project Coordinator. SEAI reserves the right to seek evidence from project elements that a competitive process has been applied. This will include seeking evidence of three quotes, or evidence that a tender process has been complied with. SEAI requires to ensure that an open and transparent tender process has been engaged by the coordinator. A contract will not be issued until SEAI are satisfied that the appropriate market rates have been achieved. We therefore recommend that all projects are fully tendered at the time of application. While every effort will be made to issue contracts on a timely basis SEAI takes no responsibility for any delays which may arise due to delays in finalising specifications or costs with the grantee. Key programme delivery dates will not be extended in such circumstances.

## 1.7 Eligible Energy Upgrades

The following energy efficiency upgrades are eligible for funding as part of the National Home Retrofit Scheme 2020

Eligible works

- **Fabric upgrades:** This includes wall insulation as well as energy-smart windows and doors. In the case of insulation work on homes, an optimal whole-element solution must be implemented. Partial solutions will not be eligible for grant support without prior agreement.
  - **Renewable energy solutions:** Renewable energy solutions like heat pump technology and photovoltaic systems are eligible where included as part of a broader retrofit.
  - Heat recovery and demand control ventilation solutions,
  - Airtightness
  - Ventilation provisions
  - LEDs
  - Energy upgrades to homes constructed prior to 1 January 2006,
- Or for Heat pumps prior to 1 January 2011 in line with Better Energy Homes guidelines including HLI requirements**
- **PV Installs** All PV installs must be completed in line with SEAI's PV programme requirements. Details are available on SEAI web site below. [www.seai.ie/grants/home-grants/solar-pv](http://www.seai.ie/grants/home-grants/solar-pv)

Note: It is a requirement that all homes should meet BER requirements subject to Part L of the Building Regulations.

## 1.8 Eligible Costs

Payment of the grant is retrospective. All beneficiaries (i.e. recipients of works as listed in the technical workbook project summary tab) will at application stage be required to provide a written confirmation stating that: -

1. They have the financial resources in place to complete their project.
2. They understand that the proposed total cost of works is €X and expected grant funding is €Y (i.e. figures as set out in the technical workbook)

Expenses eligible for grant payment

- **Project coordination** for project management costs to be considered eligible for support, they must not exceed 7% of the total eligible grant costs and are funded at the grant percentage. Only **external** Project Management fees for the coordination, management and delivery of the project, are eligible.
- **Labour** Costs of employing an **external** labourer in order to implement the building upgrade.
- **Material** Materials, equipment, hardware, software and or control systems necessary to implement the project are an eligible expense. Second-hand equipment will not be eligible for funding.
- **VAT** VAT is considered eligible for grant payment **in cases where it cannot be reclaimed**. VAT is the responsibility of the project coordinator to administer correctly.
- **BER domestic projects** All successful applicants will be required to complete and publish pre-works BER prior to requesting the first interim payment for proposed upgrade works. Post-BERs are required to be published for all upgraded homes. BER's must be supplied to the homeowner as part of the documentation, certification and handover pack provided to all homeowners.

The maximum eligible cost for a pre and post BER is €350. To be eligible for support, the work must be completed on the home. SEAI will not support pre-works BER costs if the work is not carried out, with the exception of a set number of BER assessments linked to approved Midlands Retrofit applications.

Local Authority homes are not eligible for any BER support but a post-works BER must be published for upgraded properties, nonetheless. Local Authorities must also be able to verify that the BER primary energy uplift was 100kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year or greater.

Where homes are upgraded, BER costs will only be funded at the end of the project when both pre- and post-BERs have been published. The same BER assessor should complete both the pre- and post-works BERs, and a separate site visit to the home must take place prior to each BER being published. The minimum BER for homes completed under this Scheme is B2 Where heat pumps are installed SEAI will make a €100 contribution towards the HLI assessment costs of these homes. Excluded from this HLI contribution are Local Authority and apartments or other domestic multi units installs.

As part of an approved Midland Retrofit application, funding for pre-BERs (and the advisory report) for an approved number of homes, that did not receive any upgrade measures, will be

made at the end of the contract delivery period and will be capped on the final number of homes upgraded x 10.

For all pre and post works BERs, support will only apply to BERs published after the Letter of Offer.

Note: homes with a single recommended measure are specifically excluded.

## 1.9 Ineligible Costs

- **Unrelated costs** Any costs not directly related to improving the energy performance of stock through the proposed project will be considered ineligible for payment.
- **Application costs** the cost of preparing and submitting an application is not eligible for payment.
- **Internal staff costs** Internal staff costs are not eligible for payment.
- **Ongoing monitoring costs** Ongoing monitoring costs, except those required for the M&V report, are not eligible for payment.
- **Pre-project costs** Any costs that predate formal letter of offer will not be paid.
- **Crossover** The cost of measures completed in homes which have formerly received an SEAI grant for the same measure are not eligible.
- **Baseline costs** The cost of bringing the facilities up to the standards required by legislation for such a facility are not eligible for payment.
- **Corrections** The cost of remedying defective works and installations undertaken previously by others (e.g. geothermal remedial works, solar remedial works) are not eligible for payment.
- **Unexpected** Un-commissioned equipment, and any other **costs that have not been clearly outlined** in the Application Form, will be considered ineligible for payment.
- **Unfinished works** Work that has not been completed, or 'fit for use' by the programme deadline will not be eligible for any or part grant support.
- **Energy upgrades to new buildings:** The National Home Retrofit Scheme 2020 aims at supporting retrofits for old building stock. Homes constructed after 1 January 2006 are not eligible for standard measures or after 1 January 2011 for heat pump installs. The National Home Retrofit Scheme does not support works carried out during construction.
- Concessions awarded around marketing costs which were allowed under Better Energy Finance previously will not be eligible.

This is not an exhaustive list. If you are unsure which aspects of your project are eligible for payment, please contact the National Home Retrofit team.

## 1.10 Key Roles

### Lead Applicant

It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to **distribute funds** and **organise access** for SEAI inspections. The Lead Applicant signs the **letter of offer** and agrees to all the terms and conditions of the scheme on behalf of the Project Partners. The lead applicant is responsible for receiving and distributing the grant funding from SEAI to all the beneficiaries. They may defer administration and day-to-day project management of the grant to a Project Coordinator who works on their behalf.

When filling out the Application Form, **the Lead Applicant can choose to make the Project Coordinator the main contact**. Provided the Project Coordinator agrees, and indicates so on the form, the Lead Applicant will be considered a secondary contact, and will not be copied on all correspondence.

**Contractors delivering upgrade works cannot apply as the Lead Applicant**. We advise that contractors wishing to apply for the scheme should collaborate with another organisation, such as a Local Authority. **The Partner organisation can act as the Lead Applicant**.

### Project Coordinator

The Project Coordinator is responsible for managing all aspects of the project. Project Coordination is an eligible expense (i.e. project management) under the programme, to support applicants in employing **experienced** and **qualified** managers who will be **dedicated to the project** and deliver it in a **professional** manner. A lead applicant may also be a project Coordinator.

It is important that your application demonstrate that the chosen Project Coordinator can bring the following to the project:

- The relevant experience and knowledge of the management requirements and risk mitigation involved in carrying out the proposed works;
- A plan to manage quality throughout the project;
- The competence to ensure that quality deliverables (photos, Competent Person reports, etc.) are released throughout the project as part of the payment applications and that these quality deliverables are aligned with milestones.

It is the responsibility of the Project Coordinator to select the **BER assessor(s)** and ensure that they fulfil all duties and obligations under the [Regulations and the Code of Practice for BER assessors](#). No BER assessor should complete more than 100 BER's (Pre and post together) under any National Housing Retrofit Scheme application. See link below for BER code of practice.

<https://www.seai.ie/publications/BER-Assessors-Code-of-Practice-New.pdf>

The Project Coordinator must select a BER assessor who is not an employee of **any** of the contractors or organisations involved in the delivery of the project upgrades.

There is no requirement for a project to appoint a project coordinator and beneficiaries may act as their own project coordinator where they can demonstrate they have the appropriate technical skill set. No internal project management costs may be claimed in this instance.

## Beneficiary

A grant Beneficiary is a project participant who ultimately benefits from the works being carried out and is listed on the Application Form and/or the technical workbook, who will incur and pay for the costs involved in carrying out the project. The Lead Applicant will transfer any grant payment from SEAI in respect of eligible costs incurred by a Beneficiary to the Beneficiary as soon as the payment is received from SEAI and subject to the agreement in place between the Beneficiaries and the Lead Applicant.

**Individual homeowners cannot be listed as Beneficiaries** on the Application Form. They should be grouped under a particular Beneficiary acting on their behalf.

## Participating Energy Supplier (PES)

Under the Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme, energy suppliers must support energy efficiency projects in businesses and homes across Ireland. For more information on this scheme and contact details for energy suppliers please see our website at this link: [Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme](#).

Partnership with a PES is recommended under the scheme. Projects who do not have access to a PES should contact the National Home Retrofit team to have a PES appointed or introductions made.

There are a number of ways for a PES to be involved in a project, such as providing project management, financial contribution, provision of materials, installation of works, monitoring, energy audits or advice, or a combination of some or all of the above. Advice and other services are not sufficient, on their own, in 2020 this may form part of an overall package of supports. Predicted energy credits from the project can be used as leverage in negotiations with the energy suppliers to secure the best package of supports.

The Energy Savings achieved by a project are measured in Kilowatt hours (kWh). Each kWh is equivalent to 1-energy credit, which can be traded with an Energy Supplier for either monetary, project management or other supports. Energy Credits from projects under this scheme are categorised as Residential.

Projects are encouraged to contact a number of different Energy Suppliers to negotiate the best deal for their energy credits. A project is not limited to partnering with their current energy provider or indeed just one energy supplier. Where energy credits are being 'sold' to a PES, the application should state **clearly if and how** these funds are being used to support the project. The PES is also responsible for uploading Domestic Energy Credits to SEAI's ECMS (Energy Credit Management System) once homes have been completed.

### Important Note:

The Energy Efficiency Obligation scheme is in place in Ireland pursuant to Article 7 of the EU's Energy Efficiency Directive. Changes to this legislation will mean that a new phase of the Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme will start at the beginning of 2021. The Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment has published a high-level decision paper, see link below, outlining how Ireland will meet targets under Article 7. This includes a decision to issue targets to obligation parties in final energy for the period 2021-2030, with a transition period to be agreed. This approach will encourage energy savings that also contribute to decarbonisation, in line with the Climate Action Plan. <https://www.gov.ie/en/consultation/ac175-public-consultation-on-the-implementation-of-the-clean-energy-package/>

## 2 FINANCING and PROJECT DELIVERY SOLUTIONS

### 2.1 Minimum Financing Requirements

A beneficiary will be required to indicate that they have sufficient funds available to complete the project. The beneficiary will also be required to submit in writing confirmation of their project costs along with their grant awarded. This should be agreed with the Project Coordinator and must match the beneficiary's schedule in the application workbook.

### 2.2 Specific Financing Options

Under the Better Energy Finance pilot programme SEAI has worked with a number of finance providers and financial institutions to fund residential projects.

These include individual and groups of **Credit Unions** in developing models for low-cost loans for 'Energy Efficient Upgrade' works. SEAI has also supported some innovative companies in developing **Salary Incentive schemes** for their employees similar to the 'Bike to Work' scheme. If you wish to find out more about this, please contact us at [housingretrofit@seai.ie](mailto:housingretrofit@seai.ie).

Many banks now offer specific **Energy Efficiency loans** for domestic retrofit including Green Mortgages and low-cost personal loans specifically for energy upgrades to homes. New entrants are also coming into the market.

A number of other financial entities may also be willing to lend or invest funds in larger scale housing energy upgrade projects.

Loan finance known as '**Social Finance**' is available from organisations like [Clann Credo](#) or [Community Finance](#) or the Housing Finance Agency to fund projects considered to be of value to society. Projects that improve energy efficiency and sustainability are considered to be socially beneficial.

## 3 PROJECT COMPONENTS

### 3.1 Residential Projects

Projects may not contain more than 130 domestic units for delivery under any single application. Projects of up to this size must demonstrate their ability to deliver on this scale before SEAI will entertain an evaluation of any application.

#### Local Authority Homes

Unoccupied Local Authority homes known as ‘voids’ may be granted aid, but the SEAI must be made aware that the projects contain voids at application stage. Such homes will be treated as non-energy poor homes for Energy Credits.

#### Energy Poverty

Relevant to Midlands Retrofit Strand applications only.

Private homes will be considered to be energy poor if the resident (who must be the legal homeowner) 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 have a child under seven years of age
- Working Family Payment
- One-Parent Family Payment
- Domiciliary Care Allowance
- Carers Allowance and live with the person you are caring for (effective from 1st August 2018)

Proof of one of the above must be provided for each energy poor household at project completion stage in order to receive higher financial support. This takes the form of a signed letter from the Department of Social Protection dated within six months of the start date of the Grant Agreement, a payment receipt made out to the homeowner, or a Social Welfare swipe receipt (except in the case of Jobseekers Allowance where 6 months must be proven). The name and address on the relevant 24 correspondence must match that of the homeowner on the application. These requirements are in line with The Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme (WHS) and any changes to qualifying criteria on WHS will be reflected in National Home Retrofit Scheme.

Project Coordinators are required to state the energy poor status of the home prior to the delivery of the energy efficiency upgrades. A personal data form is available from SEAI. Project Coordinators are required to seek the consent of homeowners to collect their personal data, maintain the necessary evidence on file for five years, and make it available to SEAI for audit inspection at the end of the project.

In the case of Local Authorities or Housing Associations who have access to the Department of Social Protection Database, SEAI will accept a signed letter from the Data Officer (or equivalent) confirming the numbers of energy poor homes being claimed for and detailing each of them by name and address. Energy credits for Local Authority and Housing Association projects will be awarded as energy poor based on the proof received.

### Special Requirements for Residential Projects

All proposed works for domestic stock should be in line; with standard and specification guidelines issued by SEAI such as the Domestic Technical Standards and Specification document <https://www.seai.ie/publications/Domestic-Technical-Standards-and-Specifications.pdf> (incorporating [SR54 for retrofit works](#)) and, with current building regulations.

All Contractors working on the National Home Retrofit Scheme must be a registered Better Energy Home (BEH) Contractor where the works completed are similar to BEH measures. Where PV installs are being included the installers must comply with the same standards as apply under the SEAI's Solar Electricity Grant and works must be complete by a Contractor on SEAI's Solar PV installer register. Other measures which are to be deployed must comply with any SEAI requirement pertaining to that measure at the time of install.

Domestic Contractors will apply and fully comply with the Better Energy Homes Scheme Contractors Code of Practice, Quality Assurance Disciplinary Procedures (QADP), Standards and Specification Guidelines for all measures covered under that scheme, including Heat pumps. Installers of PV must comply with the SEAI Solar Electricity Grant requirements. For the avoidance of doubt, the applicable version of the above is the one which is in force and as published on the SEAI website at the time the work or service is carried out when undertaking any works or services in respect of which funding is claimed pursuant to this Agreement.

A Technical Helpdesk for domestic contractors is available at 01 277 6977. The following technical requirements should be noted

- a) A pre- and post-works BER is required to be carried out for all properties with the exception of;
  - Local Authority homes where only a post works BER is required, (however they must be able to verify the required primary energy uplift) and
  - applicable only under an approved Midlands Retrofit contract, a defined number of pre-BER (and advisory report) on homes not upgraded.
- b) Evidence that the pre-works BERs have been completed should be submitted to SEAI before any interim payments can be made.
- c) Final post work BERs should be a B2 rating or above

All domestic buildings completed must deliver a minimum primary energy BER uplift of 100 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/yr.

Where a BER Audit determines that a minimum BER Rating specified in the grant agreement has not been achieved or that the BER Assessment is to be revoked, SEAI may require that:

- remedial works are undertaken to achieve the required BER rating and
- a new BER Assessment is published which meets the requirements

Grants relating to the homes may be withheld if not already paid until the action identified above has been undertaken to the satisfaction of SEAI.

- d) In the case of insulation work, an optimal whole-element solution must be implemented. Partial solutions will not be eligible for grant support without prior agreement. For example, windows, SEAI assume every window will be replaced; failure to replace all existing windows will result in this measure being withdrawn from the grant. Where in rare circumstances a full replacement is not required a deviation or scope change must be agreed in writing and in advance with the programme manager. Any install which is not a full install and has no written approval will be deemed incomplete and no part of the expenditure will be permitted as eligible.
- e) Changes to homes do not need prior approval once the measures installed are consistent with the measures contained within the original workbook, and the overall eligible costs are within the envelope of funding agreed per contract.

Where doors are specified the application must indicate front or back door as a single unit of measure. An explanation can be found on the buyer's guide page of the SEAI website. A fabric first solution is **mandatory**.

- f) Energy credits for individual homes are based on a published table available on the SEAI web site. The values assigned to the project on completion shall be those listed on the published table on the date of your application to this scheme.
- g) SEAI will (as noted under the funding levels section) look for evidence that a competitive procurement process has been followed – either a full tender process has been carried out or at a minimum three quotes have been sought for the works. In addition, SEAI will at evaluation stage review all prices against its pricing database (incorporating pricing data from across SEAI's domestic programmes) for reasonableness. Where prices are found to be

unreasonable and not supported with details justifying higher costs, *SEAI will be entitled to adjust the rate in line with market value*. This may form part of the evaluation process however post evaluation changes may be affected by SEAI prior to the award of a contract and without notice.

### 3.2 Project Milestones

In order to assist with cashflow and project delivery SEAI require a staggered confirmation of work completions. This will act to ensure that our payment and inspection processes are ready to assist project delivery.

Project milestones will be set by the applicant. **An applicant must outline their 20%, 50% and 70% delivery milestone dates within their Application.** Where the milestones are not in line with these percentages the application will be rejected.

Payments should be requested by the applicant once all homes listed under the milestone are delivered. SEAI will make interim payments only on fully completed homes which are supported by a published post works BER.

**During the project the applicants must deliver to the milestone dates and SEAI will review progress with applicants at each milestone. This may result in an amended grant offer if the project is unable to meet the milestones. Specifically if the 50% milestone target is not met then the overall contract will be reduced by the amount of any under-delivery subject to a cap of 20% of the homes e.g. if 50 homes were to be delivered by the 50% milestone date and only 30 homes were delivered then the overall contract could be reduced by 10 homes.**

## 4 APPLICATION PROCESS

### 4.1 Before Applying

It is essential that the project is clearly mapped out before application. Please ensure that the choice of **Lead Applicant, Project Coordinator, PES** and **all participating organisations** have been finalised before application.

Financial, administrative and site delivery resources should be identified at application stage. Remember to clearly and thoroughly outline the in-house team as it is a critical part of the project. The Application form should highlight any approvals required before the project can proceed e.g. Financial Approval (Board, Management or Lending Institution).

The Application form should inform SEAI with regard to the proposed tender process, and completion dates of same. Tenders, which are not complete or substantially under way at the time of application will be viewed less favourably and the scores awarded will reflect the increased risks associated with this status. SEAI reserve the right to refuse applications where we believe the tender is not of an appropriate standard or does not comply with good governance rules. SEAI will not allow cost revisions in excess of the values applied for at application so it is important that tendered prices should be available at that point. SEAI reserve the right to revoke any contract on the basis of delays in tenders, for any reason including delays affecting the project, the contractor or any other party involved in the delivery of the project, incurred as a direct or indirect result of Brexit

Before applying, carefully read the **requirement guidelines** regarding requirements for residential projects then carefully read the checklist and ensure that you have all of the **necessary documentation ready**.

Only those applicants who have completed all parts of the Application Form (Form B is required where a PES is involved) and submitted a completed Technical Workbook will be evaluated. Applicants should ensure every project has sufficient technical data to support energy savings. All applicants must verify by way of email that they have read and understood the published guidelines in order for an application to proceed to evaluation.

All works must be complete by the 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2021, with necessary paperwork submitted, so it is important that applicants consider carefully the ability to deliver by this deadline as extensions are **not** envisaged.

Projects may request technical advice or other from the National Home Retrofit team prior to submitting an application. While every effort will be made to provide assistance prior to an application, this can only happen if an appropriate agenda is provided in advance.

## 4.2 How to Apply

The applicant should visit <https://www.seai.ie/grants/national-home-retrofit/>

and select the application form relevant to your proposed submission. The options are:

1. National Home Retrofit (Standard) Application Form
2. Midlands Retrofit – Application Form

Applications must be submitted via email to [housingretrofit@seai.ie](mailto:housingretrofit@seai.ie)

### **Enter the following in the email subject bar:**

a) *National Home Retrofit (Standard) Application: Name of your project, with completed Application Form & PES Declaration Form B (see checklist under section 4.4).*

OR

b) *Midlands Retrofit Application: Name of your project, with completed Application Form & PES Declaration Form B (see checklist under section 4.4).*

## 4.3 Application Timeline

Projects that are submitted earlier will be considered more deliverable as there is a longer period for them to be completed. Please endeavour to submit as soon as possible. Evaluation time will depend on the volume of applications received at that time. The evaluation period for larger projects is expected to be between 4 and 6 weeks. Smaller projects will take a shorter time to evaluate.

Only completed applications will be evaluated. Where an incomplete application is submitted it will not be sent for evaluation. SEAI takes no responsibility for incomplete applications submitted.

Please note the evaluation timeframe stops when SEAI seeks additional information, therefore applications which are incomplete will take longer to evaluate. SEAI reserve the right to reject an application where we have insufficient information to complete the evaluation. In this instance, the applicant will be formally advised and given the opportunity to re-submit.

The deadline for project completion including submission of all project documentation is the 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2021. Projects which cannot deliver to the appointed time frames should not be submitted as part of the application. Elements of individual projects not delivered by the contract end date will not be supported for grant funding.

#### 4.4 Checklist

- a) Completed application form under *Tab 1 Applicant Details and Delivery* on the National Home Retrofit (Standard) Application Form or the Midlands Retrofit Application Form.
- b) Completed Technical workbook within the Excel Application Form, reference *Tab 3 Project Summary, Tab 5 Domestic Energy Credits* and *Tab 6 U-Value and Efficiency*. This is a critical component of your application. Failure to thoroughly, adequately and accurately complete the Technical Workbook could seriously jeopardize the success of the application. Ensure all fields in the Technical Workbook are fully completed, clearly indicating energy savings, project cost, and grant sum requested. Please see the [Technical Workbook Guide](#) for more information. SEAI will provide supports to assist project coordinators to complete the workbook; however, SEAI will not complete workbooks on a coordinator's behalf.

**The technical workbook is deemed to be part of the grant agreement, for the avoidance of doubt, the grant agreement will be capped at the value per measure applied for in the technical workbook.**

Contractor details should be provided where they have been tendered. It is a requirement that contractors should be registered under the Better Energy Homes Scheme register for measures delivered under that scheme.

**Sample plan** A sample of a proposed management plan by the Project Coordinator.

**Quality and Assurance plan for all projects.**

- c) **PES Declaration** A completed Form B is required where a PES is involved.
- d) Any other relevant information to support your project proposal – e.g. 3<sup>rd</sup> party delivery assurances, feasibility studies, or options appraisals relating to your project or how your project fits into wider local development plans etc

#### Financial documents

- a) **Tax Clearance** eTax clearance must be verified for the Lead Applicant and Beneficiaries who are required to provide the relevant tax reference number and access number to SEAI.
- b) **VAT status verification** If the Beneficiary is looking for a **VAT inclusive grant** from SEAI, a **2020-dated** letter, or letters, from the **Revenue Commission** confirming the VAT status of the Beneficiary must be included.

The letter must state that the Beneficiary is not registered for VAT and/or does not have VAT recovery status on the specific costs (energy upgrades) being claimed under the National Home Retrofit Scheme 2020 and cannot reclaim any VAT incurred on the project costs.

The exception to this is where the Lead Applicant is required to account for VAT on the value of goods/services provided to private homeowners in which case VAT is an eligible cost on the basis that although the applicant is entitled to VAT recovery, the homeowners are not. In this instance Homeowner invoices showing VAT charged to individuals must be supplied in order for this to be deemed payable

- c) **Declaration of financial resources** A declaration signed by all Project Beneficiaries must be provided stating that they have the financial resources to complete the project. This should also indicate the value of the grant they are requesting on their element of the project.

## 5 GRANT PAYMENTS

### 5.1 Validating the Offer

If approved, a grant offer will be issued to the Lead Applicant. The grant offer **will only become valid** upon SEAI receipt of a **signed Grant Agreement within 14 days of date of issue**.

Should SEAI propose to support projects at a lower percentage than that requested in the application, the project contact will be notified in advance of a letter of offer. Evaluator decisions on technical issues are final and SEAI will not entertain any appeals on changes made to applications during the evaluation process, due to the lack of technical details being provided at application stage.

### 5.2 During the Project

#### Project Milestones

Project milestones will be set by the applicant and approved by SEAI. Where the milestones are not in line with SEAI's delivery requirement or deemed unrealistic for the scale of the project, the application will be rejected. Payments may be requested by the project coordinators once all homes listed under the milestone are delivered.

#### Workshops

SEAI may host webinars, workshops or clinics for successful projects to assist Project Coordinators in the delivery of their project. It is advised that Project Coordinators attend these workshops.

### 5.3 Inspections

SEAI will carry out desktop audits and/or inspections, in advance or following completion of works, for compliance with the Grant Agreement. Grantees will be notified by SEAI prior to such inspections.

#### Advisory Inspection

Advisory inspections are intended as a training aid to ensure Project Co-ordinators understand relevant quality standards and technical requirements, early in the installation process.

Evidence shows that Advisory Inspections lead to improved final inspections and the timely release of payment. For this reason, Advisory inspections are not mandatory but a minimum of 2 are recommended be carried out. The upgrade measures chosen for advisory inspections should be representative of the measures to be repeated across the scheme and include any homes or measures that are technically challenging.

#### Desktop Audit

Desktop audits are completed to determine the quality of energy upgrade works submitted under this Scheme. Desktop audits may be selected to reduce the number of physical inspections, as a result of poor-quality inspection results and at random. They will also be selected in circumstances where it is not possible to complete a physical inspection such as Covid-19.

A desktop audit is the review of uploaded documents, certificates and photographic evidence that works are completed. It is important that the Project Co-ordinator gathers this information and uploads it to SharePoint prior to confirming the project is complete.

Desktop audits do not include a physical inspection of the works. However, a physical inspection may occur as a result of the findings of a desktop audit.

### **Advisory Inspection (Home Projects)**

Advisory inspections are intended as a training aid to ensure Project Co-ordinators understand relevant quality standards and technical requirements, early in the installation process.

Evidence shows that Advisory Inspections lead to improved final inspections and the timely release of payment. For this reason, Advisory inspections are not mandatory but a minimum of 2 are recommended be carried out. The upgrade measures chosen for advisory inspections should be representative of the measures to be repeated across the scheme and include any homes or measures that are technically challenging.

### **Inspection Process**

On completion of a project a domestic Inspection log is required to be submitted. Projects will be selected for inspection from these using a risk-based approach.

The Project Coordinator is responsible for quality assurance on the project and will be notified of the properties selected for inspection.

The Project Coordinator must provide access for SEAI's inspectors within 5 days of being contacted to arrange an inspection. The Project Coordinator is not required to be present at the inspection but must assign a representative who is familiar with the upgrade works completed and has access to all required certification documentation and manuals. Where the Project Coordinator cannot be present SEAI reserve the right to proceed with the inspection without the presence of the project coordinator or any of their representatives being present.

Inspections will be undertaken during normal working hours. The Project Coordinator will be required to provide the inspector with a safe working environment and suitable access to the project area. Any representative of the Project Coordinator should have all the necessary documentation and technical knowledge of the project. They may also be asked to retrieve equipment (e.g. light fittings) in areas which are difficult to access, to verify compliance with quality and safety standards.

Poor inspection results may result in additional inspections being conducted and re-inspection of remedial works for non-compliance.

### **Reworks**

Following inspection, the inspector will send a written report to the Project Co-ordinator detailing any non-compliant works recorded and requesting that reworks be carried out. Where evidence is found that works were completed after the project completion deadline (other than snagging) these works will be deemed ineligible for grant funding. A declaration of reworks is required to be submitted within 14 days of the date of the inspection report and evidence of completion should be submitted with these (e.g. photos, reports and certificates). Any re-works identified in the inspection report should be addressed on all other properties completed on the project.

The Project Coordinator may be asked to meet SEAI to confirm the remedial actions being taken to bring the project in line with quality requirements.

If satisfactory evidence of quality and safety standards is not available, SEAI may, at its discretion, reduce the grant amount proportionally. Excessive additional inspections arising from persistent poor quality may be chargeable at the cost to SEAI.

Payments between 50% and 70% must be supported by satisfactory inspection data. Payments in excess of 70% will only be made when inspection data has been finalised, energy credits uploaded, and all outstanding documentation received. All reworks must be completed before final payment will be released.

### **Appeals**

Inspection results may be appealed using the Reworks Appeal Form which can be emailed to [becinspections@seai.ie](mailto:becinspections@seai.ie).

Appeals must be received in writing within 14 days of the date of your Inspection Results Notification. Appeals must outline any evidence to dispute the inspection findings and advise on any mitigating factors that may have affected the outcome of the inspection. It is essential that your appeal be supported by appropriate supporting documentation such as photos, certification and other relevant information

### **Post payment Inspections**

SEAI may at its own discretion carry out post payment inspections to verify the quality of works performed under the Scheme. Where requested to do so the Project Coordinator will be required to provide contact details for the homeowners' properties to enable SEAI to contact the homeowner or Beneficiary directly. Schedule F forms must be completed for each and every Domestic location completed. Post payment inspections will normally be undertaken independently of the Project Coordinator. Where fails are identified re-works will be required as noted above. SEAI reserves the right to clawback any grant funds where reworks are not completed, or no works are identified.

## **5.4 Payment Procedure**

Grant payments will be made to the Lead Applicant in accordance with the Grant Agreement. Changes to the contract in relation to payment are not possible once the contract is signed.

The level of grant payment will be strictly proportional to documented eligible payments made to suppliers and contractors connected to the project. Invoices must be dated after the date of letter of offer and must be addressed to the Grantee or the Beneficiaries named on the Grant Agreement.

Once the reports and financial documents are deemed satisfactory, SEAI will transfer grant funds electronically to the Grantee's bank account and issue an accompanying letter notifying the main contact of the payment.

Final Payments are conditional upon satisfactory receipt by SEAI of the below by the **15<sup>th</sup> of October 2021** at the latest:

- a) Project completion confirmation including verification that the technical specifications have been completed

- b) A completed Payment Request Form
- c) A completed Grant Claim Workbook
- d) **Invoices** for all approved itemised **eligible costs**. Invoices should list energy upgrade measures included and identify the locations where these works were carried out.
- e) Proof of payment of invoices in the form of
  - a copy of the Grantee's bank statement which shows the payment(s)
  - (Where multiple invoices are being paid using a single Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) or cheque i.e. batch payments, a breakdown of all amounts in that payment is required.)
- f) Valid tax Clearance for all Beneficiaries
- g) All relevant financial documents
- h) For self-accounted VAT, supporting documentation as evidence that VAT has been paid to Revenue, e.g. VAT return extract and bank statement, or a letter indicating that VAT will be paid (this in the case of Local Authorities and other Government Bodies only SEAI will accept a letter from an authorised official outlining that VAT has been paid or will be paid to Revenue for each invoice. This also applies to RCT and PSWT).
- i) Domestic Energy Credits uploaded to ECMS (Energy Credit Management System) by PES

#### *Confirmation of*

- j) [Declaration of Independence](#) signed by BER assessor(s)
- k) Signed [Client Organisation Declaration for Energy Credits](#)
- l) A report on the status of the project in relation to financing aspects including a description of the mechanism used, the repayment situation and feedback on the success of the mechanism where applicable
- m) BER costs should be separately identified and invoiced, and this invoice must separately identify the properties assessed.
- n) Schedule D for every home must also be provided, signed by the homeowner or in the case of local authority or housing associations certification from the project lead.

#### Project management costs

Applicants can only claim for PM support in-line with project expenditure. Invoices accounting for the relevant values must be submitted at each stage.

## 5.5 Important Notes

#### Interim payments

SEAI will not make interim payments on projects unless works are fully complete on the homes being claimed for as supported by a published BER. Works must be completed for any invoices submitted i.e. deposits or payments on account are not acceptable. Payments for partially complete measures is not permitted. Payments for partially complete homes is also not permitted.

Final payments will be withheld on all projects until all documentation has been submitted, and all inspections and any necessary re-works have been completed and approved by SEAI.

Where the number of energy credits delivered is less than those committed to in the Grant Agreement, the maximum project management amount will be adjusted on a pro rata basis for any reduction in energy credits in excess of 5% of the amount committed to in the Grant Agreement. This may result in the grant payment being reduced.

#### Payment revocation

The SEAI will revoke payments in the following circumstances:

- Ineligible invoices submitted
- Insufficient proof of payments submitted
- Invoices are deemed invalid
- Back-up documents have not been submitted to SEAI by the assigned project deadline
- Requests for payment have not been submitted to SEAI by the assigned project deadline
- Works have not been completed to standard
- Works have not been tested and commissioned
- Works have not been 'switched on'
- Work was completed prior to letter of offer being issued
- No access has been provided to inspect the upgrade works
- Upgrade works completed do not match proposal and specification submitted and approved by SEAI in accordance with the programme guidelines
- Energy credits completed are less than that proposed in the Grant Agreement
- Invalid or insufficient Energy Credits uploaded
- Energy credits for upgrade works have already been claimed for

#### Inspection of Projects

**The cost of additional inspections will, at the discretion of SEAI be deducted from the grant payment due where the quality of work is repeatedly poor and additional inspections are required as a direct result. Both inspection costs and re-inspection costs are deductible at the cost of such inspections to SEAI.**

#### Triple E register

The Triple E Products Register is a benchmark register of best in class energy efficient products. Products on this register all meet a minimum set of stringent efficiency criteria and typically will be of a best in class efficiency standard. As such, procuring against this register will provide you with the assurance that you are purchasing a product of very high efficiency.

Projects are encouraged to commit to the purchase of plant, machinery or equipment from the relevant product/technology categories listed on the [Triple E register](#) or equivalent where appropriate. The Project Coordinator should identify such products in the Technical Workbook. This is a mandatory requirement for public sector organisations only.

## 'Green' Public Procurement Regulations

Public sector organisations should meet their obligations to procure products in accordance with SI 646/2016 European Union (Energy Efficient Public Procurement) Regulations 2016

### Publicity and Case Studies

As with all grant schemes, successes and lessons learned are a key ingredient in maximising replication. This is particularly true with community energy projects, where successfully funded projects are the flagbearers driving wider and deeper community engagement. It is essential therefore that all applicants do their utmost to publicise the successful outcomes of their endeavours. This means:

- Actively seeking opportunities to promote the successful grant application, project progress and project completion in local and regional media (print and broadcast). This should also extend to local representatives and elected officials.
- All such activities should explicitly acknowledge the funding received from the SEAI National Home Retrofit Scheme. Where signage or displays are being created in relation to particular buildings or events then you should request the SEAI logo from SEAI for inclusion accordingly. SEAI should be provided with copies of any press releases or promotional materials prior to finalisation.
- If deemed appropriate to host an event at project completion, then SEAI should be advised of same and afforded an opportunity to attend / participate as appropriate.
- At project conclusion, the project co-ordinator will provide a short case study to SEAI which sets out the main elements of the project (key partners, numbers of properties, and types of works, project costs (totals), project duration, critical success factors / learnings accompanied with high-res photos of key buildings). These may be used for further promotion by SEAI or inclusion in reports from SEAI.

Also, SEAI may seek to contact Beneficiaries to request their participation in surveys (telephone or questionnaire) to determine the impact and achievements of the Grant Scheme and may develop and publish case studies (protecting as appropriate all personal, confidential or commercially sensitive information/data);

### Energy credits

If an energy supplier is a Project Partner, the Lead Applicant on the project may give them permission to count the energy savings achieved against their energy target. This permission may only be given before the project commences. The energy supplier should be identified on the Application Form and credits cannot be assigned retrospectively. It is the responsibility of the PES to upload all completed domestic credits to ECMS (Energy Credit Management System) for completed work.

All of the savings and reductions are potentially eligible to be considered as energy credits. They only get converted to credits once the relevant work is completed and verified.

Your National Home Retrofit Scheme grant offer states the agreed number of energy credits to be delivered by your project(s). A successful project **commits** to achieving the Energy Credits as set out in the evaluated Technical Workbook and included in the Grant Agreement. At the conclusion of your grant the energy credits will be uploaded on to the ECMS system (reference section 1.10 Participating Energy Supplier, Important Note). Where the number of energy credits is less than those committed to in the grant agreement a reduction to your project management payment will be made on a pro rata basis.

## Domestic

Please note that to claim domestic energy saving credits, the applicant must collect the meter point reference numbers (MPRNs) and BERs of the relevant dwellings.

## 6 THE NATIONAL HOME RETROFIT SCHEME GRANT TEAM

SEAI's National Home Retrofit Scheme Grant Team are happy to provide advice and support to potential applicants on any questions not covered in these guidelines and to support them in developing their applications for grant support.

If you are interested in making an application, please email [housingretrofit@seai.ie](mailto:housingretrofit@seai.ie) with 'expression of interest' in the subject line so that we can track applicants interested in the programme. Please contact us at [housingretrofit@seai.ie](mailto:housingretrofit@seai.ie) or 01 808 2162.

## 7 TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. The National Home Retrofit Scheme Application Guide, Application Form, Technical Workbook and Terms and Conditions are those published on the SEAI website on the date of submitting the application. However, SEAI may, if required by law or otherwise and without incurring any liability, vary, revise or supplement the Terms and Conditions of the programme after the application submission date. These revised or supplemented Terms and Conditions (as published on the SEAI website) will apply to all applications unless the Applicant chooses to withdraw the application or withdraw from the Grant Agreement. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to monitor the SEAI website in order to learn of any such changes.
2. The Applicant's Grant Agreement with SEAI in the event of a grant offer being accepted will comprise the Letter of Offer from SEAI including the Terms and Conditions and the Schedules contained therein, the Application Guidelines including these Terms and Conditions as amended in accordance with clause 1, and the Application Form including the Technical Workbook completed and submitted by the Applicant. The Applicant having communicated acceptance of the grant offer to SEAI, shall comply with and agree to be bound by the provisions of these documents. In the event of any conflict arising between these documents the order of precedence shall be:
  - a. the Letter of Offer and the Terms and Conditions including Schedules contained therein;
  - b. the Application Guidelines including these Terms and Conditions; and
  - c. The Application Form.
3. Applicant must ensure that the application is submitted by e-mail by no later than the deadline set out in the guidelines. Hard copy applications will not be accepted.
4. The project in respect of which the application is made, must be located in the Republic of Ireland.
5. Only new products shall be installed for the purposes of the project.
6. The Applicant and SEAI are of the view that there is no supply of goods or services between them and therefore there is no VAT chargeable to SEAI by the Applicant in relation to the payment of the grant. In the event that the Revenue Commissioners determine that, in their view, VAT is chargeable then the grant payment shall be regarded as inclusive of any VAT charge.
7. VAT is not an eligible project cost unless the Applicant can provide a letter from Revenue dated 2020 confirming that VAT cannot be reclaimed on the particular project. The only exception to this is where the ultimate beneficiaries of the works are private homeowners in which case the presumption will be that they do not have VAT recovery.
8. Any costs, e.g. orders, purchases or works, which predate formal Letter of Offer are not eligible.
9. Applications by public bodies must ensure that energy suppliers were selected through an appropriate process.

10. The applicant must obtain all necessary consents and statutory approvals and have authority to implement the project.
11. The grant offer only becomes valid upon receipt by SEAI from the applicant of the signed Letter of Offer within 14 days of issuance.
12. A grant, once approved, is only payable in respect of the project(s) identified in the Application Form and set out in the Letter of Offer.
13. SEAI's prior written consent is required to approve any changes to the itemised eligible costs. For the avoidance of doubt, SEAI reserves the right to refuse such consent at its absolute discretion.
14. Once approved, the total grant amount will not be permitted to escalate under any circumstances.
15. The Applicant acknowledges that the timing of payment to approved grantees is subject to the funding allocated by Government to the programme in a particular calendar year, in accordance with public financial procedures. Where all other conditions are met, payment will be made on a 'first come, first served' basis. Where funding is exhausted in a particular calendar year, payment to remaining applicants will be deferred until such time as further funds may become available. Deferred payments will receive priority, if and when those funds become available.
16. The Applicant and project beneficiaries must ensure that compliance is achieved with the relevant principles of Irish and EC law regarding the spending of this funding and, where applicable, the laws and guidelines concerning public procurement and state aid. The Applicant acknowledges and agrees that, if it or a Beneficiary of the project is a public body, it is a condition of the grant that all products being procured by or on behalf of the grantee or the Beneficiary concerned, as the case may be, shall comply with the European Communities (Energy Efficient Public Procurement) Regulations (S.I. 151 of 2011) which oblige public bodies when purchasing or leasing products to only procure products that are explicitly listed on the SEAI Triple E Register, or satisfy the energy efficiency criteria published by SEAI for the relevant product categories.
17. The Applicant must ensure that all participating homes are prepared to be contacted and asked to participate in follow-up site visit(s) to verify impacts and achievements and to be contacted and asked to participate in follow-up research (telephone or questionnaire) as may be commissioned by SEAI to establish the Scheme's impacts and achievements. This process may also include the acquisition of information and data for the development of case studies for wider dissemination (protecting as appropriate all confidential or commercially and personal sensitive information/data). The Applicant must ensure that it is a contact for participating homeowners and acknowledges that SEAI will have to provide certain contact details to third party contractors in relation to these matters.

18. The Applicant must ensure that access can be provided to SEAI and its agents to inspect a project location the Project within five business days of request for access except in exceptional circumstances demonstrated to the satisfaction of SEAI. Failure to satisfy this full access requirement will be considered a breach of these Terms and Conditions (see clause 19 below).
19. In the event of any breach by the Applicant of these Terms and Conditions of the programme or the other documents referred to in clause 2 of the Terms and Conditions and where the Applicant has received payment pursuant to the programme, SEAI shall, amongst its remedies against the Applicant, be entitled to demand the complete repayment of and fully claw back the grant. The Applicant agrees to comply with any such demand immediately on receipt of a written demand from SEAI.
20. SEAI accepts no liability or responsibility, whether for breach of contract, negligence, breach of statutory duty or otherwise, in respect of any direct or indirect loss, expense, dispute, claim, proceedings or cause of action arising out of, or in relation to, any product (or its suitability), any materials (or their suitability), equipment (or its suitability), work, system, service, specification, standard, installation in respect of which a Grant Offer has issued, or payment granted by SEAI. No undertaking, guarantee, assurance or other warranty, express or implied, is given by SEAI, or any its agents or servants, in respect of the cost, quality, efficiency and/or benefit of any work, equipment, materials, product, service or installation provided under the National Home Retrofit Scheme.
21. Any false, fictitious or fraudulent statements or claims knowingly made on grant applications, or supporting documentation, submitted in respect of previous grant applications/requests for payment or otherwise made to SEAI, its authorised officers, or a SEAI inspector, or any breach of these Terms and Conditions may result in current and future applications being deemed ineligible by SEAI. In respect of applications where the applicant has already received payment pursuant to the programme, clause 20 of these Terms and Conditions shall also apply.
22. Inspection results may be appealed in accordance with provisions in 5.3
23. The applicant shall follow the SEAI Customer Charter in relation to any disputes between the applicant and SEAI concerning any matter in connection with the Grant Scheme
24. In relation to any complaints or appeals under the National Home Retrofit Scheme, the applicant shall follow the SEAI Complaints and Appeals Policy contained within the SEAI Customer Charter, published on the SEAI website and amended from time to time.
25. The Applicant acknowledges that SEAI is subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, as amended (“FOIA”). SEAI undertakes to use its best endeavours to hold

confidential any information provided by the Applicant subject to its obligations under law, including the FOIA. Should the Applicant wish that any of the information supplied by him/her should not be disclosed because of its sensitivity, he/she should, when providing the

information, identify the same and specify the reasons for its sensitivity. SEAI will consult with the Applicant about such information before making a decision on any Freedom of Information request received.

26. Any personal information which an Applicant provides to SEAI will be treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality, strictly in accordance with the Data Protection Acts, 1988, 2003 and 2018 as re-enacted, amended or replaced from time to time, and pursuant to the General Data Protection Regulation (meaning Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC) and any related legislation. SEAI, as data controller, and its agents, will store such information on its database and fully respect the confidentiality of the data provided. The information provided by applicants will be used for evaluation purposes and to facilitate the administration of the grant process. This may require that data be supplied to and discussed, in confidence, with any person or organisation appointed by SEAI to assist in assessing or monitoring this application. These persons will be subject to the same requirements for protection of confidentiality.
27. An Applicant is under no direct or indirect obligation to undertake and/or complete the project outlined in their application. Rather, it is up an Applicant whether or not they wish to undertake and complete the project.
28. An Applicant must notify SEAI immediately of a decision not to undertake and/or complete their project. If a successful Applicant decides not to undertake and/or complete the project, SEAI will not pay the grant and instead may (but is not obliged to) allocate some or all of the funds provisionally allocated to that Applicant to a different applicant.
29. Please note that in the case of rented properties (excluding social housing provided by Local Authorities and Registered Housing Associations) this funding for National Home Retrofit Scheme grant funding is classed as 'De Minimis aid' in accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty (the '2013 Regulation') on the Functioning of the European Union to De Minimis aid.  
  
De Minimis aid is small amounts of aid given to an enterprise, which cannot exceed €200,000 over any three fiscal years, to any company irrespective of size and location and irrespective of the form of the aid or the objective pursued. De Minimis aid can come from any State body, agency or department even when financed entirely or partly by the European Union. If a company is part of a group, then the €200,000 limit applies to the group. The funding is made on the understanding that the National Retrofit Home Scheme grant combined with any other De Minimis aid received by you in the last three fiscal years does not exceed the ceiling of €200,000 for all De Minimis aid. A declaration must accompany your application describing any other De Minimis aid received by the Applicant over the past three years.