

# The EASI Fund

## EcoMerit Award for Sustainability Improvement

### Rules & Guidance

Issue 1.

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#### General

The EASI fund is intended to help EcoMerit certificate holders to fund small scale environmental improvements. It is designed to complement the SEAI 'Better Energy Communities' (BEC) grant scheme (which is best suited to larger projects and is restricted to energy-saving improvements).

The EASI fund is sourced from the sale of energy credits accrued under previous successful EcoMerit BEC projects.

#### Application Process

Applications are invited from current EcoMerit certificate holders, for improvements at or closely related to the certified sites, where certification has been continuously held for a minimum of two years. This may include community or charitable projects which the EcoMerit certificate holder supports.

Applications should be submitted to Econcertive on the EASI application form. Key points to note are:

- The upper limit of any single award is €4,000
- The maximum award funding level for charitable and not-for-profit organisations will be 80% of the project cost
- The maximum award funding level for commercial organisations will be 40% of the project cost
- Evaluation will take account of the scope of the improvement and the amount requested (i.e. to deliver the best value for money from the EASI fund)
- Retrospective applications will not be accepted
- Applications must include the expected measurable results of the project, the basis of this expectation, and how these results will be measured.

#### Eligible Project Costs

The following is a summary of the project costs which are eligible for grant purposes:

##### **Labour.**

The cost of employing **external** labour for works directly in support of the project. Note that in-house labour is not an eligible cost.

##### **Materials.**

Materials, equipment, hardware or control systems necessary to implement the project are an eligible expense. Second-hand equipment will not normally be eligible for funding. If the purchase of second hand equipment is planned, this should be clearly stated in the application, together with the justification for doing so.

## **Design or Professional Fees.**

Building design fees for non-domestic works incurred **after the letter of offer has been issued** are an eligible cost. Likewise any specified services such as may be required for testing, commissioning, measurement or verification purposes.

## **VAT**

VAT is considered eligible for grant payment **in cases where it cannot be reclaimed.**

## **Evaluation Process**

All applications will be evaluated by the EcoMerit Steering Group who will collectively decide which applications are to be offered which level of grant support. The overall aim is to support sustainable environmental improvements within the EcoMerit 'family'. Each application will be scored according to the following four categories and the total points scored will inform the decision of the Steering Group in each case.

### **Value for Money (20 points)**

- The magnitude of the expected results in comparison with the requested level of funding.
- Confidence that the proposed improvement will remain in place and effective for a significant, or indefinite, timescale.
- The perceived ability of the applicant to fund the project without support (implying that charities and not-for-profits will be given a level of priority)

### **Awareness Raising Potential (20 points)**

- How visible will the project, and its results, be to staff, customers, site visitors and other stakeholders once implemented.
- Suitability as a case study to encourage others to implement similar improvements.

### **Innovation (20 points)**

- Innovation and imagination within the project concept or its application.

### **Quality & Delivery (20 points)**

- Clarity of the aims, methods, and expected results of the project.
- Capability of the project manager and/or team and any involved contractors to deliver the project successfully.
- Confidence in the expected results being achieved and in the Measurement & Verification method to be applied.

A secondary aim will be to ensure that the supported projects are geographically spread to broadly reflect the EcoMerit membership and the EcoMerit funding partner organisations.

The Steering Group may ask for additional information from the applicant in order to better evaluate the project proposal.

The Steering Group may decide to apply additional conditions to any given award as may be considered appropriate for the given circumstances.

The decision of the Steering Group is final. However, unsuccessful applications may be modified and submitted in future calls for proposals.

The Steering Group may, in exceptional circumstances, decide to make a grant offer which falls outwith the normal award rules. In such cases the unanimous agreement of all Steering Group members is required.

## **Notification and Acceptance of Award**

Following the Steering Group decision, the applicant will be notified in writing of any award to be offered and any additional conditions applying to the award offer. The applicant will provide written notification of acceptance of the offer within two weeks. If this is not received, the funds will be re-allocated.

Note that works must not commence, or firm orders placed, until after notification of the grant offer is issued. To do so will void the grant. The project must be complete within 12 months of the notification of acceptance. After this the grant monies will be made available for re-allocation to another project.

## **Grant Payment**

On completion of the project, the awardee will submit a Request for Payment accompanied with the following:

- Copies of supplier invoice(s)
- Evidence that the payment has been made i.e. a bank statement showing payment(s) leaving account and going to the nominated recipient. (NB: cash payments will not be accepted. Payments by cheque will require proof of destination, e.g. a copy of the cheque identifying the recipient)
- Evidence of Measurement & Verification to date, in line with that specified in the grant application (NB: full M&V evidence will be required at a later date if appropriate)
- If possible, photographs or other supporting evidence showing the project is complete (NB: this may avoid the need for a site visit before releasing the grant)
- Bank details for the grant payment to be sent

Note that projects going over-budget will not attract additional grant funding. The grant for any project coming in under budget will be reduced on a pro-rata basis.

## **Other Commitments**

The grantee undertakes to:

- Provide a short case study for the project, which will be made available for inclusion in the EcoMerit website
- Provide full Measurement & Verification data as specified in the grant application
- Maintain the site EcoMerit certification for a minimum of a further three years from the date of the grant claim.
- Acknowledge the grant support from EcoMerit in any publicity relating to the project