

Criteria for applications

The Trust will use the following criteria to assess applications for assistance:

- C1.** We will release no more than £30,000 per annum.
- C2.** Only occasionally will we approve grants or loans of more than £5,000.
- C3.** We may support any charitable activity but we will give preference to applications expected to enhance the social, economic or environmental sustainability of communities in which housing associations affiliated to the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA) are operating.
- C4.** We will give preference to applications promoting volunteering, rather than the employment of paid staff.
- C5.** We may give preference to applications from organisations which, in our opinion, have less capacity to successfully apply to major sources of funding.
- C6.** We aim to support projects demonstrating long-term viability or with a realistic plan to achieve long-term viability.
- C7.** We expect applicants to invest their own funds in the project for which they are seeking assistance. This should be to the greatest extent reasonable while maintaining long-term financial viability.
- C8.** If we believe the applicant can reasonably afford to repay a loan while maintaining financial viability, NIHACT will offer a loan rather than a grant.
- C9.** Our funding will normally be given in the form of a discrete sum of money. Only in *exceptional* circumstances will we approve repeat applications or requests for additional assistance to cover costs overlooked or not foreseen by the applicant.
- C10.** Our funding may be used to *complement* public resources. In exceptional circumstances the Trust may use its funds to substitute for public expenditure. For example, we may decide to support an initiative we believe will demonstrate sufficient public benefit to convince authorities they should assist similar projects.
- C11.** We will accept applications from incorporated and unincorporated bodies but not from individuals. Charitable status is not necessary but the activity for which you are seeking support must fall into the definition of charity[♦].
- C12.** We attach certain terms and conditions to our grants or loans. For example, we normally require applicants to publicly acknowledge our assistance, supply good quality photographs of the project and provide information on the effectiveness of the completed project within specified timescales.

[♦] To be advised.

Application and assessment procedure

The Trust will use the following procedure to assess applications for assistance:

- P1.** Applications should be made on NIHACTION's standard form and sent or delivered to:
The NIHACTION Secretary
c/o Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations
6c Citylink Business Park, Albert Street, Belfast, BT12 4HB
Your application must be dated and carry the original signature of a person authorised to act on your organisation's behalf.
- P2.** The Trust's Secretary will acknowledge all applications in a letter. It will give our target dates for considering the application and issuing a decision.
- P3.** If our Secretary considers the application does not satisfy the Trust's funding criteria, a recommendation to this effect will be made. If the Committee agrees, we will advise you in writing and outline the reasons for the decision.
- P4.** If your written application appears to satisfy NIHACTION's initial funding criteria, one of our Committee members will visit your project. From this a written report with a recommendation will be made. In the case of a relatively large, or complex, application more than one NIHACTION Committee member may be involved in the visit.
- P5.** Your application and the Committee member's report with his / her recommendation will all be considered during the next NIHACTION Committee meeting. We generally meet every two months.
- P6.** NIHACTION's Secretary will write to advise you of our Committee's decision. This will fall into one of the following three categories:
- a accept your application (with or without conditions);
 - b request further information; or
 - c turn down your application and outline why this was decided.
- P7.** If you are dissatisfied with the Committee's decision you have the right to appeal. You must submit a written request for the decision to be reconsidered. Our Secretary will put your appeal request to the next Committee meeting for consideration. A letter will then be sent advising you of the outcome.
- P8.** If you believe the procedure for reconsidering your case has not been properly followed you may send a written complaint to:
The Chairperson
Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations
6c Citylink Business Park, Albert Street, Belfast, BT12 4HB.
The Chairperson will investigate your complaint and send you a final decision in writing.