

NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS' CHARITABLE TRUST

Funding Criteria and Procedure for Considering Applications for Assistance (approved on 4 April 2007)

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

- C1.** NIHACT will release no more than £30,000 in 2007/08.
- C2.** Only occasionally will NIHACT approve grants or loans of more than £5,000.
- C3.** The Trust may support any charitable activity but 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 are operating.
- C4.** Other things being equal, NIHACT will give preference to applications that promote volunteering, rather than the employment of paid staff.
- C5.** Other things being equal, NIHACT will give preference to applications from organisations with less capacity to successfully apply to major sources of funding.
- C6.** The charity aims to support projects that demonstrate long-term viability or have formulated a realistic plan to achieve long-term viability.
- C7.** The Trust will expect applicants to invest their own funds, to the greatest extent that is reasonable while maintaining long-term financial viability, in the project for which they are seeking assistance.
- C8.** NIHACT will offer a loan rather than a grant if it considers that the applicant can reasonably afford to repay the loan while maintaining its financial viability.
- C9.** Any NIHACT support will normally be given in the form of a discrete sum of money rather than a commitment that continues into the future. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Committee approve repeat applications or requests for additional assistance to cover costs that the applicants had overlooked or not foreseen.
- C10.** NIHACT funds may be used to complement public resources but only in exceptional circumstances will the Trust use its funds to substitute for public expenditure. (For example, NIHACT may exceptionally decide to support an initiative it believes will demonstrate sufficient public benefit to convince the authorities that similar projects should be assisted by the taxpayer.)
- C11.** Applications will be accepted from incorporated and unincorporated bodies but not from individuals. It is not necessary for the organisation to have charitable status but the activity for which it is seeking support must fall into the definition of charity.
- C12.** The Trust will attach such conditions as it considers appropriate to its grants or loans. NIHACT will normally require applicants to publicly acknowledge its assistance and supply information on the effectiveness of the completed project.

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

- P1.** Applications should be made on NIHACT's standard form and be delivered to The NIHACT Secretary, c/o Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations, 38 Hill Street, Belfast BT1 2LB. The application must be dated and carry the original signature of a person authorised to act on behalf of the applicant.
- P2.** The Secretary will acknowledge all applications in a letter which also gives NIHACT's target dates for considering the application and issuing a decision.
- P3.** If the Secretary considers that the application does not satisfy NIHACT's funding criteria, he will make a recommendation to this effect. If the Committee agrees, the Secretary will advise the applicant in writing and outline the reasons for the decision.
- P4.** If the Secretary considers that the application appears to satisfy NIHACT's funding criteria, one of the Committee members will normally visit the applicant and write a report with a recommendation. In the case of relatively large or complex applications, more than one NIHACT Committee member may be involved in the visit.
- P5.** The application, the Committee member's report and the recommendation will normally be considered by the NIHACT Committee at its next meeting. The Committee meets at regular intervals of approximately two months.
- P6.** NIHACT's Secretary will write to advise the applicant of the Committee's decision, which will generally fall into one of the following three categories:
 - (a) accept the application (with or without conditions)
 - (b) request further information
 - (c) refuse the application and outline why it was considered unacceptable.
- P7.** An applicant who is dissatisfied with the Committee's decision may submit a written request for the decision to be reconsidered. The Secretary will put the applicant's paper to the next meeting of the NIHACT Committee and issue a letter advising the applicant of the outcome.
- P8.** An applicant who believes the procedure for reconsidering its case has not been properly followed may send a written complaint to the Chairperson of the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations at 38 Hill Street, Belfast, BT1 2LB. The Chairperson will investigate the complaint and send a written final decision to the applicant.