

Training Support Scheme

COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) 2023/1315 of 23 June 2023 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 published in Official Journal No 57, 26th June 2014 (“the Regulation”)

Irish Industrial Development Agencies, Training Aid Scheme 2023-2026 effective 1st July 2023 to 31st December 2026.

General Block Exemption Regulation (“the Regulation”)

1. Objective of Scheme

The objective of this scheme is to improve the strategic capability and competitiveness of enterprises in Ireland through the training of employees.

2. Legal Basis and Rules

The legal basis is the enabling legislation of Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland and Údarás na Gaeltachta (“the development agencies”)

IDA Ireland/Enterprise Ireland: Industrial Development Act 1986 to 2019 as amended.

Údarás Na Gaeltachta: Údarás na Gaeltachta Acts, 1979 – 2010 and Gaeltacht Act 2012 (as may be amended from time to time).

State Aid basis:

The operation of this scheme is subject to Article 31 of the COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) 2023/1315 of 23 June 2023 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014, General Block Exemption Regulation for 2023-2026.

3. Budget

The average annual budget of this Scheme shall not exceed EUR 150 million.

4. Who can apply?

Applicants will be eligible to apply for Training Aid once the project concerned meets the criteria set out in the enabling legislation of the development agencies. The right to apply does not impose any obligation on the State to provide funding to an applicant.

5. Incentive Effect

5.1 This Scheme shall apply only to aid which has an incentive effect.

5.2 Aid shall be considered to have an incentive effect if the beneficiary has submitted a written application for the aid to the relevant development agency before work on the project or activity starts. The application for the aid shall contain at least the following information:

- (a) undertaking's name and size;
- (b) description of the project, including its start and end dates;
- (c) location of the project;
- (d) list of project costs;
- (e) type of aid (e.g. grant) and amount of public funding needed for the project;

5.3 If work begins before the applicant has submitted a written application to the relevant development agency the whole project will be ineligible for aid. Start of work means the earlier of either the start of construction works relating to the investment or the first legally binding commitment to order equipment or any other commitment that makes the

investment irreversible. Buying land and preparatory works such as obtaining permits or conducting feasibility studies are not considered start of works.

6. Scope of Scheme

6.1 This Scheme shall not apply to the following:-

- (a) Aid for processing and marketing of agricultural products in the following cases
 - i. where the amount of the aid is fixed on the basis of the price or quantity of such products purchased from primary producers or put on the market by the undertakings concerned; or
 - ii. where the aid is conditional on being partly or entirely passed on to primary producers;
- (b) Aid to facilitate the closure of uncompetitive coal mines, as covered by Council Decision No 2010/787;

Where an undertaking is active in the excluded sectors as referred to in point (a) and also in sectors which fall within the scope of this Scheme, this Scheme applies only to aid granted in respect of the latter sectors or activities. Enterprise Agencies must ensure by appropriate means, such as separation of activities or distinction of costs that the activities in the excluded sectors do not benefit from the aid granted in accordance with this Scheme.

6.2 The following aid is not permitted under the scheme:-

- (a) Aid to export related activities towards third countries or Ireland, namely aid directly linked to the quantities exported, to the establishment and operation of a distribution network or to the other current expenditure linked to export activity;
- (b) Aid contingent upon the use of domestic over imported goods;
- (c) Operating aid;
- (d) Ad hoc aid;
- (e) Aid exceeding €3million per training project
- (f) Aid subject to conditions that the beneficiary establish its headquarters in Ireland or to be predominantly established in Ireland.

(g) Aid measures where the grant of aid is subject to the beneficiary's use of nationally produced goods or national services.

(h) Aid shall not be granted for training which undertakings carry out to comply with national mandatory standards on training.

6.3 The following beneficiaries are ineligible for aid under the scheme:

(a) A beneficiary who is subject to an outstanding recovery order following a previous Commission decision declaring the aid illegal and incompatible with the internal market.

(b) A firm in difficulty as defined by Article 2(18) of the Regulation.

7. Eligible Projects

Training programmes which are part of a company's business plan will be eligible for support under this scheme.

8. Eligible Costs and Aid Intensity

The Development Agencies will comply with the requirements relating to aid intensity and eligible costs as defined by Article 7 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 651/2014. For the purpose of calculating the aid intensity and eligible costs, all figures used shall be taken before any deduction of tax or other charge. Aid payable in several instalments shall be discounted to its value at the moment it is granted. The eligible costs shall be discounted to their value at the moment the aid is granted.

The eligible costs of a training project shall be:

(a) trainers' personnel costs, for the hours during which the trainers participate in the training;

(b) trainers' and trainees' operating costs directly relating to the training project such as travel expenses, materials and supplies directly related to the project, depreciation of tools and equipment, to the extent that they are used exclusively for the training project.

(c) costs of advisory services linked to the training project;

(d) Trainees' personnel costs and general indirect costs (administrative costs, rent, overheads) for the hours during which the trainees participate in the training.

Accommodation costs are excluded except for the minimum necessary accommodation costs for trainees' who are workers with disabilities.

9. Support Intensity

The aid intensity will not exceed 50% of the eligible costs outlined in Section 8. It may be increased, up to a maximum of 70% of eligible costs as follows:-

(a) by 10% if the training is given to workers with disabilities or disadvantaged workers;

(b) by 10% if the aid is granted to medium-sized enterprises and by 20% if the aid is granted to small enterprises;

	Large	Medium	Small
Max Aid Intensity	50%	60%	70%

Training of disadvantaged workers or workers with Disabilities	60%	70%	70%
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As per Article 4(1)(n) of the Regulation, the maximum amount of aid that will be provided will be less than €3m per training project, or the maximum limit permitted under Irish legislation, whichever the lesser. Where a project relates to the same company, the same workforce and the same timing, then it can be considered as the same training project.

10. Form of Aid

Only transparent forms of aid may be paid by the development agencies i.e. in which it is possible to calculate precisely the gross grant equivalent as a percentage of eligible expenditure ex ante without need to undertake a risk assessment.

11. Definitions

For the purposes of this scheme the definitions set out Article 2 in the Regulation shall apply.

12. Cumulation

The Development Agencies will comply with the regulations relating to cumulation as defined by Article 8 of COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) 2023/1315 of 23 June 2023 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014. Aid under this Scheme shall not be cumulated with any de minimis aid in respect of the same eligible costs if such cumulation would result in an aid intensity exceeding those laid down in the Regulation.

13. Period of Validity

This scheme shall operate from 1st July 2023 until 31 December 2026.

14. Publication and Information

The full text of the Scheme will be published on the State Aid webpage of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment's website.