



Oifig
Fiontair
Áitiúil

Local
Enterprise
Office

Online Trading Vouchers

Guidelines



Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil

Local Enterprise Office

ONLINE TRADING VOUCHERS:

GUIDELINES

Please read these guidelines carefully before completing your application form

With the trend ever increasing towards online spending it is estimated that only 23% of small Irish businesses are engaged in any meaningful way in eCommerce sales. For businesses employing less than ten people this percentage could be even lower. It is now believed that of online purchases made in Ireland that 70% of these are done in overseas markets. There is now an urgency to ensure that businesses recognise that this is happening and that they are encouraged and supported to correctly respond to this digital reality. In order to support this goal, the National Digital Strategy aims to get a further 2,000 businesses trading online by the end of 2015. To this end, the Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources (DCENR) has launched an Online Trading Voucher Programme and has teamed up with the Local Enterprise Offices to deliver this to Irish business.

The application process for the Vouchers will be a competitive process.

Eligibility Criteria

- Vouchers will be available to a maximum value of €2,500 or 50% of eligible expenditure (Inclusive of VAT), whichever is the lesser;
- Voucher approval must be gained prior to incurring any expense;
- Own labour is not an eligible expense;
- Third party costs only will be considered;
- All third party/supplier invoices must contain proper business details (e.g. Tax and Business Registration details).

The vouchers are targeted at businesses with the following profile:

- Limited Online Trading presence;
- Less than 10 employees;
- Turnover less than €2m;
- Applicant business must be registered and trading for at least 12 months;
- Business must be located in the area covered by this phase of the scheme i.e. within the remit of the participating LEOs.

Ineligible Projects

- Companies with charitable status, commercial semi-state companies, “not for profit” organisations, trade associations and company representation bodies such as Chambers of Commerce are not eligible to participate in the scheme;
- Professional services specialising in IT type services who are already capable of trading online using existing in-house systems;
- Conferences and Seminars;
- Projects which are contrary to public policy;
- Duplication of support for projects which would be eligible for assistance from other State Agencies of EU funded Operational Programmes;
- Projects with employees in excess of 10 people;

- Projects deemed to be capable of proceeding in any event without scheme assistance i.e. deadweight;
- Projects essentially comprising importation and distribution.

What the vouchers can be used for

- IT consultation;
- Development or upgrade of an e-commerce website;
- Implementing Online payments or booking systems;
- Purchase of Internet related software;
- Purchase of online advertising (this purchase cannot make up any more than 30% of approved Voucher costs and can only be drawn down in one payment phase);
- Developing an app (or multiplatform webpages);
- Implementing a digital marketing strategy i.e. Social media marketing;
- Consultation with ICT experts for early stage adopters of online strategy;
- Training/skills development specifically to establish and manage an on-line trading activity.

What the vouchers cannot be used for

- Development of brochure websites;
- Purchase of non-internet related software;
- Anything other than online trading related activity.

EVALUATION PROCESS

- An evaluation committee will assess the applications and make recommendations for approval;
- A competitive process will be put in place to assist with selection process. Selection of successful applicant will be based on the following criteria:
 - o Eligibility for scheme
 - o Value added potential
 - o Export potential
 - o Job creation potential
 - o Financial Sustainability
- Record decisions and report to the Local Enterprise Office approvals committee;

VOUCHER ADMINISTRATION

- Letter of offer with Voucher to be sent out to successful applicant;
- Letter of offer signed, accepted and returned;
- Client has **four months** to complete the work as per their application;

VOUCHER APPLICATION AND DRAWDOWN PROCESS

Application

- Read the terms & conditions;
- Submit copy of completed and signed application form in hard copy to LEO Wicklow
- Soft copy of completed application to be supplied by email to LEO Wicklow

Please note: submit copies of quotes for each supplier listed in your application detailing the works to be done and the cost. 3 quotes are required for each separate piece of work. Without this your application cannot be processed.

Evaluation

- Evaluation of applications will be conducted by the LEO who will make recommendations for approval;
- Application is approved by the Evaluation and Approvals Committee.

Drawdown (claiming the grant)

- **Applicant and supplier(s)** sign declaration on the voucher and submit to Local Enterprise Office (LEO);
- Applicant and Supplier(s) submit copy of an up to date tax clearance certificate ;
- Applicant must include the original invoice from the supplier(s), along with supplier(s) CRO and Tax Registration details when submitting claim for payment(Only suppliers with these basic criteria in place are eligible);
- Proof of payment to supplier(s) submitted by applicant to LEO;
- All work must be completed and paid for prior to claim.
- All applicants approved must draw down in full within four months of the date of offer. Failure to draw down all or any portion may result in automatic decommittal without notice, i.e. loss of voucher.

Post-Voucher reporting

By accepting a Trading On-line Voucher, businesses agree to provide information on the impact on their business of trading on-line;

- Reporting will include: Jobs (new or reallocated) , Exports and/or domestic market expansion, Increase Revenue, Reduced Costs, Expected follow on investment;

Suppliers will be required to report on the impact of their products and services supplied to the applicant business.

- Reporting will include how their product or service enabled trading on-line, improved business performance, reduced cost, opened markets etc.

Acknowledgements

The trading on-line voucher scheme is an initiative of the National Digital Strategy, developed and funded by the Department of Communication, Energy and Natural Resources on behalf of Government. It is being administered by the Local Enterprise Offices.

VOUCHER PAYMENT CONDITIONS

- * **If your application is successful you will receive an Online Trading Voucher Letter of Offer to the value of the amount approved. (Maximum Grant/Voucher inclusive of VAT is €2,500 or 50% of expenditure, whichever is the lesser)**
- * **Payment will be made directly to you on completion of the work and subject to the following being provided satisfactorily:**
 - 1 Copy of your Company Registration Office (CRO) registration
 - 2 Up to date tax Clearance Certificate
 - 3 Original Invoice(s) for work undertaken
 - 4 Declaration of project completion by supplier(s)
 - 5 Bank statement(s) showing proof of payment to your supplier along with evidence of supplier Company Registration Office (CRO) details
- * Payments will only be made with relation to approved expenses which form part of this application form
- * All successful applicants agree to report on online trading upon completion of the scheme, again in 6 months and at annual intervals up to three years thereafter. Reporting will include: jobs (new or reallocated), increase turnover, exports and/or domestic market expansion, reduced costs, expected follow on investment. This may be conducted by approved independent evaluators.
- * Applicants agree that on successful completion of their projects they will allow reference be made to them in case study materials which will be used to promote the voucher scheme more widely.