

**Comhairle Chontae Dhun na nGall**  
**Donegal County Council**

*Group Water Supply Schemes*  
*General Information*

1. The information contained in this explanatory memorandum relates to a minimum of two houses, using a shared water distribution and/or water treatment system, supplied from a common source where no such supply (or a seriously deficient supply) already exists.
2. The piping of water from a single source by a group of neighbours to their homes (and associated farms) offers many advantages and economies:-

A grant of up to 85% of the approved cost, subject to a cost limit of €7,618.43 per house served, is given by the County Council. (i.e. Maximum grant is €6,475.66 per house) for new Group Water Schemes and the upgrading of existing substandard schemes.

A grant of up to 95% of approved cost subject to a cost limit of €7,618.43 per house served is available in Gaeltacht areas (i.e. maximum grant of €7,237.51 per house).

Grants are payable in respect of domestic connections only, supplying houses and other permanent dwellings. Connections serving caravans, temporary dwellings, derelict houses and sites are not eligible for grant assistance.

Where a private source is quality deficient a grant of up to 100% of the approved cost of essential water filtration and disinfection equipment is available. (This is conditional on an operational contract with the supplier/manufacturer/contractor for the operation and maintenance of the new plant being put in place).

Further details of the available grants are set out in Appendix 1.

It must be stressed however, that in order to qualify for a domestic grant, the applicant must, on completion of the scheme, have a sink and tap installed inside his/her house and it must be connected to the Group Water Supply.

A guide to the tax related requirements from March, 1988, for payment of Group Water and Sewerage Scheme Grants is given in Appendix 2.

3. The grants available generally ensure that contributions are kept at a reasonable level and in some cases, may include a small element of voluntary labour. Tests carried out before work goes ahead establish the reliability of the source from a health and yield viewpoint. The plans and design of each scheme are examined by the Technical Staff of the Local Authority to ensure that the proposed works are in accordance with the Rural Water Strategic Plan and that the highest standard of construction and performance is reached. Engineers are available to advise groups, during progress of the work, on any difficulties that may arise.

4. **HOW TO GO ABOUT IT**

Group Schemes may be carried out, subject to the approval of the Local Authority:

- (a) In areas where it is not proposed to carry out a public scheme.
- (c) In areas which can be served by extensions of existing public watermains.
- (d) In areas where the County Council intend at a later stage to provide a public water supply. In such cases schemes should be so designed as to be capable of being integrated with the public scheme in due course.

If you and your neighbours are interested in a scheme you should proceed as follows:-

- (1) The starting point is the selection of a Committee comprising of not more than 6 people and headed by an energetic group organiser who will conduct all necessary business with the group, and the County Council.
- (2) The Organiser should write in the first instance to the Secretary, Donegal County Council, County House, Lifford, giving notice of the intention to formulate a Group Scheme.
- (3) Survey Sheets should be completed showing
  - All potential connections, both domestic and non Domestic.
  - Proposed source (including details of water quality and safe yield if a private source).

## 5. **FINANCING**

The balance of the cost of a scheme net of State Grants is met by participants by way of cash contribution and/or voluntary labour and must be at least 15% of the cost of the scheme.

It is important to arrange money matters at the outset. The organiser will want working capital to meet the expense involved in the preliminary stages of investigation and he/she would be well advised to collect a sum of money from each participant when it is decided to go ahead with the scheme. It is suggested that a practical way to apportion the individual cash contributions from participants would be at a flat rate per connection - due regard being made to the varying financial circumstances of the members of the group and to the extent to which their voluntary labour will be made available in each case.

Money will be required as work progresses to meet the cost of work done, and it may also be possible to arrange temporary overdraft accommodation with a Bank.

**Grants are only payable in respect of domestic connections to members of the Group.**

## 6. ORGANISATION

In organising a Group Water Supply Scheme, the first hurdle is to find a suitable source. When a possible source is located it must be subjected to quantity and quality tests to make sure that it will produce a satisfactory supply of potable water which will be adequate to meet the domestic and agricultural requirements of all the participants. The larger the number of participants involved consistent with the amount of water available at source, the more economical will be the scheme. The grant is based on the cost per house, which is generally obtained by dividing the all in cost by the number of houses in the scheme. The aim of the group should be to secure, at the outset, 100% connections from the householders in the area to be served by the Group Scheme. In this way, the cost of the scheme will be kept at a minimum.

When the source has been tested and approved, the group collect an initial contribution from each house so that an Engineer may be engaged to prepare a design and contract documents for the scheme. Groups are advised to consult with the Council at an early date and before advancing the proposal to design stage. The design must be approved by the County Council. This procedure ensures that designs are in line with the County Council's own water supply proposals for the area. In some instances, changes have to be made in the designs so that schemes can be integrated at a later stage with regional developments in or planned for the area.

On the basis of the approved design, at least three quotations must be sought from competitive contractors and a contractor selected for the work and the cost of the scheme estimated.

At this stage the collection of the necessary cash contributions to be made by the participants must be completed by the group organiser before the appropriate grants may be allocated. The group must open an account in a local Bank in the names of the Trustees appointed by the members, lodging the cash collections to start the account. Subsequently, all State grants are paid direct into this account.

Contracts will only be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender.

7. **CONSTRUCTION**

When the County Council's Certificate indicating the total amount of the State grant is issued to the group, work can then start provided the group have obtained the necessary road-opening licence from the County Council, and the necessary insurances have been taken out.

The Branch Bank nominated by the group is advised by the County Council of the number and amount of the grants being allocated. Grants are paid in instalments when materials are delivered on the site and pro-rata with the rate of progress on the scheme. The Bank Account is, therefore, the working fund from which the group makes payments to cover the cost of design, payments to Contractor etc.

The final grants will be paid when a water supply is installed in each house, the scheme is working satisfactorily, all wayleaves completed and all the necessary forms completed

The final cost, upon which grants will be determined, will be based on receipted expenditure only.

8. **MAINTENANCE OF COMPLETED SCHEMES**

The Local Authority tries to arrange matters so that groups generally have a credit balance on hands when schemes are completed.

Expenditure on repairs and replacements, E.S.B. bills, etc. would ordinarily come out of this account. In most cases participants pay an agreed amount annually into the account for this purpose.

It is advisable for groups to adopt rules for the maintenance and operation of their schemes as soon as possible after work has commenced - so as to prevent wastage, misuses of water, etc. Outline rules (Form G.W.31) can be obtained, on request from the Council.

8.(a) **SUBSIDY SCHEME**

An Annual Subsidy towards the operational cost of Group Water Schemes supplying water for domestic use is payable by the County Council.

(Details of Subsidy Scheme available on request).

9. **GRANTS FOR THE PROVISION OF ESSENTIAL WATER FILTRATION AND DISINFECTION OF SCHEMES**

Where a Group Water Scheme is dependent on a quality deficient private source and where there is no alternative public supply available, essential water filtration and disinfection equipment will be grant aided at up to 100% of the cost.

All associated civil works including water abstraction, sumps, pumping plants, buildings, access roads etc, will be grant aided at up to 85% of cost.

It is a condition of the 100% grant for essential filtration and disinfection equipment, that the Group enter into an operational contract, ideally for a minimum of 10 years with the supplier/manufacturer/contractor for the operation and maintenance of the new plants.

*Donegal County Council  
January, 2002*

## APPENDIX 1

Rates of grants for Group Schemes commenced on or after 27th March, 2000.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Grant Rate</b>
All Areas Non Gaeltacht	Up to 85% of approved cost, subject to a cost limit of €7,618.43 per house i.e. €6,475.66 grant per domestic connection.  Essential disinfection/filtration 100% of cost (conditional).
All Areas Gaeltacht	Up to 95% of approved cost, subject to a maximum grant of -€7,237.51 per house.  Essential disinfection/filtration 100% of cost (conditional).

### *Roinn na Gaeltachta's share of above State Grants for Domestic Supply*

<b>Gaeltacht Area</b>	
All areas	10% of cost subject to a maximum grant of - €761.84 per house

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Guide to Tax Related Requirements from 1st March, 1988 for payment of Group Water and Sewerage Scheme Grants**

#### **Section A**

##### **Re : The Contractor**

For grant applications received on or after 1st March, 1988 it is necessary that a current C2 Certificate or a Tax Clearance Certificate from the Revenue Commissioners be submitted to the Local Authority in respect of a groups Contractor(s) engaged to perform the construction work. The position in relation to such certificates should accordingly be confirmed prior to Tender/Contractor stage of the work. Where a Contractor is not engaged and the group undertake the work themselves, a Tax Clearance Certificate will be required for each of the individual group members.

#### **Section B**

##### **Re : The Group**

##### **Where Grants up to €6,348.69 apply**

In the case of all relevant sewerage schemes and group water schemes (in non-disadvantaged areas), it will be necessary for the Trustees to insert on the application form the group scheme's tax district and reference number (this information may be obtained from the Local Inspector of Taxes) and to state on the form whether to the best of their knowledge, the group scheme's tax affairs are in order.

##### **Where Grants exceeding €6,348.69 apply**

Where grants for group water schemes other than schemes in disadvantaged areas exceed €6,348.69 and for all relevant group sewerage schemes, it will be necessary for a current Tax Clearance Certificate from the Revenue Commissioners to be provided in respect of the group scheme.

**NOTE**

1. The question of whether grant payments might exceed €6,348.69 will be advised to the group prior to the allocation of grants.
  
2. Where grants exceed €6,348.69 a form T.C.1 will be provided by the Local Authority for issue by the group to the Revenue Commissioners to obtain the necessary Tax Clearance Certificate.
  
3. Grants will not be allocated by the Local Authority until the above matters have received attention.

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