



School Name  
School Address  
**Roll No:**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> November 2010**

**Re: ICT INFRASTRUCTURE PRIMARY GRANT SCHEME – 2010**

**Grant notification letter**

Dear Chairperson,

In November 2009 the Minister for Education & Skills distributed €22.3m in ICT infrastructural grants to primary schools as part of the implementation of key recommendations of the *Smart Schools = Smart Economy* and *ICT Strategy* reports. The Tánaiste is now pleased to advise that the second tranche of capital funding is now being issued under this ICT initiative. The funding will assist schools to continue to invest in the necessary ICT infrastructure to support e-Learning.

Each school is to receive a lump sum of €1,700 (which equates to the cost of purchasing one fixed digital projector and teaching computer with a long range wireless mouse and keyboard) plus €35.70 per capita (based on this Department's enrolment statistics as at 30/09/09). An additional €850 is provided this year for each *DEIS* school.

The grant, amounting to €Amount in the case of your school, has been transferred directly to your school's bank account. The provision of this funding is strictly subject to the conditions laid out in this letter.

The next steps from your perspective are as follows:

1. Familiarise yourself with the terms of this grant notification letter [similar to the 2009 scheme].
2. Sign and return the *Form of Acceptance* enclosed in **Appendix 1**
3. Purchase ICT equipment as instructed in **Appendix 2 and Appendix 3**.
4. Complete the on-line *Expenditure return* – when **all** purchases are concluded - at the following link: [www.ncte.ie/primarygrant2010return](http://www.ncte.ie/primarygrant2010return) .  
**NB: The password for entering data to this online return is 'primarygrant2010' – please retain this for future reference.**
- 5 Please note that the online expenditure return will **only** accept data relating to expenditure on Authorised Category items listed in **Appendix 3**.

Further information relating to this scheme, including all relevant forms and guidance is available at the following link: [www.ncte.ie/ictgrant2010primary](http://www.ncte.ie/ictgrant2010primary) . We would encourage schools to refer to the website, which will be updated regularly, in the first instance. Any residual queries can be addressed as follows:

- For advice on choosing equipment, public procurement procedures and using the ICT Procurement Frameworks: contact the **NCTE**. Email: [ictadvice@ncte.ie](mailto:ictadvice@ncte.ie); tel: (01) 7008388.
- For queries regarding the amount of grant funding issued to schools, the terms and conditions of the funding, acceptance forms and the online expenditure returns: contact the **ICT Policy Unit**. Email: [ictpolicy@education.gov.ie](mailto:ictpolicy@education.gov.ie); tel. (01) 8896413.

Yours faithfully,  
Alan Wall  
Principal Officer, ICT Policy Unit

# ICT Infrastructure Grant Scheme 2010 – Primary level – Appendix 1

## Form of Acceptance

1. I confirm that the Board of Management accepts the Department of Education and Skills' offer of grant assistance under the above Scheme to enable my school to upgrade its Information & Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure, and that inclusion of the school in this Scheme has the approval of the Trustees/Patron.
2. I confirm that the Board of Management agrees to use this grant to make purchases within the Authorised Categories identified in Appendix 3 to the grant notification letter, and subject to the terms and conditions outlined in Appendices 2-4. I confirm that the Board accepts that the grant payable by the Department of Education and Skills cannot be increased.
3. I confirm that the Board of Management accepts that no additional funding from the Department of Education and Skills will be available to cover any additional or ancillary costs which may arise under this scheme.
4. I confirm that the Board of Management also agrees to:
  - a) abide by public procurement rules
  - b) where ICT purchasing frameworks are not used schools should obtain concurrent tenders on a fixed price basis using a competitive tendering process in compliance with public procurement rules
  - c) ensure compliance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005
  - d) safeguard the grant received and ensure that it is only used in accordance with the terms and conditions of this scheme
  - e) complete the online expenditure return as soon as possible after purchase of equipment
  - f) retain all receipts, documentation and any other records relating to the purchase of equipment for a period of at least seven years

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Principal: \_\_\_\_\_ (Block Capitals)

Roll No: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone no: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax no: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed form of acceptance should be returned by post or fax to:

**The ICT Policy Unit,  
Department of Education and Skills  
Block 1, Floor 3  
Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1**

Telephone: (01) 889 6413

Fax: (01) 889 2365

## ICT Infrastructure Grant Scheme 2010 – Primary level – Appendix 2

### General instructions

#### 1. Acceptance of terms and conditions

The Chairperson of the school's Board of Management must sign and return the "Form of Acceptance" (Appendix 1 to the grant notification letter).

Requests for an increase to the amount available to an individual school cannot be considered and any expenditure incurred in excess of the grant amount must be met by each school.

#### 2. Equipment to be purchased

*Appendix 3* to the grant notification letter lists, in order of priority, the items of equipment authorised for purchase. Grant funding must be used to ensure that as a baseline, each classroom in the school is equipped with a teaching computer, with a long range wireless mouse and keyboard, and a fixed digital projector. Only if this baseline equipment is in place in each classroom, can the funding be used to purchase other items from the *Appendix 3* list.

#### 3. Procurement procedures – rules and assistance

All purchases must be in compliance with public procurement procedures.

Existing ICT purchasing Frameworks must be engaged with and taken advantage of, for purchase of PCs/notebooks, laser printers, and digital projectors. These Frameworks simplify the process of purchasing ICT equipment for schools. Further information, including detailed instructions on how to use the Frameworks, is available at [www.ncte.ie/ictpurchasingframeworks/](http://www.ncte.ie/ictpurchasingframeworks/)

If, having reviewed the market and considered comparative technical specifications, warranties and associated supports, it becomes clear that better value for money may be achieved from **non**-Framework vendors in a given case, then schools should seek concurrent quotes from both Framework and non-Framework vendors. Make sure that identical specification options (including warranties) are presented to all vendors at the time of request for written quotations. Issue *separate* RFQs to non-Framework vendors, as they cannot be included in Framework RFQs as such.

When purchasing equipment for which no ICT framework exists, schools are advised to refer to the NCTE's advice sheets and general purchasing guidance at: [www.ncte.ie/ICTAdviceSupport/AdviceSheets/](http://www.ncte.ie/ICTAdviceSupport/AdviceSheets/), then seek best value for money by sourcing written quotes from a minimum of three suppliers. Information regarding public procurement rules is available at: <http://www.etenders.gov.ie/>.

#### 4. Online expenditure returns

Schools must complete online expenditure returns as soon as all equipment is purchased. The online expenditure return is available at: [www.ncte.ie/primarygrant2010return](http://www.ncte.ie/primarygrant2010return). The password required for completion is 'primarygrant2010'

The online return will take about 10 minutes to complete. It must be completed in one online session covering all purchases made with the grant funding. (Please note that 'paper' versions of the return must NOT be submitted. Only online submission of data can be accepted).

**NB: If your school has not yet made a return of expenditure for the 2009 grant, you must amalgamate details from your 2009 and 2010 grants and include totals for **both** in a **single** online**

return. Please note that the Department will review any underspend in relation to either or both grants with a view to recovery.

## **5. Freedom of Information**

Information provided by schools and colleges to the Department of Education and Skills or to the NCTE may be disclosed in response to a request under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Acts, 1997 and 2003. The Chairperson shall, if requested, provide the Department of Education and Skills or the NCTE with any record relating to any action or service provided under this scheme.

## **6. Audits**

As outlined above, schools must certify to the Department the equipment which they have purchased using these grants. The Department of Education & Skills will undertake audits and inspections of schools who have been awarded ICT grants under this scheme. In accordance with standard practice, payment of any further grants is conditional on the Department being satisfied that the funding has been applied for the purpose intended, and that the school has followed proper procedures and retained appropriate records for at least seven years.

## **7. Further Information**

An FAQ document is attached at *Appendix 4*. Further information is also available on the NCTE website ([www.ncte.ie](http://www.ncte.ie)). Information and advice on choosing equipment, planning and on procurement procedures will be part of the seminars. Dates and venues for these seminars will be communicated shortly.

Schools are encouraged to refer to the NCTE website in the first instance. The materials on the website, combined with the FAQ attached to this Circular, should cover most questions. Residual queries may be addressed as follows:

- For advice on choosing equipment, public procurement procedures and using the ICT Procurement Frameworks: contact the **NCTE**. Email: [ictadvice@ncte.ie](mailto:ictadvice@ncte.ie); tel: (01) 7008388. .
- For queries regarding the amount of grant funding issued to schools, the terms and conditions of the funding, acceptance forms and the online expenditure returns: contact the **ICT Policy Unit**. Email: [ictpolicy@education.gov.ie](mailto:ictpolicy@education.gov.ie); tel. (01) 8896413.

## ICT Infrastructure Grant Scheme 2010 – Primary level – Appendix 3

### **AUTHORISED CATEGORIES OF EQUIPMENT**

Schools must allocate the 2010 grant fund received on the following prioritised basis:

- (i) **Each classroom in the school must be equipped with a teaching computer, with a long range wireless mouse and keyboard, and a fixed digital projector.**
- (ii) **Only when this equipment baseline is in place for each classroom, can any remaining grant funding be used to purchase equipment from the following prioritised list:**

Visualisers (also known as document cameras)
Classroom computers (e.g. desktops or laptops)
Digital cameras
Digital video cameras
Mobile laptop trolley
Laser printer (black and white or colour)
Mobile multi media station (also known as a video editing station)
School server
Scanner
Speakers
Networking equipment (e.g. fixed or wireless networking, cabling, switches, wireless access points, data backup systems) and including installation)
Interactive Whiteboards (factors to be considered before purchasing an IWB are available on the IWB advice sheet at <a href="http://www.ncte.ie/ICTAdviceSupport/AdviceSheets">www.ncte.ie/ICTAdviceSupport/AdviceSheets</a> )

## ICT Infrastructure Grant Scheme 2010 – Primary level – Appendix 4

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*This document will be updated as required and the latest updated version can be accessed at [www.ncte.ie/ictgrant2010primary](http://www.ncte.ie/ictgrant2010primary)*

1. **Can I submit my Form of Acceptance by email?** *No. For audit trail purposes, signed forms must be sent in by fax or post to the ICT Policy Unit. If your school does not have a copy of the form, it is available in Appendix 3 to this Circular.*
2. **Do I need to provide receipts to the Department of Education & Skills?** *No. However, you must retain receipts for all expenditure for at least seven years. Random audits will be carried out.*
3. **What if the cost of my purchases is higher than the grant allocated?** *Where total cost exceeds grant allocated, no additional funding is available. Schools must make up the difference from their own resources.*
4. **Where can I get more information on how to use ICT Framework arrangements for Procurement?** *Please see the NCTE's website: [www.ncte.ie/ictpurchasingframeworks/](http://www.ncte.ie/ictpurchasingframeworks/)*
5. **What are the benefits of using the Frameworks?** *For those items covered by the Frameworks, it is expected that the prices obtained will be very competitive. Furthermore, use of the Frameworks should offer significant administrative advantages, in terms of simplifying the tendering process – for example, a single email to a central email address can be used to obtain competitive tenders from all PC Framework vendors. More specifically, advantages include the following:*
  - a. *Schools are spared the need to research the market, develop detailed once-off tender processes, and so on*
  - b. *Prices include 3-year next-business-day on-site warranties*
  - c. *Standard products supplied must meet specification requirements set with schools in mind*
  - d. *Option to seek non-standard specifications*
  - e. *Vendors have committed to pricing equal to or lower than the 'ceiling price' published in the framework documents for the standard category products in question.*
  - f. *National delivery at a single fixed price (or in some cases, free).*
  - g. *Flexibility for schools to come together and pool their demand for greater discounts*
  - h. *Option to seek quotes for "associated products" (such as wireless mice/ keyboards) and "associated services" (say installation/configuration) under the Frameworks.*
  - i. *Schools can raise any practical concerns regarding Framework effectiveness with framework management (i.e. NCTE or CMOD)*

*We would encourage schools to consider working together on a local or regional basis to aggregate their requirements and therefore maximise value for money.*

6. **What if I want associated services under the Frameworks (for example installation services) or associated products (for example, consumables)?** *Tenders under the Frameworks can be specified to include certain "associated services" or "associated products". For further information on this, please see the NCTE's website: [www.ncte.ie/purchasingframeworks](http://www.ncte.ie/purchasingframeworks)*
7. **Having reviewed the market and considered specifications in depth, I believe I can get better value for money from non-Framework vendors – can I seek quotes from non-Framework vendors?** *In these circumstances, you can seek concurrent quotes from Framework and non-Framework vendors, and for an identical specification of your minimum*

requirements. Please remember that your request for quotes (RFQ) must not refer to specific brand/manufacturer names, processor names and speeds, etc. Issue separate (but concurrent) RFQs to non-Framework vendors, as they cannot be included in Framework RFQs as such.

8. **Can I purchase items outside those included in the Authorised Categories list in Appendix 1? No.**
9. **How was my school's grant calculated?** *Your school's grant is composed of €1,700 (which is considered sufficient to purchase the recommended baseline of one fixed digital projector and teaching computer with long-range wireless mouse and keyboard) plus €35.70 per capita. The per capita calculation uses the Department's official record of enrolment figures as at 30th September 2009.*
10. **My school is getting new accommodation – can I defer spending the grant until this new accommodation is available? Yes.**
11. **Is the ICT equipment strictly for regular classrooms only?** *A “classroom” encompasses any key permanent/semi-permanent area in the school where teaching takes place on a regular basis. It can include libraries and other spaces used for learning and teaching.*
12. **Can I use the grant to buy Software? No.**
13. **Can a “teaching computer” be either a laptop or a desktop? Yes**
14. **What is a “teaching computer”?** *The expression "teaching computer" refers to the computer which the teacher uses for presentation of digital content (including interactive content) through the Digital Projector (or interactive whiteboard, if one happens to be in place already), for integration of ICT into teaching and learning. The teaching computer should be connected to the school's network and have broadband internet access (e.g. through Schools Broadband). It should be the host for the wireless mouse and keyboard which schools are also required to purchase under this grant scheme. The teaching computer would typically be at the front of a general classroom (but other configurations may of course be appropriate for specialist teaching spaces).*
15. **What is a visualiser?** *A visualiser is a digital camera on the end of an arm (either rigid or flexible) with controls available at the base unit. You can zoom in and out, freeze and capture an image or display it through the digital projector. The camera is mounted 30-50cm directly above a 'display' space or teacher's table top onto which documents, diagrams, pages from books or objects can be placed for display purposes. Further information at: [http://www.ncte.ie/documents/advisesheets/36Visualiser\\_Nov08.pdf](http://www.ncte.ie/documents/advisesheets/36Visualiser_Nov08.pdf)*
16. **Can I buy Interactive Whiteboards (IWBs) with grant funding instead of Digital Projectors?** *No. Except in so far as funding remains after the baseline referred to in point (i) of Appendix 1 has been achieved in all classrooms..*
17. **Can I purchase a Digital Projector with integrated interactive capability?** *Yes. The Framework for Digital Projectors can be used to purchase this technology. Schools should specify in their requests for quote that they wish to have integrated interactive capability.*
18. **When do I have to spend the grant?** *Schools should use the grant to purchase equipment as soon as possible, and are asked to make every effort to purchase equipment before the end of the 2010 calendar year.*
19. **Can I use the grant as reimbursement for equipment bought previously, or to pay off loans outstanding in relation to previous purchases?** *Where schools have already purchased equipment that conforms to the requirements of the grants package, (teaching computer, digital projector, wireless mouse and wireless keyboard for each classroom) and in*

*compliance with public procurement rules, the grant may be used to offset loan amounts still outstanding - at the time the grant issued - in respect of these purchases.*

- 20. Does the Department maintain a panel of retailers/suppliers?** *No. Where frameworks are not available for products, selection of vendors for competitive tender is a matter for each school. When purchasing ICT equipment for which no ICT Framework exists, schools are advised to refer to NCTE's general purchasing advice and to seek best value for money by seeking written quotes from a minimum of three suppliers*
- 21. The anticipated value of one of my contracts is less than €5,000 – how many quotes do I have to get?** *Where a purchasing framework is being used, the framework email automatically distributes your RFQ to all vendors on the framework. You do not have to get any additional quotes outside the Frameworks (but may do so in the circumstances given in FAQ 7). When purchasing ICT equipment for which no ICT Framework exists, schools are advised to refer to NCTE's general purchasing advice and to seek best value for money by seeking written quotes from a minimum of three suppliers*
- 22. The digital projector and teaching computer kit is not appropriate for our school's Special Classes. Can we use the grant to buy alternative ICT equipment.** *Yes, you can use the grant to buy classroom ICT equipment which is more appropriate to the special classes in question, provided that your school's e-Learning plan has clearly identified how the ICT equipment in question is used to support pupils with special educational needs. Schools with Special Classes can get further information in regard to special education needs and ICT at: [www.ncse.ie](http://www.ncse.ie) . It should be noted that the equipment purchased for special classes should not replace or supplement the existing Assistive Technology Grants Scheme whereby grants are available to meet the needs of individual pupils.*
- 23. Can schools buy refurbished computers with Department grant funding?** *Refurbished computers are not recommended to schools as generally they are inherently more prone to failure, have shorter lifespans, and have shorter and weaker warranties than the 3 year next business day onsite warranty that is standard on ICT equipment purchased under ICT frameworks. When buying new computers through the ICT frameworks, schools will get a three-year next-business-day on-site warranty included as standard (no extra charge) and will also have the option to buy extended warranties. However where schools have the technical knowledge required and are in a position to make a fully informed decision regarding the quality of refurbished computers and are aware of the risks, and yet are convinced that they are getting better value for money they may purchase high quality refurbished computers (eg 2GB memory, and up to 3 years warranty) from reliable suppliers.*
- 24. Do I have to buy computers before buying projectors – e.g. if the grant is just enough to cover equipping 5 more classrooms with computers OR two more classrooms with Digital Projectors, do I have to buy the computers first?** *No. Once the fund is being spent on equipping classrooms with the four prioritised items (teaching computers, digital projectors, and long-range wireless mice and keyboards), there is no requirement to buy those items in any particular order. The core requirement remains, i.e. the fund must be used to kit out all classrooms with the four baseline items before it can be spent on other Authorised Category items.*
- 25. Can the grant be used to cover installation costs associated with purchases of PCs, Notebooks or Digital Projectors?** *Yes.*
- 26. If I am purchasing an Interactive Whiteboard which includes a digital projector – do I have to split the purchase and buy the Projector from the framework?** *No. The core requirement remains however that grant funding must be used to kit out all classrooms with the four baseline items before it can be spent on other Authorised Category items (such as IWBs).*

- 27. Does the grant cover situations where a school wants to acquire teaching computers for learning support teachers and language teachers in a mainstream school setting? *Yes***
- 28. If a school purchases and installs a fixed digital projector can it be used with an Interactive Whiteboard or other projection surface installed at a later date? *Yes in general, digital projectors purchased under the Frameworks are compatible with IWBs. We would suggest however that to avoid any potential compatibility issues, you should make sure that any IWBs subsequently purchased are compatible with already installed digital projectors. Subject to the above, in general if the surface being projected onto (e.g. ordinary whiteboard, IWB, smooth wall) by a fixed projector changes the projector settings may need to be adjusted to take these changes into account. This is a minor adjustment, to be carried out as per the projector manual, and which should take no more than a few minutes***
- 29. Is there any additional funding for DEIS schools? *DEIS schools have each been allocated an extra €850 (50% of the block grant of €1,700)***
- 30. I haven't yet submitted my expenditure return for the 2009 Grant – do I submit this using last year's Appendix 3 form, or using the new online return? *If your school has not yet made a return of expenditure for the 2009 grant, you **must** amalgamate details from your 2009 and 2010 grants and include totals for **both** in a **single online return using the password supplied**.. Please note that the Department will review any underspends in relation to either or both grants with a view to recovery.***