



Rural Micro Capital Grant Programme 2015 Phase 2

Guidance Notes for Applicants

Overview

This programme is funded under the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Tackling Poverty and Social Isolation Framework. The key aim of this Framework is to assist in tackling poverty and social isolation within rural communities across Northern Ireland. More information on the Framework is provided at Annex 3.

For the Ards & North Down Borough Council area, County Down Rural Community Network is delivering this Programme on behalf of the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development.

Key objectives

The Rural Micro Capital Grant Programme 2015 has been designed to:

- Help rural community-led, voluntary groups to address local issues of **access poverty, financial poverty** and **social isolation**; and
- Improve the lives of rural communities, and in particular the wellbeing of isolated individuals.

County Down Rural Community Network
Ballymote Centre
40 Killough Road
Downpatrick
BT30 6PY
Tel Number 028 4461 2311

The Grant Scheme

Micro Capital grants of between £200 and £1,500 are available to rural community-led, voluntary organisations for projects tackling issues of local poverty and / or social isolation. Projects must focus on one of the following three themes:

- Modernisation (of premises / assets)
- Information Communication Technology
- Health and Wellbeing

The Rural Micro Capital Grant Programme can provide up to 85% of the total cost of your project, up to a maximum grant of £1,500. Match funding for your 15% must be in the form of a 'cash' contribution. Labour or 'in-kind' contributions will not be accepted. In order to ensure that as many groups as possible get the opportunity to benefit from this Programme, groups will be allowed a maximum of one award in any 12 month period.

NB The total project cost must not exceed £3,000.

If you were awarded funding through Phase 1 of RMCGP you are **NOT** eligible to apply.

What can be funded?

Grant aid can only be used to meet costs associated with capital equipment, the improvement of a capital asset and / or the extension of the useable life of a capital asset. Eligible items **must** clearly relate to the key themes of (i) Modernisation, (ii) ICT or (iii) Health & Wellbeing. As this is a capital programme, the following types of activity **cannot** be funded.

Examples of Ineligible Activity	
General maintenance	Running costs & Consumables
Training	Staff / Volunteer expenses
Clothing, Uniforms	Hospitality, Food, Drink
Motorised vehicles	Feasibility Studies / Reports
Labour costs not directly associated with purchased Capital works / items	

This list is not exhaustive and if you are in doubt about the eligibility of your project, please contact County Down Rural Community Network before applying.

Who can apply?

You **can** apply for a Micro Capital grant if:

- ✓ you are a not-for-profit community / voluntary organisation;
- ✓ the organisation is based in a rural area. A definition of rural is detailed at Annex 1;
- ✓ you have a formal Constitution or governing documents;
- ✓ you have a minimum of three people on your management committee (this must be clearly detailed within your constitution or governing documents)
- ✓ you have a bank or building society account in the name of your group, which requires at least two signatures on each cheque or withdrawal (this must be clearly detailed within your constitution or governing documents)
- ✓ you can enclose your most recent Annual Accounts or financial statement. These must be signed as approved as detailed in your Constitution;
- ✓ you need a capital grant of between £200 and £1,500 for a specific poverty or social isolation project and can provide two written quotes for each item to be purchased;
- ✓ you can spend and claim the grant **within four months** of receiving your offer;
- ✓ you are appropriately insured (public liability & building/contents insurance as appropriate).

What cannot be funded?

We **cannot** fund the following:

- × **Organisations who were awarded funding through Phase 1 of this Programme;**
- × Organisations based in urban areas;
- × Individuals, Sole traders and / or Commercial trading companies;
- × Companies that exist to distribute a profit;
- × Statutory Authorities or organisations governed by Statutory Authorities;
- × Appeals or charities set up to support statutory bodies;
- × Organisations with an income in excess of £70,000;
- × Costs already incurred – an application cannot be made for capital items that have already been ordered or received before the award of a Letter of Offer;
- × Grant cannot be used to match another funder's project;
- × Projects where the value of match funding is greater than the value of grant;
- × Second-hand equipment.

Eligibility

Your application will be considered against the Eligibility Criteria for the Programme (Please carefully consider the criteria listed at Annex 2, this will be used to determine if your application is eligible). Only the information contained within your application will be used during this process and no additional information other than that provided with your application will be considered.

As this Programme is funded as part of DARD's Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation Framework, you must also demonstrate within your application how your project will contribute to reducing rural poverty and / or social isolation within your local community. Please refer to Annex 3.

Please note

1. We intend to inform applicants if their application is considered 'eligible' within two weeks of the closing date.
2. It is anticipated that this Programme will be over-subscribed and we will use random selection to award grants. All eligible applicants will be invited to attend the random selection event for their area.
3. You **must not start** your project until you attend a **mandatory 'Letter of Offer Workshop'** and have agreed to the terms and conditions of the grant. We intend to inform applicants if their application has been successful within two weeks of the random selection event. If your application is successful, we will contact you with details for the Letter of Offer Workshop in your region.
4. Your project must be completed and your grant claimed **within four months** from the date of your award. **NO extensions** will be given.
5. You must incur the initial cost of your purchases and then claim your grant once your project is completed. **NO advance payments** will be provided.
6. Following completion, you must provide evidence of your purchase (photographic evidence, serial number(s), etc.). Your project may be selected by DARD for a verification check to ensure your grant aid is being used for the purposes intended.

How to apply

This programme is open for applications from **Monday 5 October 2015** until **12 noon** on **Friday 30 October 2015**.

Download the Application Form and Guidance Notes from www.countydownruralcommunitynetwork.com or request an Application Pack by calling 028 4461 2311 or emailing info@countydownrcn.com

Please return your completed application form, with electronic attachments (e.g. scanned copies of constitution, quotes etc.) by email to: info@countydownrcn.com

Alternatively, if you are unable to submit your form online, the completed application form and supporting information should be returned in a sealed envelope, clearly marked **Grant Aid Application** to us at the address shown below.

The following documents must be included with your application:

- A copy of your group's Constitution / governing documents. These documents should clearly detail the number of members on the Management Committee and the procedures adhered to in respect of cheque / cash withdrawal.
- A copy of your group's most recent Bank / Building Society statement (within last 3 months).
- A copy of your most recent audited accounts or financial statement (for minimum 12 month period*) that clearly shows annual income. *Newly formed organisations should provide a financial statement covering the period from establishment to date.
- A copy of at least two written, like-for-like, quotations from at least 2 different suppliers for every item that you wish to purchase. Written quotes must be addressed to your organisation. Print-outs from internet searches are acceptable. Please do not simply provide website addresses or web links as we cannot accept these. Complete Annex A of the Application form. Procurement requirements are outlined at Annex 1 of these guidance notes.
- A copy of your current insurance certificate(s) and policy schedule (public liability, building/contents as appropriate).
- A copy of your lease or proof of ownership (for projects involving work to your building)

Please refer to Annex 1 and 2.

The onus to ensure that your application is received before the closing date rests solely with the applicant. Therefore please ensure that you leave sufficient time to submit your application on-line or use sufficient postage to ensure delivery by the closing date.

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL LATE OR INCOMPLETE
APPLICATIONS BE ACCEPTED.**

If you would like more information about the Rural Micro Capital Grant Programme 2015 or have a specific query, please contact:

County Down Rural Community Network

40 Killough Road, Downpatrick BT30 6PY

Tel: 028 4461 2311

Email: info@countydownrcn.com

**The Rural Micro Capital Grant Programme 2015 is funded by the
Department of Agriculture & Rural Development as part of its
Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework.**

Annex 1

Rural Location

Applications will only be accepted for projects that are based in a rural area of Northern Ireland.

For the purposes of the Rural Micro Capital Grant Programme 2015, rural Northern Ireland means all those areas outside the statutory development limits of those towns with a population in excess of 4,500 inhabitants plus the areas of Strathfoyle, Newbuildings, and Culmore in Derry/Londonderry Urban Area (OUA) and Milltown, Helens Bay, Crawfordsburn, and Groomsport in the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (BMUA).

If you are in any doubt about whether your group is located in a rural area, please contact [delivery agent details] before submitting your application.

Procurement

Estimated values	Action & Minimum Number	Comments
<p>Up to £3,000 (maximum total project cost under RMCGP 2015)</p>	<p>At least 2 price-checks / quotations per item from <u>different</u> suppliers</p>	<p>Fax or e-mail confirmation, evidence of internet searches / prices is required.</p> <p>“like-for-like” quotations must be sought – particularly where items are specific e.g. laptop / IT / lawnmower etc quotations for the same make and model of products must be provided</p> <p>Documented evidence of the price-checks must be retained: print off internet searches & submit with application.</p> <p>Quotes should be dated & addressed to organisation</p> <p>Do not simply list website addresses/ provide links to websites as we will not check these.</p> <p>Make sure that you detail quotes obtained for each item on Annex A of Application form.</p>

Annex 2

NB: This document details the criteria that will be used to confirm if your application is eligible.

Eligibility Criteria Checklist

Primary Eligibility Criteria	
1.	Is the application form sufficiently completed, signed and appropriately authorized, including Annex A? All supporting documentation must be provided.
2.	Is (i) the applicant's status and (ii) proposed project eligible according to the checklist of secondary criteria?
3.	Does the project address an issue of local poverty and / or social isolation, in line with the key objectives of the Rural Micro Capital Grant Programme 2015?
4.	The project has not commenced.
5.	Can the project be completed and grant claimed within four months?
6.	The applicant has not received funding through Phase 1 of the RMCGP

Secondary Eligibility Criteria	
1.	Applicant is a not-for-profit community / voluntary organisation.
2.	Applicant is based in a Rural area.
3.	Applicant has provided copy of their Constitution / Governing documents.
4.	Constitution / Governing documents confirm that at least two signatories are required for cheques / withdrawals.

5.	Constitution / Governing documents confirm that the Management Committee must have a minimum of three people.
6.	Applicant has provided a Bank / Building Society statement (less than 3 months old) bearing the applicant organisations name.
7.	Applicant has provided recent Annual Accounts or financial statements.
8.	Grant requested is between £200 - £1500 and at least two quotes have been provided for each item to be purchased.
9.	Applicant is providing a minimum of 15% match funding and the value of match funding is not greater than the grant.
10.	Applicant has an annual income less than £70,000.
11.	Applicant has provided evidence of insurance.

Applicants must meet all Primary and Secondary eligibility criteria in order to proceed to selection phase.

Please remember – you must supply all relevant documentation with your application e.g. recent Bank or Building Society Statement, evidence of Insurance, written quotes, copy of your lease / proof of ownership for projects involving work to your premises.

Failure to supply these documents will result in your application being deemed ineligible.

Closing Date for receipt of completed application forms is:

12 Noon on Friday 30 October 2015

No LATE or INCOMPLETE applications will be accepted.

Annex 3

Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework

The Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework outlines the priority areas for Government to target and mitigate against issues of rural poverty and social isolation. It also sets out an action plan of activities that DARD will lead on to help address rural poverty and isolation that includes supporting vulnerable communities, developing and introducing new initiatives and reacting to emerging needs.

The priorities of the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework are to address issues of:

Access Poverty

- Access to statutory services,
- Advice on welfare benefits, health & social care, education & training and public transport.

Financial Poverty

- Ensuring vulnerable rural dwellers can maximize their income, maximize benefit uptake in rural areas,
- Tackle fuel poverty issues and address the additional costs people face by living in rural areas.

Social Isolation

- Addressing different types of isolation experienced by different vulnerable groups, for example by using community development approaches,
- Supporting those organisations that work in rural areas to help those suffering from stress or mental health issues.