

Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme 2017

Guidance Notes for Applicants

Overview

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

For the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area, County Down Rural Community Network is delivering this Scheme on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

Key objectives

The Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme 2017 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
40 Killough Road
Downpatrick
BT30 6PY
Tel 028 4461 2311
Email – info@countydownrcn.com / nuala@countydownrcn.com

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 (ICT)
- Health and Wellbeing

The Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme can provide up to 85% of the total cost of your project, up to a maximum grant of £1,500. **NB** The total project cost must not exceed £3,000. 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 Scheme, organisations can only make **one** application to the Scheme. In the event of the call for applications being over-subscribed, preference will be given to applicants who did not receive funding through the RMC GS 2015 and 2016 pilot programme.

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 (e.g. ink cartridges, paper)
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, if you are in doubt about the eligibility of your project please contact County Down Rural Community Network on 028 4461 2311 before applying.

******Your organisation must ensure that all actions undertaken in relation to this project comply with the relevant statutory requirements and legislation in existence during the lifetime of the project.

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 a copy of your most recent Accounts or a signed Financial Statement. The Financial Statement must be signed by a person in authority within your organisation, i.e. Chairperson, Secretary or Treasurer;
- ✓ 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;
- ✓ your organisation can deliver the project, pay the supplier(s) and submit a grant claim **by 30 March 2018** (including reimbursement of credit cards / loans);
- ✓ you are appropriately insured or prepared to obtain appropriate insurance if awarded a grant (public liability & building/contents insurance as appropriate).

What cannot be funded?

We **cannot** fund the following:

- ✗ 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 £80,000 (not including in-year restricted funds, e.g. non-business / grant income);
- ✗ 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; and
- ✗ Second-hand equipment.

Eligibility

Your application will be considered against the Eligibility Criteria for the Scheme (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 Scheme is funded as part of DAERA's Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme, you must also demonstrate within your application how your project will contribute to reducing rural poverty and / or social isolation within your local community. Annex 3 refers.

Please note

1. We intend to inform applicants if their application is considered 'eligible' within two weeks of the closing date.
2. If your application is successful, we will contact you with details for the Letter of Offer Workshop in your region. 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.
3. Your project must be completed and your claim for grant submitted **by 30 March 2018. No extensions** will be given.
4. You must incur the initial cost of your purchases and then claim your grant once your project is completed. Your organisation must have paid for all project expenditure **and submitted a claim for payment by 4PM on 30 March 2018. No advance payments** will be provided.
5. **DAERA need to be made aware immediately of any Conflict of Interest**, however arising, that may occur between your organisation and any other organisation, supplier, person or employee associated in any way with the delivery of the Project.
6. Following completion, you must provide evidence of your purchase (photographic evidence, serial number(s), etc.). Your project may be selected by DAERA for a verification check to ensure your grant aid is being used for the purposes intended.

How to apply

This Scheme is open for applications from **Monday 4 September 2017** until **4PM on Friday 29 September 2017**.

Download the Application Form and Guidance Notes from www.countydownruralcommunitynetwork.com or request an Application Pack by calling County Down Rural Community Network on 028 4461 2311 or emailing info@countydownrcn.com / nuala@countydownrcn.com

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

Alternatively, if you are unable to submit your form electronically, 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.

County Down Rural Community Network, 40 Killough Road, Downpatrick, BT30 6PY

The following documents must be included with your application:

- A copy of your group's Constitution / governing documents and/or relevant policy 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 Accounts or a signed Financial Statement signed by a person in authority within your organisation, i.e. Chairperson, Secretary or Treasurer (for minimum 12 month period*) that clearly shows annual income. *Newly formed organisations should provide a signed 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) or confirmation that you will obtain appropriate insurance if awarded funding.
- A copy of your lease or proof of ownership (for projects involving work to your building/land)

Please refer to Annex 1 and 2 for further information.

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.
Proof of postage is NOT proof of receipt.**

If you would like more information about the Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme 2017 or have a specific query, please contact:

County Down Rural Community Network, 40 Killough Road, Downpatrick, BT30 6PY, Tel 028 4461 2311 or email info@countydownrcn.com / nuala@countydownrcn.com

**The Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme is funded by the
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs as part of its
Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme.**

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 Scheme 2017, rural Northern Ireland means all those areas outside the statutory development limits of those towns with a population in excess of 5,000 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 County Down Rural Community Network on 028 4461 2311 or email info@countydownrcn.com before submitting your application.

Procurement

Estimated values	Action & Minimum Number	Comments
<p>Up to £3,000 (maximum total project cost under RMCGS 2017)</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. laptops - 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 Scheme?
4.	The project has not commenced.
5.	Can the project be completed and grant claim submitted by 30 March 2018?

	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 and/or relevant policy 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 Accounts or a Financial Statement signed by a person in authority within your organisation, i.e. Chairperson, Secretary or Treasurer.
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 not exceeding £80,000. (not including in-year restricted funds, e.g. non-business / grant income);
11.	Applicant has provided evidence of insurance or has confirmed that they will obtain appropriate insurance if awarded funding.

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 (if held), written quotes, copy of your lease / proof of ownership for projects involving work to your building / land.

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

Closing Date for receipt of completed application forms is:

4PM on Friday 29 September 2017

No LATE or INCOMPLETE applications will be accepted.

Proof of postage is NOT proof of receipt.

Annex 3

Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework

The Framework focuses on three Priority Areas for Intervention, namely Access Poverty, Financial Poverty and Social Isolation, and aims to support measures designed to address these priorities in rural areas. It is recognised that there is potential for significant overlap between the three priority areas and that individual measures may address more than one priority area.

- **Access Poverty** - this priority aims to improve access to key services for vulnerable rural dwellers by supporting interventions which;
 - Improve urban-rural linkages (e.g. through the provision of better transport and broadband services etc);
 - Improve access to key services (e.g. healthcare, education and training, leisure facilities, library services, advice services, childcare etc).

- **Financial Poverty** – this priority aims to address financial poverty among vulnerable rural dwellers by supporting interventions which:
 - reduce household expenditure or other living costs (e.g. transport costs);
 - increase household incomes; (e.g. through improved employability, employment opportunities, entrepreneurship, increased benefit uptake etc);
 - address issues relating to the additional costs faced by people living in rural areas (e.g. fuel costs);
 - address the barriers to escaping financial poverty (e.g. low qualifications, low skills, lack of access to affordable childcare, lack of access to quality jobs, disengagement, lack of access to information and advice, poor health etc);
 - help alleviate the effects of financial poverty (e.g. food poverty, health problems, obesity among children, debt etc).

- **Social Isolation** – this priority aims to address social isolation among vulnerable rural dwellers by supporting interventions which:
 - promote positive mental health and wellbeing;
 - increase opportunities for social engagement (e.g. social activities, sport and leisure activities, cultural activities etc);
 - provide support to groups at risk of social isolation (e.g. farmers, older people, people with disabilities, disengaged youth, etc).