

# Rural Business Development Grants Scheme 2024/25



Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**

[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)



**Armagh City  
Banbridge  
& Craigavon**  
Borough Council

# Background to the Scheme

- Call Opened: 16 October 2024
- **Closing date: Friday 8 November 2024 @ 12noon**
- Funded through DAERA under The Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme (TRPSI)
- AIM OF THE SCHEME:  
“**Support recovery, sustainability and development of rural micro business across Northern Ireland**”
- Administered by Local Councils on behalf of DAERA

# Who can apply?

- Business located in a rural area of the Borough ..this means outside the settlement limit of 5000+ people, i.e. outside Armagh City, Banbridge, Craigavon, Dromore, Lurgan or Portadown  
(If unsure please check your postcode on the NISRA website).
- Applicant must be over the age of 18 and actively trading as an existing registered private business or Social Economy Enterprise (evidence of self assessment number and sales turnover will be needed).
- Business employs **less than** 10 full time equivalent employees (Full-time employee must work at least 30 hours per week. Part-time employees must work at least 16 hours per week).
- Sports Clubs and Community Groups can be considered if they are commercially trading and generate sales revenue from selling goods and services to customers who are not exclusively Club or Commercial Group Members. The grant can only be used to support the sustainability, survival and/or development of this commercial element and not for the club, community group of its own.

# Who can apply?

- The businesses appropriately insured or prepared to obtain appropriate insurance if awarded grant support.
- Dedicated bank account used by the business.
- Applicant must attend pre-funding workshop.
- Deliver with the timeframes.
- Only one application can be accepted per business/legal entity.

**Other conditions on eligibility are outlined within the guidance notes to the Scheme: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/rural-business-development-grant-scheme-rbdgs-general-guidance-notes>**

# What can I apply for?

- Capital equipment /machinery/ e-commerce websites with a minimum cost of £1,000 and maximum cost of £20,000.
- VAT registered? Lower and upper thresholds are based on net cost of items.
- Not VAT registered? Lower and upper thresholds are based on gross cost of items.
- Examples include:
  - Equipment/machinery to aid production
  - Mobile equipment – scissor lifts, forklifts, ride-on mowers
  - E-commerce websites to allow online purchasing capabilities

**In all instances you need to explain why you require to purchase the equipment and how it will benefit your business.**

# Examples of what you can't apply for:

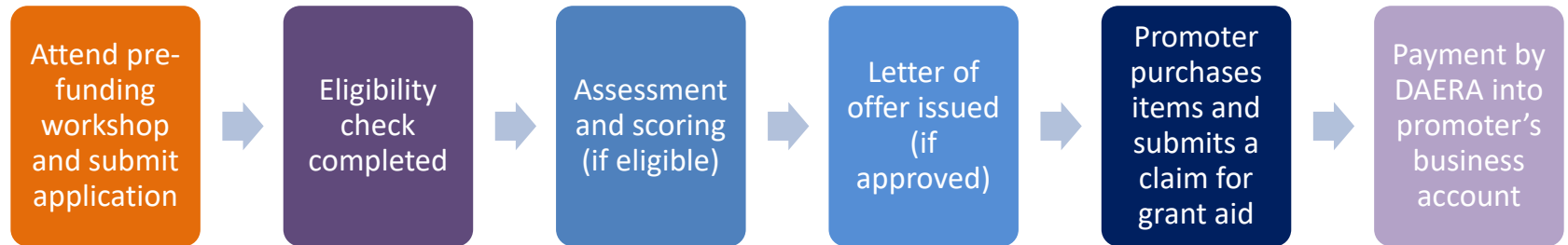
- Equipment costing less than £1,000 or more than £20,000
- Projects that have already started prior to Letter of Offer
- Secondhand equipment
- Cars, vans, lorries, boats, quads etc. that can be used as a means of transport
- Servicing of existing equipment or general maintenance/refurbishment costs
- Capital improvements, building or refurbishment of property
- Purchase of buildings – pods, port-a-cabins or any other building
- Labour costs not directly related to the installation of purchased equipment or e-commerce web construction
- Resource items – marketing, information-only websites, training courses, feasibility studies, uniforms
- Any activity or action that is a statutory requirement of your business.
- Consumable items used by businesses that are replaced regularly because they wear out or are used up (for example, high-visibility vests for staff, printer ink).
- Running costs / Bank Charges.

**PLEASE REFER TO THE SCHEME GUIDANCE NOTES FOR FULL DETAIL ON ELIGIBLE ITEMS BEFORE YOU APPLY.**

# How much can I apply for?

- The Scheme can provide funding of up to 50% of costs for capital items up to a maximum of £4,999.
- The minimum grant awarded will be £500. The total cost of the capital project must be a minimum of £1,000 and must not exceed £20,000.
- Applicants must provide the remaining match funding towards the project.
- This is a competitive process - all grants awarded will be determined on the basis of merit.

# The Application Process



- Applications are made online
- You need to log in and register before starting your application.



# Access to the Scheme:

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the following content:

- Browser Tabs:** rural business grant daera - Search, Rural Business Development Grant, Login
- Address Bar:** [https://www2.daera-ni.gov.uk/AuthWeb/auth/login/RBDGS/1/?returnurl=CentralAuthentication\\_IS%2Frest%2FCAS%2FCallB...](https://www2.daera-ni.gov.uk/AuthWeb/auth/login/RBDGS/1/?returnurl=CentralAuthentication_IS%2Frest%2FCAS%2FCallB...)
- Page Header:**
  - Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
  - www.daera-ni.gov.uk
  - Rural Business Development Grant Scheme
- Main Content:**
  - Section: Welcome to Rural Business Development Grant Scheme
  - Text: Choose a service to access Rural Business Development Grant Scheme
  - Buttons:
    - nidirect government services** (NIDA Sign in / register)
    - Government Gateway** (GG Sign in / register)
- Notices:**
  - Information icon: NIFAIS-On-Line For Keepers and Agents. [Click here for more details.](#)
  - Information icon: Your nidirect (NIDA) account service has changed. [Click here for more details.](#)
  - Information icon: Daera Direct verification appointments. [Click here for more details.](#)
- Taskbar:** Windows taskbar with search bar, icons for Word, File Explorer, Outlook, Edge, Excel, PowerPoint, Teams, and a notification icon. System tray shows FTSE..., ENG, and time 09:20 on 22/10/2024.

**There are 8 different sections to complete as shown here...**

<a href="#">Applicant details</a>	COMPLETED
<a href="#">Business overview</a>	COMPLETED
<a href="#">Project details</a>	COMPLETED
<a href="#">Project costs</a>	NOT COMPLETED
<a href="#">Project timescales</a>	NOT COMPLETED
<a href="#">De Minimis aid declaration</a>	NOT COMPLETED
<a href="#">Supporting documents</a>	NOT COMPLETED
<a href="#">Declaration</a>	NOT COMPLETED

# Completing Your Application

- Pay attention to the scoring criteria within the guidance notes – section 3.3
- Each criteria relates to a section within the application form
- Criteria with higher weightings attract higher overall marks but require a good level of detail within the application
- Scores are awarded on merit against the information you provide within the application – little or no detail won't attract marks – nor will lots of detail if it isn't relevant to your project.
- Applicants must score at least 65 marks to be considered for funding.

# Scoring Matrix

Criteria	Score out 5	(a) Weight	Overall Score (a x b)
<b><u>Project Need:</u></b> Clear and concise evidence of the need for the project within the scope of the fund		x 6	/30
<b><u>Cost of Living:</u></b> Clear assessment of impact of cost of living on business and project identified supports business growth.		x 2	/10
<b><u>Economic Impact:</u></b> Clear and realistic outcomes set for the project e.g. sustaining existing and creating employment, income generation, new markets entered, new products or services introduced.		x 4	/20
<b><u>Project Experience / Management Strength:</u></b> Ability, skills and experience of the business which enables them to deliver the project.		x 4	/20
<b><u>Innovation:</u></b> Project demonstrates innovation in the marketplace or in business practices		x 2	/10
<b>SUB- TOTAL</b>			/90
<b><u>Previous Funding:</u></b> Has the applicant received TRPSI funding in previous iterations of the Rural Business Development Grant Schemes?  <b><u>If yes, score = 0 points, If no, score = 10 points</u></b>			/10
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>/100</b>

# Completing Your Application

**Project details** – most of the information used to score your application comes from this section.

- Tell us what it is you're applying for – this will describe your project
- Tell us why you need to buy it – how is your business being impacted by not having this equipment at present? – business needs and limitations.
- What difference will the equipment have on your business - more sales/turnover, better production processes, new services/products, create/sustain jobs? These are the outcomes you hope will happen as a result of the project. You need to explain **all** of the benefits your project will have on the business.
- Tell us about the skills and experience within your business relevant to your project.

**Continue to refer to the Scheme Guidance notes to help you understand the information needed within the application**

# Procurement

**PLEASE FOLLOW THE PROCUREMENT GUIDANCE WITHIN THE SCHEME GUIDANCE NOTES WITH CARE. (Section 1.7)**

## **Step 1 - Prepare a specification for your item (s)**

- You'll need to prepare a **WRITTEN specification** for each item you're applying for. This gives a detailed description of what you want to buy in terms of capacities and standards...etc. Some examples...
- “please quote for supply of 1no bevel table saw, 2100w power output, depth cut range of 80 - 100mm, rip capacity range of 635 – 735mm”.
- “please quote for supply of 1no 15.6inch 64GB laptop and case” .
- Specifications have to be issued to at **least 2 suppliers** (unless you're getting them via the internet – in that case quotes **MUST BE** like for like).
- The purpose of the specification to ensure that 2 **“like for like”** quotes for comparison are received.

# Procurement....continued

## Step 2 – Check your quotes before submitting

- One of the main reason why applications are deemed ineligible is due to quotes not matching your specification or not showing a “like for like” comparison if looked at side by side.
- You need to satisfy yourself that quotes are giving a like for like costs comparison – **otherwise your application will be deemed ineligible**
- Quotes need to be provided on **supplier headed paper and contact details.** Screen shots of internet-based quotes for items under £5,000 need to show the name of the supplier or website address with costs clearly visible. (Print and scan the screen shot is best)
- Ensure that all costs are quoted and accounted for e.g. delivery and installation costs should be included under an item as part of the one quote.
- Quotes must be dated prior to close of call and within three months of the date of application is submitted.
- Quotations must be readable condition, with the lowest selected.

**Scheme Guidance notes give a step-by-step breakdown of what you need to do on procurement – please read them carefully and keep to hand when seeking quotes.**

# Procurement....continued

## Step 3 – Up-load your specifications and quotes to the application website.

- When completing your online application you'll be ask to upload:-
  1. Your specifications (one for each item applied for);
  2. Two quotes for each item you're applying for, and
  3. Any cover emails issued to suppliers requesting quotes **and** cover emails received from suppliers attaching quotes.
  
- For ease of reference please label specs and quotes as individual files before uploading from your PC / laptop:





# Deadline for Your Application

- **Friday 8 November 2024 @ 12noon.**
- Once you have submitted your application, you will receive an email & individual reference number.

## Tips....

- Do not leave things to the last minute – **the portal closes strictly at the time above**
- Read the Guidance Notes
- Seeking Quotes - start this process as soon as possible
- Previous Applications by the business can be viewed in portal log in.
- **KEEP A NOTE OF YOUR NI DIRECT / GOVT GATEWAY NUMBER AND PASSWORD**
- Any questions please contact Council's Economic Development Team via: [ruralbusinessgrant@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk](mailto:ruralbusinessgrant@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk)

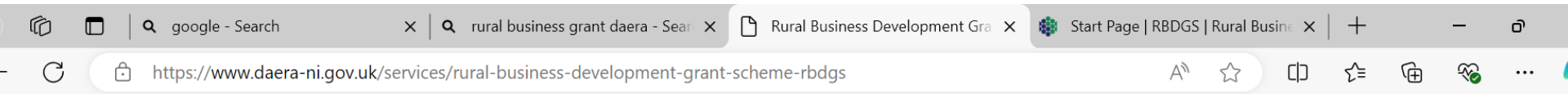
# After you apply

- **DO NOT PURCHASE ANYTHING UNTIL YOU HAVE RECEIVED YOUR LETTER OF OFFER**
- Letters of Offer will be issued on 10 January 2025 - there will be a further workshop to explain the grant drawdown process at this time.
- Grant aid will be paid by DAERA, not Council.
- **Project must be completed by 14 March 2025:** includes all payments, evidence invoices, bank statements, evidence of item on site etc.
- Funding for this scheme is limited – if demand is high you could reach the funding threshold and be unsuccessful, depending on availability of funding.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR**  
**TO APPLY VISIT:**

**Rural Business Development**  
**Grant Scheme (RBDGS)**  
**2024/2025 | Department of**  
**Agriculture, Environment and**  
**Rural Affairs**

# To Apply - click the green link below:



The Rural Business Development Grant Scheme 2024/2025 is now open for applications.

Registering for this service takes approximately 5 minutes. You cannot register for this service if you're in the UK illegally.

## Guidance and documents

- [RBDGS 2024/2025 - general guidance notes](#)
- [RBDGS 2024/2025 - claim guidance notes](#)
- [RBDGS 2024/2025 - terms and conditions](#)

[Apply now for the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme 2024/2025](#)

## Additional information

For more information or help with your application, please contact:

[Scheme – Capital \(FBIS – C\) Tier 2 Tranche 2 - CAFRE Nutrient Calculators videos](#)

- [Farm Business Improvement Scheme – Capital \(FBIS – C\) Tier 2 Tranche 2 - Information Sessions](#)

- [Farm Business Improvement Scheme – Capital \(FBIS – C\) – Tier 2 Tranche 2- Business Plan](#)

- [FBIS Capital Scheme - contact details](#)

- [FBIS Capital Scheme - Ineligible items/projects](#)

[More related articles](#)



# Any Questions?



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