

Preparing for Rural Development Programme Investment – **Community Voluntary** Readiness

Are you investment ready?

Investment readiness means that you are in a strong position to present your project to different investors/funders and meet their requirements.

This quick and simple tool is designed to help the community, voluntary and not for profit sector think about the requirements of the [Rural Development Programme](#) so that organisations:-

- ✓ Can make an informed decision about whether this type of investment is right for them;
- ✓ Are more prepared for the application process should they decide to apply

About the Rural Development Programme

The [Rural Development Programme](#) provides financial support for a range of schemes that will help the economic development of rural areas. Support will be provided to improve the provision of basic services and the quality of life for those living in rural areas; for renewal of rural villages linked to village plans and to support small broadband projects for communities to provide access to an improved broadband service locally.

So whether you are a registered not-for-profit company, statutory body or a social enterprise this programme is open to you.

A project business plan will be required to support your application for investment.

About this Tool

This tool consists of a questionnaire that takes you through some of the key questions you need to consider to work towards investment readiness and completion of a project business plan. To use this tool take the following steps:-

1. Complete the attached questionnaire
2. Ensure you have evidence to support your answers
3. Record any issues or further questions that arise as you complete the questionnaire
4. If you decide to proceed with an application, consider:-
 - a. any actions you need to take to improve your investment readiness
 - b. what further advice you might seek to prepare your application

Getting Started

Before you start make sure you comply with Programme requirements. You must be able to confirm each statement by ticking the box:-

Your project is located in / benefits the rural¹ economy

Please note this does not confirm eligibility of your specific business or project but rather confirms your eligibility to engage in this rural business investment readiness support.

For more information

Contact your LEADER Local Action Group (LAG) for Rural Development located within your local Council. Contact details below:

Causeway Coast and Glens Local Action Group
Rural Development Programme Staff
c/o Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
Cloonavin
66 Portstewart Road
COLERAINE
BT52 1EY
Tel: 028 7034 7034 or 028 7776 0306

¹ For more information on the definition of rural please visit <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/geography/UrbanRural.htm>



Causeway Coast and Glens
Borough Council

Community Voluntary Investment Readiness Toolkit

	Yes	No	Further Actions
Identifying Local Need			
Is there clear evidence of need for your proposed project?			
Have you identified potential users for the proposed project?			
If a rural service project, is the service provider in place/secured?			
Have local users/project beneficiaries been involved in identifying the need?			
Have local users/project beneficiaries been involved in developing the project?			
Do you have data (statistics) to support your need?			
Will your project contribute to at least one of the Rural Development Programme objectives ² ?			
Will your project improve quality of life in rural areas and target those most in need?			
Will local users/project beneficiaries be involved throughout the life of the project?			
Your Organisation			
Is the applicant organisation a registered not-for-profit company, statutory body or social enterprise?			
Does the organisation have a management Board/Committee?			
Is the Board/Committee representative of the area or sector of the community that it represents?			
Does the organisation hold regular General Meetings in accordance with its Memorandum & Articles of Association?			
Can the organisation provide a record (minute) of its General Meetings?			
Does the organisation have its own Bank Accounts?			
Does the organisation prepare a set of Annual Accounts each year?			

²Promoting social inclusion; poverty reduction; economic development in rural areas



Does the organisation have appropriate insurance in place for the activities?			
Does the applicant organisation own or have a suitable lease on the premises in which the project is located or will operate from? *			
Project and Organisation Finances			
Has the organisation identified the level of funding required?			
Has the organisation checked to see that there is no other, more appropriate source of funding available for the project?			
Has the organisation identified the source of match funding?			
Is the match funding secured? *			
Is the organisation able to supply audited accounts?			
Is the organisation able to supply income & expenditure profiles for the project?			
Are the organisational accounting policies in accordance with accounting standards?			
Project Proposal			
Does the organisation have a comprehensive project business plan? *			
Is the organisation able to clearly demonstrate the need or opportunity that it seeks to address?			
Has the organisation clearly identified the level of benefits that the project would provide?			
Has the organisation considered any other ways that this need or opportunity could be addressed?			
Has the organisation considered the risks that might affect the project success and how likely these may be e.g. not securing match funding, project costs being higher, not enough users/customers?			
Has the organisation prepared realistic cost projections?			
Have you checked that this service or project is not already being offered?			



Can you confirm that the project will not be displacing the work of another organisation?			
Is the necessary planning permissions in place to undertake the proposed project? *			
Are the necessary agreements in place to implement the project e.g. service level agreements; access agreements, other legal requirements eg legal charge/debenture and any other permissions that may be required?			
Does the proposed project meet environmental regulations, if required?			
Does the project meet equality principles?			
About the Organisation			
Does the organisation understand the grants process – timescales, due diligence, legal requirements, procurement, and contractual obligations?			Attending the pre-application workshop will assist you with this
Has the organisation or those involved with it any experience of delivering similar projects in the past?			
Is the organisation ready to work with new stakeholders? i.e. funders			
Is the organisation prepared to publicise the project and the support received through LEADER for it?			

***MUST HAVE AT TIME OF APPLICATION**

Take the next step

Count the number of yes and no ticks. The more you have answered yes the more ready you are likely to be to seek investment. This alone, however, does not mean that you will secure investment. Your application form and business plan will be subject to a detailed assessment process including site visit.

Work on the areas you have answered no, can these be addressed in support of an application? Follow up with your further actions. Good Luck.

View previous projects at www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk/PROJECTS-DIRECTORY



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Borough Council**