

Rural Business Investment Scheme Frequently Asked Questions Sheet-

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PROGRAMME FAQs

Who is the Causeway Coast & Glens Local Action Group?

The Causeway Coast and Glens Local Action Group (CCGLAG) is made up of representatives from the Borough. There are 10 Social partners and 8 Elected members.

What is the Causeway Coast & Glens Local Action Group Responsible for?

Delivery of £7.87million of funding to meet Priority 6 of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. There are five schemes available under Priority 6 which will be managed by the CCGLAG: Rural Business Investment Scheme; Village Renewal Scheme; Rural Broadband Scheme; Rural Basic Services Scheme and Cooperation Scheme.

Who Funds the NI Rural Development Programme 2014-2020?

The programme is part financed by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

What is Priority 6 of the NI Rural Development Programme 2014-2020?

Priority 6 of the Programme aims to: increase economic activity within the wider rural economy; to improve the living conditions and wellbeing of rural dwellers; to regenerate villages and to provide community based solutions to broadband black spots in rural areas.

Eligibility and Funding Availability FAQs

Do I Need to be Involved in Agriculture Activity to Apply?

No, Funding under Priority 6 of the NI Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 is also available to the business sector, community/voluntary sector and Local Authorities.

Is there a Broad Overview of Eligibility Criteria?

Eligible applicants must be 18 years of age or over and living or working within a rural area within the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area (CCGBC). A rural area is broadly defined as any area with a population of less than 5,000 residents and located outside town limits. Projects must have a detailed business plan and full planning permission in place if applicable.

What Areas are Considered Rural within the Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council Area?

A rural area as defined within the CCGBC area is anywhere outside of the main towns of Coleraine, Limavady, Ballymoney, Ballycastle, Portrush and Portstewart.

What Funding Opportunities are Available?

Grant aid is available towards capital expenditure, technical support and bespoke training, non-web based marketing expenditure and web based marketing expenditure. For further detail on eligible expenditure please refer to the CCGLAG website or Scheme Information Sheets.

What Types of Activities Cannot be Funded?

The Programme will not fund retail businesses, food production or processing businesses, new build accommodation, provision of additional bed space for existing accommodation providers, resource based projects, or any project which is the statutory responsibility of another government department or agency. For further detail on eligible expenditure please refer to the CCGLAG website or Scheme Information Sheets.

How Many Applications Can be Made?

Eligible applicants can only submit one application per Call but can make a number of applications during the lifetime of the programme. Each application must be for a separate project and grant aid will be capped for private sector applicants at a maximum of €200,000 over a 3 year period. All targets relating to an earlier project must be met before you can reapply to the Programme.

What is the Grant Intervention Rate?

Private sector applicants and social economy enterprises engaging in an economic activity can avail of a 50% grant under the Rural Business Investment Scheme, not exceeding the maximum grant rate. The Village Renewal Scheme, Basic Services Scheme and Broadband Scheme are not available to private sector applicants. Local Authorities, Community/Voluntary sector (including social economy enterprises engaging in non-economic activity) and strategic public bodies can apply to these Schemes and avail of a 75% grant, not exceeding the maximum grant rate.

How Can I Match Fund a Project?

Private sector applicants must match fund projects at a rate of 50%. A cash contribution is the only acceptable form of match funding. Clear evidence of match funding secured must be provided at time of application. Community and voluntary projects must match fund projects at a rate of 5%, which must be present in the group's bank account in cash.

How Will I be Paid for any Grant Aid Awarded?

Payment of any grant awarded will be made retrospectively on completion of the project and evidence of satisfactory documentation. Phased payments (maximum of 5) are permissible on a project.

Approval is required by the CCGLAG and only on a case by case basis. Applicants from the Community/Voluntary sector or Local Authorities can request advance payments in relation to a project. Approval from DAERA must be sought by the LAG in this instance. For further information on phased payments or advance payments contact Programme staff.

How Can Contribution In Kind be Demonstrated?

DAERA has set guidelines in relation to use of contribution in kind toward match funding of a project. Contribution in kind as match funding can only be considered in direct implementation of the project after any award of funding by the CCGLAG. Private sector applicants cannot match fund with contribution in kind to a project.

Is Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Required to be Consulted on Applications to the Programme?

Council is expected to have an input to **ALL** projects funded under the Village Renewal Scheme, Basic Services Scheme or Rural Broadband Scheme. Consultation with Council should be held prior to submission of an application. Council will be expected to make a cash input to the project.

What Do I Do Next If I am not Eligible to Apply?

CCGLAG will be happy to support and signpost where appropriate.

How Can I Access Information?

Information will be provided at Information sessions which will be held throughout the delivery of the Programme. Alternatively information on how to apply can be accessed by contacting staff on 028 7034 7016 and by visiting www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/work/rural-development

What is the Application Process?

All potential applicants must attend a mandatory pre-application funding workshop which will be delivered by the CCGLAG prior to any call for applications. Workshop attendees will be provided with a unique registration number which will allow them to submit an application to the programme.

Funding Workshop FAQs

What is the Difference Between an Information Session and a Pre-Application Funding Workshop?

The information sessions will be an opportunity to find out first-hand what the Programme is about, what the objectives of the Programme are, and what types of project it is likely to fund. **These sessions are not mandatory.** Pre-application funding workshops are **MANDATORY** for anyone who wishes to submit an application for funding to CCGLAG. A pre-application funding workshop is designed to take you through the application process and explain what is expected of applicants so that you can decide if the programme is suitable for you and your project. If you do not attend a pre-application workshop prior to submitting an application DAERA will deem the application ineligible.

How long will the Information Sessions and Pre-Application Funding Workshops Last?

Each session will last about approximately 2 hours.

What Happens if I/we can't Attend or Something Happens that Means I/we can't Attend? Am I Excluded from Applying?

You will not be able to make an application until you have attended one of the pre-application workshops. Information Sessions are not mandatory and do not affect your eligibility to submit an application. A number of workshops will run in the CCGBC area in advance of each 'Call for Applications'. Should you not be able to attend a workshop on a particular date please check for the opportunity to attend on another date. As most Schemes are likely to re-open, if you miss the available workshops for a Call please contact Programme staff to register your interest for future workshops for the next round of funding.

Who Should Attend the Information Sessions and Pre-Application Workshops?

The workshop is designed for anyone who may submit an application to the Programme including individuals, business owners, Councils, other public sector bodies, representatives of community & voluntary groups and social enterprises.

The eligible attendees for a business owner are:

- Business owner
- Director within Business

The eligible attendees for a community/ voluntary group are:

- Committee members
- Employee (subject to admin unit being provided with a letter from group providing permission to employee to proceed with application on group's behalf).

Can Someone Attend the Information Sessions or Pre-Application Workshops on my Behalf?

If you are considering making an application on your own behalf you must attend in person. However, if you are part of a group that is considering applying, any registered member of the group may attend i.e. Committee/Board member.

Is there a Different Pre-Application Workshop Depending on which Scheme you Apply to?

Yes, workshops are tailored to each Scheme. Please ensure that you attend the workshop of the Scheme you wish to apply to. If you are unsure please contact Programme staff. Consultants cannot attend on behalf of an applicant but may attend with the applicant.

It is not necessary for you to bring any professional advisors with you to the workshop.

Can I Attend a Pre-Application Workshop in Another LAG area?

No, you must attend a workshop within your own area as the details of each Scheme may vary from area to area based on the priorities of each LAG and their Local Rural Development Strategy.

Do I/we need to Bring any Professional Services i.e. Accountant / Consultant to the Workshop?

No

Do I need to Bring any Identification to Confirm Name / Identity of Business or Group?

No, but you are required to provide your signature and business/group name and address. Confirmation of identity will follow as part of the assessment process.

If I/we Make more than One Application do I/we need to Attend more than One Workshop?

Yes, you must be registered as attending one of the Pre-application workshops relevant to the Call that you are applying to.

What if I decide not to Apply in the Current Round but in a Later Call – do I/we have to Attend Again?

Yes, you must be registered as attending one of the Pre-application workshops relevant to the Call that you are applying to.

Is there a Cost for Attending?

No. Attendance at the workshops will be free of charge.

How Long after Attending do I/we have to Submit an Application?

You will be notified at the workshop of the deadline for submitting applications. It is likely to be within 4-6 weeks from the date of the last pre-application workshop.

Do I/we have to Disclose our Business / Project Idea at the Workshop?

No. The workshop will provide general information to assist you in deciding if the funding programme is right for you, and if you are ready to apply. You will not be required to disclose any information which may be confidential or commercially sensitive to other attendees. However, you are required to submit an Expression of Interest to staff prior to attendance to establish if it is eligible. Your place on the Funding Workshop will not be confirmed until we have received your Expression of Interest.

Will Anyone Else have Access to Information about my Attendance?

A record of your attendance will be held by CCGLAG and may be shared with DAERA for eligibility, programme monitoring or communications purposes.

Will there be an Opportunity for One-to-One Discussion or Follow up?

Yes. There will be opportunities to have one to one discussions with staff at the end of the workshop should you wish. Alternatively, you can follow up with staff on any queries you may have. Staff contact details will be provided at the workshop.

What do I/we need as Evidence of Attending the Mandatory Pre-Application Workshops?

You will be required to sign in at the workshop and this will provide the evidence needed by the CCGLAG to confirm your participation. You will also be required to detail your attendance, providing date and workshop attended, within the application form. It is important that you keep a record of attendance for this purpose.

Will I/we have Access to the Application Form in Advance of Submitting an Application?

Yes, the application form and any associated guidance materials will be available in advance from Programme staff and accessible at www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/work/rural-development. Please note that this will be for reference only – applications cannot be completed until AFTER workshops have taken place and will be through an online EU database when the Call for Applications is open.

Do I/we need to Bring Anything with me/us and/or do Anything in Advance of the Pre-Application Workshop?

No, although it is advisable to complete the Investment Readiness self-assessment Toolkit in advance. You can access the Toolkit on www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/work/rural-development.

Will I be Informed if my Project is Eligible?

When you submit your Expression of Interest staff will be able to advise you on the basis of the information included. Staff will inform you if your project is ineligible or if your project appears to be eligible under the Scheme. However it will not be possible in advance of submitting an application, to determine if a project will successfully proceed to be funded.

Will I Receive Information on who to Contact to Help me with Developing my/our Business/Project Plan?

Yes, information about potential other sources of support will be made available at the workshop.

Submitting an Application- Eligible and Ineligible items

Can items such as furnishings for capital build be included in project costs for an application?

CCG LAG permit that for projects relating to new builds or existing buildings that are expanding their services/business with the provision of new activities or services (for the new element only) all capital items essential to deliver the intended project are eligible under the following conditions:

- The items are not a statutory responsibility of the applicant or another statutory organisation,
- The items are integral to the completion of the proposed project,
- The items are integral to the delivery of the proposed services / business,
- The items are not replacement of 'like for like' items,
- The items are capital purchases and not consumables,
- Where the purchase of multiple items is required for delivery of the intended services / business the quantity is proportionate to proposed need.
- All of the above should be clearly demonstrated within an application and business plan / project plan

Maximum grant rates still apply. Please refer to information provided at the pre-application funding workshop for funding rates.

Can architect fees be included within an application?

Professional fees, which includes architects fees, are only eligible if they relate to implementation of the project i.e. the actual build phase of the project where the professional team manage the build period and contractor on behalf of their client.

However, if the fees relate to pre-application costs such as professional fees relating to preparing drawings for procurement, planning applications or building control applications then this is **ineligible**.

Please note eligible professional fees are capped at 10% of total eligible project costs. Any eligible grant for professional fees is deducted from the maximum grant amount available to an applicant.

For example, if a small business is applying for a grant of £90k the maximum eligible project costs are £180,000. Professional fee costs are therefore capped at £18,000 and eligible building costs capped at £162,000. The maximum grant award for professional fees is £9,000 (50%). This leaves a remainder of £81k grant which can cover capital costs. NB: If the total project costs exceeds £180k the max. grant is still £90k and of that the max. grant for professional fees is still £9k. Any additional costs over £180,000 are borne by the applicant.

The eligible grant amount for professional fees will reduce proportionately if the total eligible project costs are less than the maximum eligible project expenditure.

Costs relating to professional fees are capped at 10% of total eligible project costs, depending on the applicant type and max. grant amount available. The eligible grant amount for professional fees will be 50% of that amount.

Are the professional fees included in the grant? Are they to be drawn out of the grant or do these be paid by ourselves? The estimated costs on the build would meet the maximum grant – what happens in this case with regards professional fees?

If the maximum grant is intended to be absorbed within the costs of the build then we cannot pay any additional grant towards professional fees. Any professional costs in this case will be borne by the applicant.

You may wish to apply for some funding towards professional fees but if you do this will deducted from the total eligible grant amount for the entire project. It will not be in addition to the maximum grant award for the application or the building costs. If you intend that all the grant should be against the costs of the build then we would advise that you do not include professional fees within your application.

Professional fees are only eligible if they directly relate to implementation of the project post award of funding. Any costs incurred during pre-application stage are borne by the applicant.

Submitting an Application- Details within application form

Q13 (IV) (a) Scheme Target – Number of people supported to develop their business
Is this basically just the owner (s) of the business which is hopes to be supported with the Grant Funding?

This target relates to the owner of the business, members of the partnership or limited company, i.e., the number people directly benefiting from the business income/profit.

Could you please define “linked enterprises”?

The EU defines a linked business as one that is linked to one or more enterprises. Enterprises are linked where any of the following is true:

- One enterprise holds a majority of the shareholders’ or members’ voting rights in another;
- One enterprise is entitled to appoint or remove a majority of the administrative, management or supervisory body of another;
- A contract between the enterprises, or a provision in the memorandum or articles of association of one of the enterprises, enable one to exercise a dominant influence over the other; and
- One enterprise is able, by agreement, to exercise sole control over a majority of shareholders’ or members’ voting rights in another.

When applying for application under £30k. How long does the lease have to be obtained for?

- For capital build where total grant aid of more than £50,000 is awarded for building, or renovation/refurbishment/development works the period of the lease must cover not less than 25 years from the date of the Letter of Offer,
- For capital build where total grant aid of £50,000 or less is awarded for building or renovation/refurbishment works the period of the lease must cover not less than 10 years from the date of the Letter of Offer,
- In all other cases (i.e. non capital build) the lease period should at the very least cover the period from the date of the Letter of Offer, until 5 years following the date of the final payment to the project. This lease period can be made up of a number of shorter-term consecutive leases where their renewal is closely monitored by the LAG to ensure continuity for the full lease period.
- Lease does not need to be shown at application stage, however must be in place at site visit stage to proceed to Letter of Offer.

Do I have a DAERA Business ID?

Businesses that have not previously received funding from DAERA (formerly DARD) will not have a Business ID number. This is not required at application stage. If your application is successful you will be required to obtain a DAERA Business ID.

If your business has previously obtained funding from DAERA (formerly DARD) you should have a Business ID number. Please note this on the application form.

At what stage is the base number of employees counted - At the application date or at the date of the letter of offer?

On the application form you must state the current number of employees of the applicant business. This is required to determine the type of the business, i.e. new micro, existing micro or small enterprise, at application stage. Depending on the full-time equivalent staff headcount at time of application this will determine a) if the application is from an eligible business type and b) the maximum grant amount available.

The information detailed on the application form will be verified at site visit if your application proceeds to assessment stage. Evidence will be sought by means of payroll records or contracts of employment.

The figures detailed on the application form will therefore be used as the baseline figure for employees (taking into account any changes at site visit after verification of jobs).

In most cases the proposed project for which funding is being sought will have associated job targets. The baseline figure detailed on the application form will be used to monitor new jobs created as a direct result of funding from the Rural Business Investment Scheme.

You are reminded that this is a job creation scheme. In particular, where capital investment is sought, projects not creating additional employment are highly unlikely to be successful applications.

We intend to submit our application. There is a lot of documentation which will not fit on 1 email. There may be up to 6 separate emails. Is this ok?

This is ok. If there are a number of attachments which cannot be sent in the one email then you can send more than one email when submitting your application. We would advise sending your application and all pre-requisite documentation on the same date at the one time.

If you have to send more than one email please:

- use the same Subject title on all the emails
- Identify the name of the applicant on the Subject title of all the emails
- Identify the email in sequence e.g. number the emails 1 of 6, 2 of 6, 3 of 6 and so on
- In the body of the email please list the documents attached to the email

Do you need planning permission for a piece of capital equipment?

If you are purchasing a piece of capital equipment you are not required to provide evidence of planning permission.

Planning permission is a pre-requisite for capital build applications. You are required to provide evidence of planning approval in this instance at time of application. Planning permission should be specific to the proposed project. We cannot accept any documentation other than the final approved planning certificate. If an application does not provide evidence of planning permission in this instance the application cannot proceed to assessment.

If you have an existing planning permission you must check that a 'Change of Use' planning application is/is not required. If a 'Change of Use' is required this should be approved and in place at time of application. If it is not required you should obtain written confirmation from the Planning Office.

In some cases capital works may not require planning permission. If this is the case you should obtain written confirmation from Planning that planning approval is not required.

All applicants are reminded however that you are legally responsible for ensuring that your business has planning permission to operate, irrespective of funding sought through the Rural Development Programme. If at any stage it is determined that you do not have the necessary planning permissions for your business any offer of funding for your project may be withdrawn.

Submitting an Application- Procurement

Should I declare a conflict of interest with procurement if I am aware of another potential conflict outside of those examples in the procurement guidelines which states 'family / extended family members'?

If there is any potential for a conflict of interest this should be declared in the interests of a fair and transparent procurement process being followed? The RDP Team should be informed of this potential conflict of interest in writing as soon as it becomes apparent. In completing procurement you must:

- a) Declare this in writing on the procurement documentation issued to potential tenderers
- b) Provide 3 quotes with your application – 2 independent quotes in addition to the quote provided from the party with the conflict of interest
- c) Provide a written declaration when submitting your application along with your procurement documentation stating:
 - a. Competitors quotes / tenders were not shared with the quoting party with whom there is a conflict of interest
 - b. As the applicant you have strictly adhered to the procurement requirements as set out in the Applicant Procurement Guidance document

If during a procurement process one of the tenders is a relative of a member of the Design Team and not the Applicant do we inform the other Tenderers of this?

If there is any potential for a conflict of interest this should be declared in the interests of a fair and transparent procurement process being followed. The RDP Team should be informed of this potential conflict of interest in writing as soon as it becomes apparent.

In completing procurement you must inform other tenderers of this relationship on the tender documents issued.

If there is a conflict of interest to be declared do we only need to advise tenderers of the matter but not give the name of the tenderer in question? To give out the name would be a breach of confidence and against normal tendering procedures.

It would be acceptable for you advise other tenderers of the relationship as a conflict of interest without informing the other tenderers of the company/person in question. When you submit your applicant and supporting procurement documentation you will be required to confirm in writing:

- a) Competitors quotes / tenders were not shared with the quoting party with whom there is a conflict of interest
- b) As the applicant you have strictly adhered to the procurement requirements as set out in the Applicant Procurement Guidance document

I am undertaking over £30k procurement and have only received 3 replies to tender advert. If none of these firms can meet my selection criteria what will I do?

For procurement over £30k for capital build projects you are required to undertake a pre-qualification stage as part of the process. If a tenderer does not pass all of the pre-qualification criteria as set out in the procurement documentation then they must be eliminated from the remainder of the tender process. This should be fully documented by the applicant with supporting evidence for the decision.

The pre-qualification criteria set are pre-requisites in submitting a tender. They cannot be amended mid process or once procurement documentation has been issued.

You are required to obtain a minimum of 2 tenders / quotes.

If the pre-qualification stage results in an applicant not obtaining the required number of quotes/tenders the application may be rejected from the call.

If you are concerned that you will not obtain the correct number of quotes you are advised to send a copy of the advert to a number of potential tenderers. Please retain evidence of this and any subsequent requests for the tender documentation. This provides evidence of seeking tenders.

We have contacted suppliers of marketing materials with a list of items to be quoted. We wish to clarify the following:

- a) *We requested prices for, for example 25 units 'X'. One company provided a price for the quantity requested and another had a minimum order. However, while the total price for 25*

was lower with Company A, Company B, supplying a larger minimum order of 72 , had a much lower unit price, fractionally above the total price for 25. Can we accept the price from Company B as this is better value or do we need to go back to Company A to quote for the minimum quantity per Company B?

b) Can we have 2 or more different suppliers for total marketing supplies? - i.e. Item 'X' is cheaper from Company A and item 'Y' is cheaper from Company B. Or do we accept the lower price for total supplies - i.e. Total price Company A v Total Price Company B?

c) If companies asked for quotes for items that they do not supply , can we get 2 online prices and supplement our marketing supplies with an online order?

a) In obtaining quotes you must compare on the basis of 'like for like', therefore in this scenario you cannot accept a price as the two quotes are not quoting for the same thing.

However, you can still use the quote for the required quantity as a valid quote if the total cost of the items is under £5,000 only. If this is the case you can then proceed to get a second comparison quote from the internet.

If you cannot obtain an internet quote you will have to re-procure. In the second procurement exercise you can ask the supplier of the valid quote to confirm if they will stand over their original quote. You should obtain this confirmation in writing. This can then be used as one of the two quotes in the second re-procurement exercise. You are required to obtain a minimum of 2 'like for like' quotes.

b) If you have issued a specification listing a group of related items together then you are required to accept the lower price for the total list of items.

In order to be able to select different suppliers for different items of marketing materials each item should have been procured separately i.e. separate specifications for each item and separate emails issuing each different specification to suppliers. This is the only way that you can purchase from different suppliers for items. In this example, suppliers should be provided with 10 days to return a quote therefore if you have not already undertaken procurement in this manner there is insufficient time to re-procure again separately for each item.

c) If the total costs of a group of related items is less than £5,000 you can use online quotes. You can obtain the 2 quotes required as internet quotes. In this case you do not have to issue specifications by email to suppliers. As part of your procurement documentation submitted with your application you should still provide a specification to evidence how the quotes were obtained and show that the prices are 'like for like'.

NB: Please also take into consideration comments at b) above. If you are grouping items the 2 internet quotes obtained should list all of the same items. If you intend to purchase from different suppliers for different items then there should be a separate procurement process for each item.

Does the email correspondence relating to the procurement process need to be emailed, or hard copy?

You must submit all procurement documentation with your application including all correspondence between you and the tenderers. This includes but is not limited to:

- a) Emails issuing specifications / tender packs – clearly showing the date/time the email was issued to the tenderer, the email address of the tenderer, and if there were attachments to the email. Please also submit copies of any attachments to emails
- b) Emails from tenderers regarding clarifications on the specification / tender documentation - clearly showing the date/time the emails were received, the email address of the tenderer, and if there were attachments to the email. Please also submit copies of any attachments to emails
- c) Emails with your response to clarifications – clarifications should be issued to all parties who are involved in the tender process and we need to see correspondence of same. The emails should clearly show the date/time the email(s) were issued to the tenderer, the email address of the tenderer, and if there were attachments to the email. Please also submit copies of any attachments to emails
- d) Emails from tenderers returning quotes (if applicable) – clearly showing date/time the quote was returned and if there were attachments to the email. The attachments may include the quote. Please also submit copies of any attachment to the emails

NB: Item d) above is not applicable for procurement processes over £30k. You cannot accept tenders returned by email. Tenders should only be returned by post or hard copy.

Submitting Procurement Documentation

If you can email this information along with your application we would advise that you do so. The emails should be forwarded as an email attachment or as a pdf document attachment, along with the application form and all other pre-requisite documentation to the email address on the last page of the application form. Please note where the email is a copy or pdf of the original email we may require verification of the emails on receipt of your application. Please retain all email correspondence on your email accounts for future reference.

In cases where applicants have had to complete quotations or tender exercises for goods or works over £5,001 we are prepared to accept hard copies of the information.

Do I need to receive tenders as a hard copy?

For items up to £4,999 - Price check in writing with at least 2 suppliers or internet quotations

For items from £5,000 - £29,999 – minimum 2 written quotes, can be received via email, post or hand

For items/services £30,000 and above – minimum 2 written quotes, must be submit by hand or post – envelopes must be included with procurement documentation

Our tenders have been received and are due to be opened tomorrow morning with architect and client present. Is a tender report completed by the QS with a recommendation to run with the successful tenderer required?

Yes a tender report should be completed after assessing and scoring tenders received. This should be submitted with your procurement documentation. You should submit all procurement documentation with your application including but not limited to:

- Original advert
- All correspondence i.e. copy of emails or letters issued
- Copy of tender pack issued
- All tenders received (all documentation submitted with each tender bid)
- Envelopes in which tenders returned
- Tender receipt record
- Scoring matrix for tenders
- Tender report

If you have received any late tenders these should not be opened or considered as a tender. Late tenders should be also be submitted as part of your application

Please refer to applicant programme procurement guidelines to ensure that you have adhered to procurement and provide the correct documentation with your application.

Submitting an Application- Match Funding

Can the declaration of support come from a Credit Union as match funding?

If the Credit Union are content to sign the declaration of support form this is an acceptable form of evidencing match funding. It should be signed and stamped by an official within the Credit Union.

If the Credit Union do not wish to sign the declaration of support form they can still provide match funding via their own internal process. Please note however that in this case any funding must be agreed and in place, i.e. in the applicant's own bank account, at time of application.

If the bank is not providing a loan and we are using own company funds, is a bank statement sufficient evidence? Do we also need to complete the Bank Support Declaration template?

If you are providing match funding using your own funds a bank statement is suffice. The bank statement submitted with your application must be dated within 5 working days from the date you submit your application and the available balance on that date should cover your required match funding contribution. It should clearly show the name on the account and the name of the bank. You do not need to complete the Bank Support Declaration form.

Can the evidence for 'match funding' be presented in the form of one bank statement or can it be drawn from more than one bank statement? I.e. Two different statements (one from a bank, an ISA savings fund and one from a Credit Union for example) but which in total equal the sum of match funding requirement total?

Yes, match funding can be evidenced from one or more bank statements. The bank statement(s) should clearly show that match funding for the project is available. If you are using more than one bank account the statements provided should collectively total the sum of match funding required for your project.

Statements should be dated within 5 working days of the date you submit your application and the available balance on that date should cover the required match funding contribution.

Can an ISA savings account statement be presented as proof of evidence for match funding? The ISA fund in this instance can be withdrawn and transferred in less than 24 hours?

An ISA savings account can be used as match funding. You must however provide an up to date statement for the account at the time of application. This should be dated within 5 working days from the date you submit your application and the available balance on that date should cover the required match funding contribution. If the statements are annual please contact your bank to obtain written confirmation of an up to date balance on the account.

The application invite document outlines that proof of match funding needs to be evidenced up to 5 working days before the application is in place? Can you please advise if this proof of match funding evidence needs to be in a bank account (or bank accounts) for up to 5 working days before the 13th November 2017?

The monies do not need to be lodged in your bank account(s) for 5 working days before you submit your application.

On the date that you submit your application you must have match funding in place. If using a bank statement as evidence of match funding the statement should show the correct available balance within 5 working days of the date you submit your application. For example, if you submit your application on 13th November, the bank statement should show sufficient funds between the 7th to 13th November. A sufficient balance any date during this period is suffice.

What type of documentation is acceptable if the match funding is from a bank account?

We can accept an original bank statement, online print out or print out from the bank stamped and initialled by a representative of the bank.

The documentation must clearly show the name of bank, name on the account and a closing balance for each date on the statement. If there is an overdraft facility that is to be utilised it should also detail available overdraft facility.

As a minimum the bank statement should show the balance on the date you submit your application. If this is not available on the date you submit your application the statement should show a date no earlier than 5 working days before the date you submit your application. There should be a sufficient balance on whichever date to demonstrate that you have the 50% match funding amount required for your application.

Please note if the bank account is not in your name or the business name we also require a cover letter from the person to whom the bank account belongs. This letter must state that the person has agreed to provide funding to you for the purposes of the RDP application and specify the amount of money that they are giving to you for your project.

In relation to showing match funding if bank won't loan all the money needed and I am getting the rest from a family member what do I need as proof of funding

You must provide a letter from the family member confirming the amount of loan that they are providing, who it is being given to and for what purpose. You must also provide proof that the family member has sufficient funds in their bank account to provide the loan. As with your own bank statement the family member's bank statement should show the correct available balance within 5 working days of the date you submit your application.

Submitting an Application- Business Plan

How should projections for an existing business be shown on the 3-Year Cashflow Projections?

Existing businesses applying to the scheme must be expanding into a new product, service or market with the proposed application. Cashflow projections should clearly differentiate between:

- a) existing sales and potential growth for the 3-year cashflow period; and
- b) new sales as a direct result of the project for the 3-year cashflow period

If an existing business is completing cashflow projections, should figures be based on the last set of accounts? If the most recent accounts are not available at the time of preparing the business plan how should figures within the cashflow justified?

In the absence of up to date accounts (over 6 months from date of application) existing businesses should prepare cashflow projections based on current business activity. If your application is deemed eligible at application stage a statement of affairs will be requested at site visit in addition to the last two years set of accounts. The figures stated in the opening balance of the 3-Year cashflow projections whilst not identical should reflect figures in the statement of affairs or accounts.

The Application process comes with its own Business Template. Do we have to use the provided template or can we use our own? If we have to use the template are all the headings (Section 1 to 6) applicable or can they be used as appropriate to the applicant fit?

You must only use the business plan template (word document) and 3 year cashflow spreadsheet (excel document) provided to complete your application. Both parts must be submitted with your

application. You cannot use any other format. All sections of the business plan and cashflow spreadsheet must be completed. You cannot alter the format of the documents.

Please note that once your application has been submitted you cannot add any additional information to your application, including the business plan. It is therefore essential that you include all relevant information in your application.

For an existing business that has a bank balance in excess of total Project costs , should the Year 1 funding ‘Own Cash’ show the estimated total cash at bank as at the start of the projections or only the bank balance relevant to the project?

Year 1 ‘Own Cash’ relates to your investment to the project. You are therefore only required to show cash input to deliver the project. We would recommend that you complete your projections on this basis. However, showing your full cash balance will not have a negative impact on the assessment of your application.

It is up to you how you wish to present the figures within the cashflow. Depending on the business, and how you feel it is best to show the financial activity within the business, you can choose to show the full financial picture. There is no issue in doing this.

In assessment of your application we will take either scenario into consideration. Whichever way you present the figures your application will not be negatively affected unless it is not providing a clear picture on the impact of the proposed project.

In the financial spreadsheet the instructions state that only the yellow shaded boxes in the work book should have data entered. Is there to be no data entered into the Estimated Op Bal page?

Data can be entered onto the ‘Estimated Opening Balance Page’.

This spreadsheet can be used to bring any pre-existing financial figures into consideration when preparing you future 3 year cashflow projections for your RDP application. Some sections on this Estimated Opening Balance Page spreadsheet may not be relevant or applicable to each business. Complete the page if required. If you are completing the Estimated Opening Balance Page please be aware of the effects the information will have on your balance sheet as the two documents are linked.

NB: Please ensure that any data entered on the spreadsheet is correct. The Excel document includes formulas. If you amend any sections of the document it may have an effect the formulas set up on the spreadsheet. It will be your responsibility to ensure that those formulas have calculated figures correctly if you chose to amend the spreadsheet.