

# DAERA Rural Business Development Grant Scheme (RBDGS) 2026/27

## ***PRE-APPLICATION WORKSHOP***

***Please wait while others join the meeting.***

***We will commence at 5.00pm.***

***Please put your 1. Name, 2. Business Name, Council area in the chat or***

***email it to [rural.development@fermanaghomagh.com](mailto:rural.development@fermanaghomagh.com)***

# DAERA Rural Business Development Grant Scheme (RBDGS) 2026/27

## Pre-Application Workshop

Funded by Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)

Through the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Framework & administered  
by Local Councils

# Agenda

- Level of Grant Aid
- Who Can Apply?
- What Can/Can't be Funded?
- The Application Process – Tips, Timescales & Scoring
- Procurement Guidance
- How Grants are Paid
- Q&A

# Level of Grant Available

- The Scheme can fund up to £7,500 at a maximum 50% grant rate.
- Minimum grant of £500 and project must cost between £1,000 and £30,000.

e.g. £1,000 project – £500 grant

Up to £30,000 project – up to £7,500 grant

- Projects must have a spend of at least £1,000 eligible items.
- This is a competitive process and all grants will be awarded on merit.

# Who Can Apply?

- Businesses registered and operating in a **rural area** (Population less than 5,000).
- Business or Social Economy Enterprise that is **actively trading commercially**.
- Businesses that currently **employ fewer than 10 full-time** equivalent employees.
- Applicant must be **aged 18 or over** at the time of application.
- **Only one application** accepted per business/legal entity.
- Ensure the project has not commenced.

# Who Can't Apply?

- Businesses based in urban areas.
- New start businesses who have yet to commence trading (all business sectors).
- Agricultural Businesses registered to a Category 1 DAERA Business ID or any other business registered to a Category 1 DAERA Business ID, undertaking mainstream agricultural activity. (Diversified businesses separate from the Category 1 ID are eligible to apply)
- Farm diversification projects where the diversified activity has not started trading.

# What can be Funded

- **Computer equipment**, e.g. computer, laptop, printer.
- **Computer software** (outright purchase; ongoing license fees are not eligible).
- **E-commerce Websites** to allow online purchase capabilities.
- **New equipment/ machinery**.
- **Mobile machinery**, such as scissor lifts, forklifts, ride-on lawn mowers.

The maximum number of items, or groupings of items, that you can purchase under the scheme is **six**.

# What Can't be Funded

- Second hand equipment, including refurbished equipment.
- Servicing of existing equipment.
- General maintenance or refurbishment works.
- Capital improvements, building works or refurbishments of any property (commercial or residential).
- Motorised vehicles, including vans, lorries, cars, boats, bikes, quads and any other form of motorised mobile vehicles
- Purchase of port-a-cabins, pods, or any other building.
- Solar panels and wind turbines, Generators, wood waste heaters
- Scaffolding, ventilation equipment
- CCTV, Signage
- Mobile Phones

Please refer to **Guidance Notes Section 1.6** for a full list of items that cannot be funded under the Scheme



# The Application

The online application available from week commencing 30<sup>th</sup> June 2026 will ask you to provide information on the following:

1. Applicant Details
2. Business Overview
3. Project Details
4. Project Costs
5. Project Timescales
6. De minimis Aid Declaration
7. Checklist/Declarations

# How to Apply

Online application to be submitted by **12noon on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2026**

- Online Application form and supporting documents, including:
  - Up to £10,000 - 2 price-checks from different suppliers per item;
  - £10,001 - £30,000 - At least 3 written quotes per item from different suppliers (internet quotes cannot be used)
  - Quotes must be comparable and demonstrate similar specifications, e.g weight, capacity, storage etc.

**Late applications will not be accepted – deadline is fixed at 12 noon on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2026.**

# Application Tips

- If you have any concerns regarding your eligibility please contact your Council
- Ensure you complete all sections/questions and uploaded all required documentation.
- Ensure projected outcomes are realistic and meaningful.
- Quantify any outputs e.g. how much additional revenue from sales/how many customers/number of jobs sustained or created.
- You must provide evidence that you placed your order, including the delivery date, within one month of the date of your letter of offer.
- When submitting your application please ensure you press save and then the save and submit button. If you do not receive an automated response please revisit and ensure you have pressed the submit button.
- Please ensure you submit your application well before the closing time to avoid issues such as difficulty accessing your NI account or system outages.

# Application Scoring

| Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | (a) Score out of a possible 5 | (a) Weighting | Overall Score (a x b) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Project Need: Clear and concise evidence of the need for the project within the scope of the fund                                                                                                                                                    |                               | X 6           | /30                   |
| Cost of Living: Clear assessment of impact of cost of living on business and project identified supports business growth                                                                                                                             |                               | X2            | /10                   |
| Economic Impact: Clear and realistic outcomes set for the project e.g. sustaining existing and creating employment opportunities, income generation, new markets entered, new products or services introduced                                        |                               | X4            | /20                   |
| Project Experience / Management Strength: Ability, skills and experience of the business which enables them to deliver the project                                                                                                                   |                               | X 4           | /20                   |
| Sustainability/Innovation Project demonstrates Promoting environmental sustainability, supporting net zero targets, or fostering innovation by reducing waste, saving energy, or creating new or more environmentally efficient products or services |                               | X 2           | /10                   |
| SUB- TOTAL                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                               |               | /90                   |
| Previous Funding: Has the applicant received TRPSI funding in 2024/25 or 2025/26 iterations of the Rural Business Development Grant Schemes?<br><br>If yes, score is 0 points<br><br>If no, score is 10 points                                       |                               |               |                       |
| TOTAL                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                               |               | /100                  |

# Procurement Guidance

| Total Estimated<br>Cost per Item | Action & Minimum Number                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Up to £10,000                    | At least 2 price-checks per item from <u>different</u> suppliers / internet quotations with estimation of delivery or lead time                         |
| £10,001 - £30,000                | At least 3 Written Quotes per item from <u>different</u> suppliers with estimation of delivery or lead time<br><br>(internet quotations cannot be used) |

# Procurement Guidance

- Email evidence is required for all quotations sought.
- Where it is possible to purchase items from the same supplier, you should group these in the same specification.
- You, or a business that you are part of, are excluded from quoting.
- If quotations are being sought from a family member, this must be advised in writing to Council prior to any procurement.
- Applicants should ensure that quotations are comparable. Where relevant, details such as size, capacity, storage or weight should support a reasonable assessment of value for money.
- Email quotes are acceptable and covering emails must also be provided.

# Procurement Guidance

- Quotes must include supplier's name.
- Internet quotes are acceptable for items under £10,000 – these can be supplied as screenshots or scanned attachments. The supplier, web address and cost must be clearly visible. Do not simply list web addresses or supply links as these will not be checked.
- Clarify whether any costs provided are inclusive or exclusive of VAT.
- The lowest quotation should be selected.
- Successful applicants will be paid 50% of the procurement submitted or the final price of each item, whichever is the lowest amount (up to a maximum grant of £7,500). Any price increases between procurement and purchase must be borne by the applicant.
- Quotations in other currencies should be compared using [www.x-rates.com](http://www.x-rates.com)

# Procurement Guidance

- All quotations must be submitted at the time of application, or your application will be deemed ineligible.
- Quotations must be supplied as attachments and clearly labelled. Links to electronic file storage services such as Dropbox and iCloud are not accepted.
- The copies of the quotations supplied must be in a **readable condition**.
- You must inform Council of any Conflict of Interest between your organisation and any other organisation, supplier, person or employee associated in any way with the delivery of the Project.

**Please note, Council and DAERA, as part of our verification checks, contact suppliers of quotations/invoices to confirm authenticity. Any quotation/invoice which cannot be verified by a supplier will be passed to DAERA Fraud Department for further investigation.**



# How Grants Are Paid

- Letters of Offer intended for issue on **15 October 2026**.
- Your project cannot commence until you receive a formal offer of funding.
- Your business will be required to pay all invoices, and these must be cleared through the business bank account by **3pm on 21 December 2026**.
- Submit a claim to Council by **3pm on 21 December 2026** – this will include invoices, bank statements and photographs of items purchased, on site and operational.
- Officers from your local Council, DAERA officers and/or Scheme auditors may arrange post project visits to verify spend which may delay your payment.

# Accessing the RBDGS Portal

- Use the 'Apply Now' option on the DAERA website
- Select the NI Direct Sign In
- Either sign in or create a new account
- Will receive a confirmation code which will be needed to progress
- Add personal details
- Identity Verification – upload a photo of driving licence or passport (This must match personal details to allow progression to next step).
- Identity Verification – use your device to take a photo of yourself

# Thank You

Complete your application online via the RBDGS Portal

Grant call closes **@ 12 noon on 30th July 2026**

## Contact Details:

**E. [rural.development@fermanaghomagh.com](mailto:rural.development@fermanaghomagh.com)**

**T. 0300 3031777**