



Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

Information Pack

Growing Opportunities Together



Department of
**Agriculture and
Rural Development**
www.dardni.gov.uk



'The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development: Europe
investing in rural areas'.

Introduction from the Minister

Over recent years rural areas have undergone considerable demographic, social and economic change. Although change can present a challenge to us all, it can also provide exciting opportunities to shape our future. Working together, we can make a difference in rural areas and to the lives of people living, working and visiting there.

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2007-2013 has been specifically designed to provide hands on support, advice and assistance, aimed at serving the needs of local communities and strengthening the rural economy. It aims to make agriculture, horticulture and rural businesses more competitive. The Programme also seeks to develop a more sustainable environment and to improve the quality of life for rural dwellers.

I have had the pleasure of visiting a wide variety of schemes and projects as well as meeting many dedicated people involved in rural development. There are many excellent initiatives throughout the North that demonstrate how the RDP is making a real difference to rural communities.

I am determined that support and funding will reach those rural communities and businesses that most need it. I am also committed to promoting equality of opportunity and encouraging uptake, particularly by rural women and young people.

Building on past strengths, working closely with stakeholders and in partnership with rural communities, I firmly believe that we can create prosperity for future generations by growing opportunities together.

Michelle Gildernew
Department of Agriculture
and Rural Development



Réamhrá ón Aire

Le blianta beaga anuas tháinig athrú mór déimeagrafach, sóisialta agus geilleagrach ar cheantair thuaithe. Cé gur féidir leis an athrú a bheith ina dhúshlán againn uilig, thig leis fosta deiseanna corraitheacha a sholáthar leis an todhchaí a mhúnlú. Is féidir linn, agus muid ag comhoibriú le chéile, difear a dhéanamh i gceantair thuaithe agus do shaol na ndaoine atá ina gcónaí nó ag obair nó ar cuairt ansin.

Dearadh Clár Forbartha Tuaithe (CFT) 2007-2013 go sainiúil le tacaíocht, comhairle agus cuidiú teagmhálach a sholáthar atá dírithe ar fhreastal ar riachtanais pobal áitiúil agus ar neartú an gheilleagair thuaithe. Tá sé mar aidhm aige talmhaíocht, gairneoireacht agus gnóthaí tuaithe a dhéanamh níos iomaíche. Féachann an Clár lena chois le comhshaol níos inbhuaine a fhorbairt agus le caighdeán beatha mhuintir na tuaithe a fheabhsú.

Bhí sé de phléisiúr agam cuairt a thabhairt ar réimse leathan scéimeanna agus tionscadal, chomh maith le castáil ar an iomad daoine tiomanta a bhfuil baint acu le forbairt tuaithe. Tá cuid mhór tionscnamh ar fheabhas ar fud an Tuaiscirt a léiríonn an dóigh a bhfuil an CFT ag déanamh difir fhíor do phobail tuaithe.

Tá rún daingean agam go bhfaighidh na pobail agus na gnóthaí tuaithe, is mó atá ina bhfeidhm, tacaíocht agus maoiniú. Lena chois sin, tá mé tiomanta do chur chun cinn comhionannas deise agus do ghríosú daoine le deiseanna a thapú, go háirithe mná agus daoine óga na tuaithe.

Agus muid ag tógáil ar nirt an ama atá thart, ag obair go dlúth le páirtithe leasmhara agus i gcomhpháirtíocht le pobail tuaithe, creidim go diongbháilte gur féidir linn rathúnas a chruthú do na glúine atá le teacht, ach muid deiseanna a sholáthar i gcomhar.

Michelle Gildernew
An Roinn Talmhaíochta
agus Forbartha Tuaithe



Introduction from the Minister

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Michelle Gildernew
Department of Agriculture
and Rural Development



Forrit fae the Meenester

I recent yeirs kintra airts hae hed mighty demographic, social an' economic altherations. The mair at altherations can gie a challenge tae ivryboadie hit can gie excitin' chansts tae shape tims tae cum forebye. Waarkin thegither we can mak' a differ i kintra airts an' tae the lifs o' fowk at lee, wrocht ir cailly thaire.

The Kintra Forderin Programme 2007-13 bes wrocht oot tae gie hans oan hefts, advice an' assistance airted aa servin' the needs o' locail communities an' biggin ap the kintra economy. Hit ettles tae mak' fairmin, meercet grawin an' kintra concairns mair fit tae compete. Forebye thon the Programme leuks tae developin' a mair sustainable environment an' tae mak' bether the qualitie o' lif o' thaim at bide i kintra airts.

A wus sarious gled tae visit a clatter o' differ schemes an' projects forebye meetin' wi' monie dedicated fowk taakin a han' i kintra forderin. Thair ir monie furst class initiatives athwort the Noarth at shew hoo the Kintra Forderin Programme bes maakin a real differ tae kintra communities.

A'hm strangly mindet at hefts an' catter wul gae tae thae kintra communities an' concairns at hae maist need fer thaim. A'hm committed forebye tae heftin equalitie o' chansts an' leukin tae get aptak' i pairticular bae kintra weemin an' young fowk.

Biggin oan pas' strenghts, waarkin langside stakehoulders an i partnerschip wi' kintra communities A strangly alloo at we ir fit tae mak' prosperity fer the generations tae cum bae grawin chansts thegither.

Michelle Gildernew
Depairtment o' Fairms an' Kintra Forderin



Contact Details

Where can I find out more?



If you would like to find out more, about the Rural Development Programme, please contact us:

Tel: 0845 3044 509 • **Website:** www.rdpni.info • **Email:** rdp@dardni.gov.uk

Write to us at: Rural Development Programme, Room 141, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SB

or call in to any of the DARD offices listed below:

Department of Agriculture
and Rural Development
Kilpatrick House
38-54 High Street
Ballymena
BT43 6DT

Department of Agriculture
and Rural Development
Crown Buildings
Artillery Rd
Coleraine
BT79 7AQ

Department of Agriculture
and Rural Development
Glenree House
Carnbane Industrial Estate
Newry
BT35 6EF

Department of Agriculture
and Rural Development
Inishkeen House
Killyhevlin Industrial Estate
Enniskillen
BT74 4EJ

Department of Agriculture
and Rural Development
Rathkeltair House
Market St
Downpatrick
BT30 6LZ

Department of Agriculture
and Rural Development
Crown Buildings
Thomas Street
Dungannon
BT70 1HR

Department of Agriculture
and Rural Development
2 Newry Road
Armagh
BT60 1EN

Department of Agriculture
and Rural Development
Sperrin House
Sedan Avenue
Omagh
BT79 7AQ



Section 1

Rural Development Programme

Farming and Food

The Rural Development Programme will help to improve the performance of agricultural and forestry businesses by funding farm modernisation, helping businesses to improve their processing and marketing skills and supporting projects that will strengthen supply chain partnerships. Advice, mentoring and training will also be available for farmers and their families.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking is funded under Axis 1 of the Rural Development Programme.

Benchmarking aims to contribute to the creation of a more competitive agricultural industry through the provision of quality information to farmers and growers from which they can make business decisions.

The scheme is delivered on behalf of DARD by an appointed agent who works in association with the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE). The appointed agent is responsible for the recruitment of farmers, the collection and collation of data and forwarding the cleansed data to CAFRE. CAFRE's role is to analyse the data, quality assure the benchmarking figures, send out reports to the farmers and provide advice based on the information.

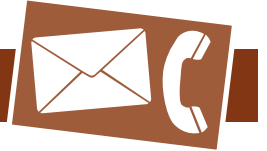
This information seeks to help farmers to see where their business sits in relation to others of a similar type and size — not just in terms of profitability, but also in terms of output and costs. The support and assistance provided by previous benchmarking programmes has demonstrated how beneficial it is in improving business competitiveness and sustainability.

Who can apply?



Benchmarking is open to full or part-time farmers and growers. While there is no minimum size requirement for entry, the benefits to be gained from the programme increases with the scale of the enterprise being benchmarked.

How do I apply?



The opening and closing dates for schemes/programmes supported by the Rural Development Programme are advertised and promoted widely.

The Rural Development Programme website www.rdpni.info provides a full list of what is currently open for applications together with further details of each scheme/programme and how to apply. If you do not have access to the Internet or require additional information please contact us using the details provided overleaf.

Please Note: If you have previously benchmarked any of your farm enterprises, we will contact you, directly, inviting you to continue with the process.

What happens next?



A visit to your farm will be arranged. During the visit, information necessary for the benchmarking of your enterprise(s) will be collected. This information, together with that relating to all participating farms, will be entered onto the CAFRE computer system and compared with averages for that sector. A copy of the report will be sent to you and your appointed CAFRE adviser.

CAFRE advisers specialise in designated business areas e.g. dairying, beef and sheep, arable, pigs etc. When your adviser receives a benchmarking report he or she will arrange a farm visit to discuss the results and make recommendations for the future. Follow-up visits may take place at the request of the farmer.

The process of giving advice is a continuous one assisted, as far as possible, by annual benchmarking reports. These will help to show progress, assess the outcome of changes and provide guidance for further improvements.

Frequently asked questions



What are the benefits of Benchmarking?

Benchmarking shows the performance of your farm enterprise and compares it with averages from similar farm enterprises. It highlights the strengths and weaknesses of your farm business. Thus, areas for improvement can be flagged up and lessons can be learnt from other farmers. It will also help you to focus on the main factors affecting the profitability and cost control of your business.

How can I be certain of confidentiality?

The high level of confidentiality currently provided by CAFRE regarding analysed data will be maintained.

CAFRE will hold the information on their database at Greenmount Campus. Data collection staff will be trained to ensure that an individual's information is kept confidential at all times.

Where can I find out more?



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Focus Farms

The Focus Farms' Scheme is funded under Axis 1 of the Rural Development Programme.

It aims to contribute to the creation of a more competitive agriculture industry through the provision of farmer-led training to farmers.

Focus Farms participating in the Scheme are commercial farms that demonstrate good farming practices. The farms represent a range of farm businesses and locations and promote good practice by example. They are available for visits by groups of farmers, where they can learn, share experiences and solve common problems through discussion, farm walks and demonstrations.

Focus Farmers receive financial assistance towards establishing and maintaining their farm as a training facility and also benefit from benchmarking of their farm against similar farms.

Focus Farms will be benchmarked against similar farms. Visiting farmers will have an opportunity to compare their own performance information with that of the Focus Farm. They can also benefit from a mentoring programme which provides access to the Focus Farmer on a one-to-one basis to follow up questions arising from the farm visit.

What type of farm can I visit?



Focus Farmers have been appointed across a range of key areas. Key areas include the Dairy, Beef, Sheep, Pig, Arable, Commercial Horticulture, Organic, Renewable Crops, Diversification and Environmental sectors.

Who can visit a Focus Farm?



Focus Farm visits are open to farmers and farm families who have a Business Identification Number (Business ID).

How do I arrange a visit to a Focus Farm?



Visits are arranged in response to demand. If you are interested in visiting a farm, you will be required to indicate what type of farm you want to visit and the area in which you live. You will then be contacted with a date and a time when the minimum number required for a group visit has been reached.

Why visit a Focus Farm?



Focus Farmers will be able to outline management practices and share experiences of managing a farm business as well as demonstrating:

- good farming practices;
- innovative farming methods;
- modern technology;
- on-farm research.

Frequently asked questions



How much will it cost me to visit a Focus Farm?

Focus Farm visits are free of charge.

What precautions are taken to prevent the spread of disease?

If a Focus Farm is under any restrictions for disease reasons, visits will be suspended until the restrictions are lifted.

Each Focus Farm is required to prepare a bio-security plan to protect stock on the farm. Visitors will be asked to wear clothes which have not been in contact with their own stock prior to the visit. Protective clothing and footwear will be provided by the Focus Farmer. Disinfectant dips for cars and footwear will also be available at the entry points to the farm.

Where can I find out more?



The Rural Development Programme website www.rdpni.info provides further details of the Focus Farms and other schemes that may be of interest.

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Supply Chain Development Programme

The Supply Chain Development Programme is funded under Axis 1 of the Rural Development Programme.

It aims to increase the number of new and collaborative initiatives in the agri-food and forestry sectors which will lead to more effective and sustainable supply chains.

Support under the Supply Chain Development Programme will facilitate collaboration in the supply chain and promote the development of new supply chain partnerships.

Support will also be provided to producers working together or along with a processor/end user to establish a new or more effective supply chain process/relationship.

- **Training** — Funding is available towards training of group members in order to develop the capability of the group to achieve their goals.
- **Use of Business Tools** — Funding is available for business tools, for example, benchmarking, lean manufacturing or value chain analysis by all or some of the group members.
- **Co-operation Support** — Funding is available towards costs associated with professional services or advice.

Who can apply?



Groups of primary producers in the agri-food and forestry sectors are eligible to apply to the Supply Chain Development Programme.

What funding is available?



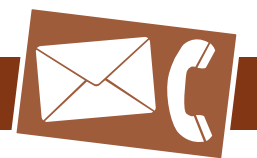
Successful applicants to the Supply Chain Development Programme will be eligible to receive a package of support that includes all or some of the following:

- **Facilitation/Mentoring** — A facilitator and/or mentor will be provided to help a group progress their supply chain initiative. A maximum of 50 days is available within the following limits:-

Facilitation - up to a maximum of 5 days per month.

Mentoring - up to a maximum of 10 days per year.

How do I apply?



The opening and closing dates for schemes/programmes supported by the Rural Development Programme are advertised and promoted widely. The Rural Development Programme website www.rdpni.info provides a full list of what is currently open for applications together with further details of each scheme/programme and how to apply.

If you are interested in participating in this Programme, but do not have access to the Internet please contact us using the details provided overleaf.

Frequently asked questions



Do groups have to be legally constituted to apply?

No. However, as the group develops it will need a bank account in the name of the group to avail of some of the elements of the Supply Chain Development Programme.

Can an individual producer apply?

No. The Supply Chain Development Programme is only available to two or more producers.

Can one or more members of the group be a processor or retailer?

The Supply Chain Development Programme has been designed for producers. However producers involved in other activities such as processing or retailing are eligible to apply.

Where can I find out more?



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Family Farm Options

Family Farm Options is funded under Axis 1 of the Rural Development Programme.

It aims to encourage farmers and farm family members to consider options, for both themselves and their farm, and provide the necessary training and support to secure the viability of their farm business and their own financial well-being.

There are two elements:

Farm Family Options – This will assist farmers and farm family members with analysing their current position and identifying their options for the future.

Skills Training – This, although not part of the Rural Development Programme, will run in conjunction with the Farm Family Options element. It will provide farm family members with guidance on training opportunities and financial assistance to develop new, work-related skills.

Applicants to the programme will meet with a mentor to discuss what assistance is available.

After identification of their initial needs, applicants will be directed to:

- Farm Family Options;
- Skills Training;
- Alternative scheme/programme supported by the Rural Development Programme; or
- Signposted to other services.

Who can apply?



Both the Farm Family Options and the Skills Training Schemes are open to farmers and farm families of agricultural and horticultural businesses and who have a Business Identification Number (Business ID).

What funding is available?



Under the Farm Family Options Scheme financial assistance is available towards the cost of legal and financial advice, if required as part of the options appraisal process.

The Skills Training element focuses on courses which could provide farm family members with the necessary training and support to develop work-related skills and generate additional income. Courses such as LGV driving, Health and Safety, forklift training, excavator training and computers may be considered. Equally, modules in childcare, eldercare and counselling would be considered, as would essential skills training. This may be the preferred route prior to progressing to more specific job training.

Hobby-type courses, e.g. art classes, flower arranging and digital photography, as well as courses at NVQ levels four and five will not be supported.

How do I apply?



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Agricultural and Forestry Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme

The Agricultural and Forestry Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme is funded under Axis 1 of the Rural Development Programme.

It seeks to improve the economic performance and international competitiveness of the agri-food processing, horticulture and forestry sectors.

The scheme is delivered jointly by DARD and Invest Northern Ireland.

The key aims of the Scheme are:

- to improve the competitiveness of agricultural (including horticultural) and forestry products in the market place and benefit the primary producers providing the raw material for processing;
- to encourage greater integration and collaboration between producers and processors;
- to add value to agricultural products through the application of appropriate technology together with sound manufacturing processes; and
- to improve the application of appropriate technology in the forestry sector where the output is a renewable energy product.

Who can apply?



The Scheme is open to micro, small, medium and intermediate sized enterprises with fewer than 750 employees in the agricultural and horticultural sectors who are involved in processing and marketing including:

- processors;
- groups of producers who market their produce collaboratively; and
- individual producers who want to process and market their own produce.

In the case of the forestry sector the Scheme is limited to micro enterprises.

Projects must primarily (at least 90%) concern the processing and/or marketing of primary agricultural products or forestry products (fishery products are not included) covered by Annex 1 to the Treaty of Rome. Investments must fall within the following sectors:

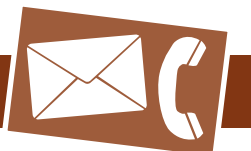
- Red meat;
- Pig meat;
- Poultry meat;
- Eggs;
- Milk and milk products;
- Potatoes;
- Horticulture (including fruit and vegetables);
- Cereals;
- Forestry.

What funding is available?



The level of grant aid will vary depending on the size and turnover of the enterprise. The maximum grant payable is at a rate of 40% of eligible costs subject to a maximum of £500,000. In the case of forestry applications, the maximum grant available is £130,000.

How do I apply?



The opening and closing dates for schemes/programmes supported by the Rural Development Programme are advertised and promoted widely. The Rural Development Programme website www.rdpni.info provides a full list of what is currently open for applications together with further details of each scheme/programme and how to apply.

If you are interested in participating in this Scheme but do not have access to the Internet please contact us using the details below.

What happens next?



When your application is received we will check to make sure that it is eligible and to see that it has been correctly completed and all relevant documents included.

If your application:

- passes these initial checks, we will acknowledge it within five working days.
- is incomplete, we will send it back highlighting the missing information and we will only process it once all of the required information has been received
- is ineligible, it will be rejected.

If your application passes these checks, it will be assessed for eligibility. This might include a visit to your premises to inspect the project location and undertake an expert technical assessment. Checks will be undertaken to ascertain whether you have made an application for aid for the same project, or part of the project, under another European Community or national scheme. We will write to inform you of the outcome of this assessment.

Eligible applications will be considered by a selection panel and, if successful, will be issued with a Letter of Offer.

Ineligible applications will be rejected and an explanation provided.

Frequently asked questions



How do I know if the raw materials in my product are covered by Annex 1 to the Treaty of Rome?

In the application form, applicants will be asked to list all of the ingredients used in each of their products. This information is then classified by DARD, who will confirm whether 90% of the inputs are Annex 1 products.

What is covered under marketing costs?

Marketing costs under the Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme are for capital costs associated with packaging, labelling and chilled- storage equipment. Costs of promotional materials, for example, in developing a website or producing leaflets, are not eligible.

When can I start my project?

Work on a project must not commence until DARD has given written approval. Projects which breach this will not be considered for a Processing and Marketing Grant.

Where can I find out more?



If you would like to find out more, please contact us:

Tel: 0845 3044 509

Website: www.rdpni.info

Email: rdp@dardni.gov.uk

Write to us at: Rural Development Programme, Room 141, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SB

or call in to your local DARD office.

Agricultural and Forestry Marketing and Development Grant Scheme

The Agricultural and Forestry Marketing and Development Grant Scheme is funded under Axis 1 of the Rural Development Programme.

It provides financial support for businesses engaged in the marketing of the produce of agriculture (including horticulture) and forestry or of agricultural products derived from such produce.

The key aims of the scheme are to improve the economic performance and international competitiveness of the agri-food and forestry sectors by:

- Encouraging greater integration and collaboration between producers, processors and others in the food, wood-supply and renewable-energy chains; and
- Improving the application of technology in the forestry sector and improving the marketing capability of businesses in the food, wood-supply and renewable energy chains.

Who can apply?



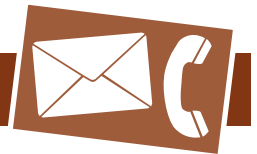
The Agricultural and Forestry Marketing and Development Grant Scheme is open to micro, small, medium and intermediate sized agri-food enterprises, including individual producers or others wishing to set up a procurement group, groups of collaborating producers, food processors, trade associations and industry bodies. In the case of forestry, support will be limited to micro enterprises.

What funding is available?



Projects submitted by micro, small and medium sized enterprises may be paid at a grant rate of up to 40% of eligible costs. Projects submitted by intermediate enterprises may be paid at a grant rate of up to 20% of eligible costs. The maximum grant payable on a project is £150,000.

How do I apply?



The opening and closing dates for schemes/programmes supported by the Rural Development Programme are advertised and promoted widely. The Rural Development Programme website www.rdpni.info provides a full list of what is currently open for applications together with further details of each scheme/programme and how to apply.

If you are interested in participating in this Scheme but do not have access to the Internet please contact us using the details provided overleaf.

What happens next?



Your application will be checked for eligibility and a technical evaluation by DARD staff will be carried out. Your application will be assessed competitively by a Selection Panel. You will then receive a letter to inform you whether your application has been successful or not. If your application is successful, you will receive a detailed Letter of Offer. If you are unsuccessful, we will write to you and explain why.

Frequently asked questions



I received a grant under the previous Scheme, am I eligible to apply for this Scheme?

Yes, you may apply to this Scheme if you have previously been awarded a grant, but the process is competitive.

What types of projects can the grant be used for?

The Scheme brochure will contain information relating to the type of project that can be funded. Examples are feasibility studies into identifying new markets, the impact of new processing methods or a quality assurance system on a market, or the possibility of producer groups collaborating to market a product. Staff costs to implement marketing, or a new quality assurance system are also possible.

Can I use my grant to buy new equipment?

No, capital expenditure other than the provision of new ICT equipment is not eligible. The Scheme provides grants for costs associated with improvement of marketing and staffing costs incurred to achieve this.

Where can I find out more?



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Farm Modernisation Programme

The Farm Modernisation Programme is funded under Axis 1 of the Rural Development Programme.

It aims to contribute to improving the competitiveness and economic performance of agricultural and horticultural businesses in Northern Ireland.

This programme will provide financial support for farm business across all sectors to modernise their holdings and improve their production techniques through on-farm investments in new plant, machinery and equipment over six priority investment areas:

- Introduction of new technologies and innovation;
- Improved animal health and welfare;
- Increased hygiene control and product storage;
- Enhanced occupational safety and business efficiency;
- Increased energy efficiency; and
- Enhanced environmental status.

A sub-programme, the Manure Efficiency Technology Sub-Programme, aims to encourage uptake of specific advanced slurry spreading distribution systems. These technologies will help farmers to achieve greater nutrient efficiency from manures and slurry and reduce the environmental impact.

Who can apply?



This Programme is open to all farm businesses with a Business Identification Number (Business ID).

What funding is available?



Financial support will be provided at up to 40% of the invoiced purchase cost of a wide range of plant, machinery and equipment from a pre-defined list of eligible items up to a maximum amount allowable for each item.

Two levels of financial support will be available:

Farm Modernisation Programme (FMP) — Financial support per farm business of up to £5,000 on eligible expenditure of £12,500 will be available for the FMP List of Eligible Items. Expenditure in excess of this will not attract additional funding. Farm businesses must apply for a minimum financial support of £1,000 (that is, minimum eligible expenditure of £2,500); and

Manure Efficiency Technology Sub-Programme (METS) — Financial support of up to £10,000 will be available for a limited list of advanced slurry handling equipment.

How do I apply?



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Funds will be allocated on a “first come, first served” basis.

What happens next?



When your application is received we will:

- acknowledge its receipt within 10 working days; and
- determine its eligibility against the programme selection criteria.

If your application passes the eligibility selection criteria as detailed in the Explanatory Booklet and subject to availability of funds, you will receive a Letter of Offer detailing the items for which financial support is being provided, the amount of financial support awarded, the appropriate timescale for the submission of the claim for payment and the terms and conditions under which the financial support is awarded. Funding will be allocated on a “first come, first served” basis. If your application is not successful you will receive a letter detailing the reason(s) why.

Frequently asked questions



Why are the maximum financial support amounts so low?

There is a limited budget for this programme. During consultation, industry representatives were keen to restrict the maximum amount of support per farm business so as to allow more farmers to avail of the programme. The higher maximum financial support level for METS takes account of the significant cost of advanced slurry spreading systems.

Can the list of eligible items be changed?

Yes. Funding for the programme will be released in several tranches. Between the tranches for funding the list will be reviewed for uptake across the farming sectors, and if required, it will include additional modernising items.

What is not eligible for funding?

Funding is only available for the purchase of the items detailed on the List of Eligible Items. It will not be available for other items or associated costs incurred such as construction, delivery, installation, training, extended warranties, insurance, maintenance, running costs, labour and so on. Second-hand equipment is not eligible. Funding will only be provided for items used in agricultural businesses. Any item used in full or in part for other businesses or domestic purposes will not be eligible.

Where can I find out more?



If you would like to find out more, please contact us:

Tel: 0845 3044 509

Website: www.rdpni.info

Email: rdp@dardni.gov.uk

Write to us at: Rural Development Programme, Room 141, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SB

or call in to your local DARD office.

Short Rotation Coppice Scheme

The Short Rotation Coppice Scheme is funded under Axis 1 of the Rural Development Programme and delivered by DARD.

It aims to assist in developing the wider renewable energy market by increasing the amount of SRC grown for energy use in Northern Ireland.

Short rotation coppice is a specialised form of forestry plantation which involves growing high yielding trees, such as willow, at close spacing and harvesting at regular intervals (every two to three years). The harvested crop is usually converted into wood chips which can be used as a fuel to generate heat and electricity. When oil and gas prices are volatile, wood-chip energy provides a consistent energy source and a long-term supply.

Who can apply?



The short rotation coppice scheme is open to farmers and land managers with at least three hectares of agricultural land available for planting.

How do I apply?



The opening and closing dates for schemes/programmes supported by the Rural Development Programme are advertised and promoted widely. The Rural Development Programme website www.rdpni.info provides a full list of what is currently open for applications together with further details of each scheme/programme and how to apply.

If you are interested in participating in this scheme but do not have access to the Internet please contact us using the details below.

What funding is available?



	Level of support	Maximum rate of grant/ha
Less Favoured Area (LFA)	Up to 50% of establishment costs (or up to 60% for young farmers)*	£1,000
Outside Less Favoured Area (LFA)	Up to 40% of establishment costs (or up to 50% for young farmers)*	£1,000

*A young farmer is defined as a person who has successfully entered the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Financial Assistance for Young Farmers Scheme for Northern Ireland (also known as the New Entrants Scheme).

Grant aid is paid in two instalments – 70% when planting is completed and 30% when cutback is completed after the first year.

What happens next?



When your application is received we will check it to make sure that it is eligible and to see that it has been correctly completed, best practice guidelines have been followed and that all relevant documents are included.

If your application:

- passes these initial checks, we will acknowledge it;
- is incomplete, does not follow best practice guidelines, or ineligible, we will inform you of what you need to do and will only process it once all of the required information has been received.

If your application is eligible, a forester will arrange to carry out a site visit in order to confirm suitability. If your application is successful, you will receive a letter of approval, an annotated map and a claim form.

Do I need to have an end use for the harvested crop?

Yes. You will need to submit a letter of intent from your intended end user as well as a contract showing how much biomass they expect to receive and for how long. If you intend to grow the crop to heat your own home, you will need to produce evidence of plans you have to install suitable equipment.

Can I plant in several phases?

No. The agreed area must be planted in one phase in the season immediately following application (usually Springtime). It is not possible to add land to an existing agreement. A new application must be submitted for any additional land.

Would the Short Rotation Coppice Scheme affect my Single Farm Payments?

You can plant land with Short Rotation Coppice and this area can be claimed under your Single Farm Payment.

Frequently asked questions



When can I apply?

You can apply at any time during the year, but applications must be received before 31 January each year for funding of planting in the following spring.

How long does the application process take?

You will normally be informed whether your application has been approved within eight weeks of Forest Service acknowledging the eligibility of your application. However, this will depend on whether any objections are raised or if further information is required.

Where can I find out more?



If you would like to find out more please contact us:

Tel: 0845 3044 509

Website: www.rdpni.info

Email: rdp@dardni.gov.uk

Write to us at: Rural Development Programme, Room 141, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SB

or call in to your local DARD office.

Section 2

Rural Development Programme

Environment and Countryside

The Rural Development Programme will help to improve the environment and the countryside through schemes such as the Countryside Management Scheme and the Organic Farming Scheme. Support will also be available for land owners who wish to convert their land to forestry use, or who are maintaining existing afforested areas.

Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowances Scheme

The Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowances Scheme (LFACA) is funded under Axis 2 of the Rural Development Programme and delivered by DARD.

It aims to support those who farm in naturally less favoured areas in Northern Ireland.

Support under this scheme will contribute to:

- Ensuring continued agricultural land use and thereby contributing to the maintenance of a viable rural society;
- Maintaining the countryside; and
- Maintaining and promoting sustainable farming systems which, in particular, take account of environmental protection requirements.

Who can apply?



The Scheme is open to farmers in Less Favoured Areas (LFA) who use their land to maintain breeding herds of beef cattle, sheep, deer and goats.

To claim, the applicant must have a Business Identification Number (Business ID) and;

- Have at least 3 hectares of eligible forage land in the Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA) and/or Disadvantaged Area (DA);
- Keep enough eligible stock to meet the minimum 0.2 Livestock Units per hectare stocking density requirement;
- Have the land available and accessible and meet the stocking density requirement throughout the period of 1 April to 31 October;

- Adhere to the Cross-Compliance requirements; and
- Undertake to farm in the LFA for five years from the first payment of a compensatory allowance.

What funding is available?



The scheme has two parts:

1. An area-based payment for eligible hectares of SDA and DA land; and
2. A “cattle bonus” which increases the area based payment for those farmers who have 25% or more of their eligible livestock units as suckler cows or heifers.

Payments are normally made annually.

How do I apply?



The opening and closing dates for schemes/ programmes supported under the Rural Development Programme are advertised and promoted widely. The Rural Development Programme website www.rdpni.info provides a full list of what is currently open for applications together with further details of each scheme/ programme and how to apply.

If you do not have access to the Internet or require additional information please contact us using the details on the reverse.

An application must be made on the IACS/Single Application Form (SAF1) and land declared on

the Field Data Sheets (SAF 2) under land use codes FR1 grass for grazing, hay or silage, rough grazing, grazed heather, lucerne, sainfoin, clovers, forage vetches or OT3 grazed orchards or grazed woodlands.

What happens next?



LFACA claims made on the Single Application Form within the application period and signed by the claimant will usually be acknowledged within 10 to 15 working days of receipt. Unsigned forms are invalid and will be returned.

Applications will then be subject to validation checks, during which any obvious completion errors will be identified. We will write to claimants to try and resolve these.

After these initial validation checks, claims go through eligibility checks which cover:

- Validation on the areas claimed; and
- Checks on the number of eligible livestock maintained throughout the qualifying periods.

land, each must ensure that they meet the full requirements of the respective schemes to which they are applying. Failure to meet these requirements may result in penalties being applied. In conacre and leasing agreements, great care should be taken to avoid both parties claiming under the same scheme for the same land.

Will there be any on-farm inspections?

We must carry out on-farm inspections on at least 5% of applicants to see if the requirements of the scheme are complied with. In addition, a further 1% minimum of applicants will also be inspected for cross compliance purposes.

Will any penalties be applied?

LFACA payments will be based on eligible forage area after account has been taken of any penalties that reduce your land, because of, for example, overdeclaration. You may also be penalised if, for example, we get your application late. You may be penalised if you do not adhere to the cross compliance requirements. Any penalties will be proportionate to the severity, extent, permanence and repetition of the non-compliance.

Frequently asked questions



Can I claim LFACA on conacre land?

Many farmers claim LFACA on conacre land. With the introduction of the Single Farm Payment (SFP) Scheme, some landowners established SFP entitlements on the LFA land that they let in conacre. Landowners could establish and claim SFP entitlements on land they owned and continue to let to farmers provided they retained sufficient management control of the land to enable them to maintain it in GAEC. However, the farmer to whom the land is let may use this conacre land to support claims for LFACA payment. In circumstances where the landowner is claiming SFP and the tenant is claiming LFACA for the same

Where can I find out more?



If you would like to find out more please contact us:

Tel: 0845 3044 509

Website: www.rdpni.info

Email: rdp@dardni.gov.uk

Write to us at: Rural Development Programme, Room 141, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SB

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Countryside Management Scheme

The Countryside Management Scheme is funded under Axis 2 of the Rural Development Programme and delivered by DARD.

It provides financial support to farmers and landowners for adopting farming practices that enhance our countryside.

The key aims of the scheme are:

- To maintain and enhance biodiversity in line with the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy and the Northern Ireland Programme for Government 2008-2011 by maintaining species diversity through the positive management of farmland habitats and to protect and enhance ASSI/Natura 2000 sites;
- To assist implementation of the Water Framework Directive; and
- To enhance landscape and heritage features by integrating their management into the everyday workings of the farm.

Who can apply?



The Countryside Management Scheme is open to all farmers and land managers with a Business Identification Number (Business ID) and with at least three hectares of eligible land.

What funding is available?



Annual payments vary according to farm size, the farmland habitats and historic monuments that are present and the areas or length of habitat.

How do I apply?



Applications to the Scheme will be invited during specific periods.

The opening and closing dates for schemes/programmes supported under the Rural Development Programme are advertised and promoted widely. The Rural Development Programme website www.rdpni.info provides a full list of what is currently open for applications together with further details of each scheme/programme and how to apply.

If you are interested in participating in this scheme but do not have access to the Internet, please contact us using the details below.

To apply to the Countryside Management Scheme, you should contact us during the application period to check your eligibility. We will require the following information:

- Your Business Identification Number (Business ID); and
- Details of leased land (not conacre) you wish to enter into the Scheme.

We will use this information to create a report giving details of what land is eligible for the Scheme or, in cases where your land is ineligible, you will be provided with a reason(s) why.

If you are eligible and decide to proceed with your application, we will issue an acknowledgement and send you a detailed information pack.

What happens next?



When your application is received it will be assessed and prioritised against set criteria for the Scheme. We will write to inform you whether your application has been successful or not.

If your application is successful, a member of Countryside Management Branch will contact you to make an appointment to carry out a farm audit. The audit consists of three parts:

1. An overview of the Scheme rules;
2. A farm nutrient and waste management advisory visit and assessment; and
3. Land classification.

Following successful completion of the audit, we will write to you to tell you when your Scheme should commence. This date is called your “start date” and you should not commence any scheme work before this date. A scheme agreement normally lasts for seven years from this date.

Frequently asked questions



I am in an existing agri-environment scheme, can I enter into this scheme?

Yes. However, in the event of too many applications for the scheme, applications may have to be prioritised. This may mean that existing scheme holders will have a lower priority than applicants with designated sites.

Will participation in the Countryside Management Scheme affect my Single Farm Payment?

It is generally possible to claim Single Farm Payment and Countryside Management Scheme payment on the same area of land.

However, you should consult with us regarding the latest advice on SFP and agri-environment, and the likely affect on your farm business.

How do I claim for payment?

In all cases, Countryside Management Scheme participants must complete an IACS Single Application Form to claim the annual Scheme payment.

Can I enter only part of my farm into the Countryside Management Scheme?

No. The Countryside Management Scheme is a “whole” farm scheme. All owned eligible land which is not leased out and is held by the farm business must be entered into the Scheme.

Where can I find out more?



If you would like to find out more, please contact us:

Tel: 0845 3044 509

Website: www.rdpni.info

Email: rdp@dardni.gov.uk

Write to us at: Rural Development Programme, Room 141, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SB

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Organic Farming Scheme

The Organic Farming Scheme is funded under Axis 2 of the Rural Development Programme and delivered by DARD.

It aims to protect and enhance the rural environment and encourage and assist farmers to convert to organic farming to help meet consumer demand for organic produce.

It provides payments to help them with the additional costs and loss of income that occurs during the conversion period to organic production.

Who can apply?



The Organic Farming Scheme is open to all farmers and land managers with a Business Identification Number (Business ID) and at least one hectare of horticultural land or at least three hectares of arable, improved and semi-improved land.

What funding is available?



Annual payments vary according to farm size, type of land and crops grown.

How do I apply?



Applications to the Scheme will be invited during specific periods. The opening and closing dates for schemes/programmes supported under the Rural Development Programme are advertised and promoted widely. The Rural Development

Programme website www.rdpni.info provides a full list of what is currently open for applications together with further details of each scheme/programme and how to apply.

If you do not have access to the Internet or require additional information please contact us using the details below.

What happens next?



When the Organic Farming Scheme is open for applications, you should contact us to register your interest and check your eligibility. This can be done using the details below.

If you are eligible for the Scheme, we will arrange to visit your farm. During this visit you will be given an overview of the Scheme rules, your land will be classified, and any documents relating to organic certification will be considered.

If your application is successful, you will be offered an agreement which you must sign and return to us. We will then send confirmation that you have entered an agreement and will provide you with a start date. The agreement will indicate the fields that will receive payment, and provide a breakdown of the payment for those fields.

Each land parcel entered will receive a maximum of five payments, provided Scheme obligations are maintained.

Frequently asked questions



What land is eligible for the Organic Farming Scheme?

Only land included on a DARD Farm Business map is eligible for OFS. Land that has already been certified at the time of application as fully organic is not eligible. Any horticultural land, arable land, improved and semi-improved land that has been registered as "in conversion" to organic production after 1 January 2007, and meets the other eligibility criteria, may enter an agreement.

What level of funding is available?

Land classified as horticulture (including top fruit) will be paid £670 per hectare. Arable land at a rate of £570 per hectare and other improved or semi-improved land at £470 per hectare. These payments will be apportioned over the five years.

Can I enter only part of my farm into the Organic Farming Scheme?

Yes. A minimum area of one hectare per application of horticultural land, or three hectares in total of arable, improved and semi-improved land, can be entered into the Organic Farming Scheme. It may be possible to enter additional parcels of land into the Scheme under a separate agreement(s) in later years through the normal application process.

Where can I find out more?



If you would like to find out more, please contact us:

Tel: 0845 3044 509

Website: www.rdpni.info

Email: rdp@dardni.gov.uk

Write to us at: Rural Development Programme, Room 141, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SB

or call in to your local DARD office.



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The Woodland Grant Scheme

The Woodland Grant Scheme Grant is funded under Axis 2 of the Rural Development Programme and delivered by DARD.

Woodlands and forests are major components of the landscape and provide essential habitats for much of our wildlife. They make a substantial contribution to meeting our growing demand for wood, and can be an effective means of locking up carbon from the atmosphere. They provide major opportunities for recreation and public access to the countryside, especially near towns and cities, and play an important role in the rural economy, providing jobs and support to rural communities. New forests and woodlands also offer an attractive long-term use of land as an alternative to agriculture.

The Woodland Grant Scheme aims to expand the amount of tree cover in Northern Ireland by encouraging the creation of new woodland in order to:

- Increase the production of wood;
- Improve the landscape;
- Improve woodland biodiversity and offer opportunities for recreation and sport; and
- Encourage the sustainable management of forests and woodlands.

Who can apply?



The Woodland Grant Scheme is open to anyone who wishes to plant on an area of at least 0.2 hectares.

What funding is available?



The rate of payment depends on the species being planted. Establishment Grant rates are as follows:

Species	Total area (hectares)	£per hectare
Conifers	0.2 and over	1250
Broadleaves	0.2 and over	1850

How do I apply?



The opening and closing dates for schemes/programmes supported by the Rural Development Programme are advertised and promoted widely. The Rural Development Programme website www.rdpni.info provides a full list of what is currently open for applications together with further details of each scheme/programme and how to apply.

If you are interested in participating in this scheme but do not have access to the Internet please contact us using the details below.

What happens next?



When your application is received we will check to make sure that it is eligible and to see that it has been correctly completed and that all relevant documents are included.

If your application:

- passes these initial checks, we will acknowledge it;
- is incomplete, we will send it back highlighting the missing information and we will only process it once all of the required information has been received;
- is ineligible, you will be informed as to what you need to do.

If your application is eligible, a forester will arrange to carry out a site visit in order to confirm suitability. If your application is successful, you will receive a letter of approval, an annotated map and a claim form.

Frequently asked questions



When is the work carried out, and when do I receive payment?

It is up to you as the applicant to have the trees planted according to the forester's prescription. Once planting is complete, you will submit a claim form, and Forest Service will arrange an inspection before authorising payment. Grants are paid in two instalments – 70% after planting, and the remaining 30% after five years.

I would like to create woodland for public use, is this allowed?

Yes. A Community Woodland Supplement is also available under the Woodland Grant Scheme to encourage people to create new woodlands in locations which have demonstrable potential to be used for informal public recreation. The rate of supplement is £1000/ha for both conifers and broadleaves, and this is paid in addition to the establishment grant.

Can I plant Christmas trees?

No. Christmas trees will not be grant aided. However, interplanting with Christmas trees will not debar an otherwise acceptable area from grant aid, provided that their presence does not affect the growth of the main woodland species and does not conflict with the aims of the scheme.

Where can I find out more?



If you would like to find out more, please contact us:

Tel: 0845 3044 509

Website: www.rdpni.info

Email: rdp@dardni.gov.uk

Write to us at: Rural Development Programme, Room 141, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SB

or call in to your local DARD office.

The Farm Woodland Premium Scheme

The Farm Woodland Premium Scheme is funded under Axis 2 of the Rural Development Programme and is delivered by DARD.

It aims to encourage the creation of new woodlands on farms and agricultural land and realise the productive potential of woodlands as an alternative sustainable land use. It provides ongoing income through annual payments to compensate for agricultural income foregone by creating woodland.

Who can apply?



The Farm Woodland Premium Scheme is open to all farmers and land managers who run an agricultural business* and have at least 1.0 hectare of agricultural land available for planting as woodland.

* Further details on what constitutes an agricultural business are included in the information booklet which accompanies the application form.

How do I apply?



The opening and closing dates for schemes/programmes supported by the Rural Development Programme are advertised and promoted widely. The Rural Development Programme website www.rdpni.info provides a full list of what is currently open for applications together with further details of each scheme/programme and how to apply.

If you are interested in participating in this scheme but do not have access to the Internet please contact us using the details below.

What funding is available?



Applicant	Category of land	Outside LFA	LFA – Disadvantaged Areas	LFA – Severely Disadvantaged Areas
Farmer	Arable and other improved land	270	220	160
Non-farmer	Arable and other improved land	100	100	100
Farmer/ Non-farmer	Unimproved land	Ineligible	60	60

What happens next?



When your application is received we will check to make sure that it is eligible and to see that it has been correctly completed and all relevant documents included.

If your application:

- passes these initial checks, we will acknowledge it;
- is incomplete we will send it back highlighting the missing information and we will only process it once all of the required information has been received;
- is ineligible, it will be rejected.

If your application is eligible, a forester will arrange to carry out a site visit to confirm suitability. If your application is successful, you will receive a letter of approval, an annotated map and a claim form.

Frequently asked questions



For how many years will I receive the annual payments?

Farm Woodland Premium Scheme annual payments are made for either 15 or 10 years, depending on the trees planted and how they will be managed. To receive annual payments over 15 years, more than 50% of the area must be planted with broadleaved trees. The wood must not be felled within 30 years following the first annual payment. Woodlands with 50% or more of the area planted with conifers, or fast growing broadleaves to be felled in less than 30 years (e.g. poplar) will receive annual payments for 10 years. They must not be felled within 20 years of the first annual payment.

What information do I need to include in my application?

Apart from filling in our simple application form, which will include your Business Identification Number (Business ID). You will need to send us a farm survey map, which needs to be in the same name as on the application form.

Where can I find out more?



If you would like to find out more, please contact us:

Tel: 0845 3044 509

Website: www.rdpni.info

Email: rdp@dardni.gov.uk

Write to us at: Rural Development Programme, Room 141, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SB

or call in to your local DARD office.

Forest Environments – The Woodland Environment Grant and the Sustainable Forestry Operations Grant

The Woodland Environment Grant and Sustainable Forestry Operations Grant are funded under Axis 2 of the Rural Development Programme and delivered by DARD.

The grants provide assistance towards the management of existing woodland.

- The Woodland Environment Grant aims to enhance biodiversity, improve the public amenity of woodlands and assist in achieving their expansion, maintenance, enhancement and restoration.
- The Sustainable Forestry Operations Grant aims to support forest environment actions to improve the ecosystems within private forests and woodlands and prevent damage by domestic and wild animals. This includes ongoing maintenance required to control invasive species and for the clearance of stream sides and other open ground.

Who can apply?



The Woodland Environment Grant and Sustainable Forestry Operations Grant schemes are open to woodland owners with at least one hectare of existing woodland.

What funding is available?



The Woodland Environment Grant is a one-off capital payment and is discretionary. Payments of up to 50% of approved costs for a single project, supported by an appropriate appraisal, may be made. The maximum payment for a single project is £3,000.

The Sustainable Forestry Operations Grant is an annual payment. In normal circumstances, this will be at a rate of £50 per hectare per year, for a maximum of five years. In exceptional circumstances this rate may be increased to £120 per hectare, per year.

How do I apply?



The opening and closing dates for schemes/programmes supported by the Rural Development Programme are advertised and promoted widely. The Rural Development Programme website www.rdpni.info provides a full list of what is currently open for applications together with further details of each scheme/programme and how to apply.

If you are interested in participating in this scheme but do not have access to the Internet please contact us using the details below.

Please Note: Applications for the Sustainable Forestry Operations Grant must be supported by a five-year plan describing the specific objectives and eligible activities for those areas for which the grant is being sought.

What happens next?



When your application is received we will check to make sure that it is eligible and to see that it has been correctly completed and all relevant documents included.

If your application:

- passes these initial checks, we will acknowledge it;

- is incomplete, we will send it back highlighting the missing information, and we will only process it once all of the required information has been received;
- is ineligible, it will be rejected.

If your application is eligible, a forester will arrange to carry out a site visit to confirm suitability. If your application is successful, you will receive a letter of approval, an annotated map and a claim form.

Frequently asked questions



Can I get a Woodland Environment Grant for carrying out normal woodland management operations?

No. Support under the Woodland Environment Grant will only be offered for projects which are over and above that normally regarded as good woodland management and do not lead to any significant increase in the value or profitability of the forestry holding.

When do I receive Forest Environment payments?

Woodland Environment Grant will be paid upon condition of competitively tendered and agreed costs for the project following verification and inspection of receipts.

Under the Sustainable Forestry Operations Grant scheme, applications totalling five hectares or less will receive the full payment at the end of the first year. For schemes over five hectares plans will be annualised over the agreement period and grant paid annually in arrears on condition of inspection and approval.

What type of operations qualify for a Forest Environments Grant?

Different types of projects will be considered under the Woodland Environment Grant scheme. However, all projects must demonstrate a contribution towards the objectives mentioned above. One such example is the control or eradication of invasive species such as rhododendron, which pose a threat to existing woodland ecosystems.

Where can I find out more?



If you would like to find out more, please contact us:

Tel: 0845 3044 509

Website: www.rdpni.info

Email: rdp@dardni.gov.uk

Write to us at: Rural Development Programme, Room 141, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SB

or call in to your local DARD office.

Section 3

Rural Development Programme

Rural Life

The Rural Development Programme will help to improve the quality of life in rural areas by supporting a wide range of activities. These include diversification into non-agricultural activities, support for business creation, encouragement of tourism activities, village renewal and development, basic services for rural communities and conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage.

Rural Life

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) aims to improve the quality of life in rural areas by supporting a wide range of projects including:

Diversification into Non-Agricultural Activities

Through support from the RDP we aim to increase farm household income and create employment opportunities by providing assistance for farm households to diversify into non-agricultural activities on farm.

Business Creation and Development

The RDP aims to develop the economic infrastructure in rural areas through creating employment opportunities and promoting entrepreneurship. The Programme will provide support for existing micro-enterprises and for individuals wishing to set up a new micro-enterprise in a non-agricultural sector.

Encouragement of Tourism Activities

Through support from the RDP we aim to maximise opportunities for tourism development, which make best use of our natural and cultural resources. Through the sustainable development of the rural economy, we aim to attract visitors and create new employment opportunities by providing support to existing rural tourism enterprises and for individuals wishing to develop tourism activities.

Basic Services for the Economy and Rural Population

The RDP aims to increase the attractiveness of rural areas through supporting the improvement of basic services. This will include the improvement of cultural and leisure activities and related small-scale infrastructure. Support will

also be provided towards the costs of identifying needs.

Village Renewal and Development

In order to support integrated village initiatives which promote community development and regeneration, the RDP will support animation and capacity-building within and between villages and their surrounding rural areas. This will include the formulation of integrated action plans to define the role of the village and fully develop the potential of rural areas.

Conservation and Upgrading the Rural Heritage

The RDP aims to use the natural resources in Northern Ireland's rural areas to create new employment opportunities and develop the rural economy. This will be achieved through supporting local village initiatives to preserve and upgrade their rural heritage.

How is funding being delivered?



This element of the RDP is being delivered by seven Council Clusters using the LEADER approach. An EU-wide initiative, LEADER methodology uses local knowledge to enable a "bottom-up", area-based, innovative and integrated community-led approach to the delivery of RDP funding in rural areas.

Council Clusters have facilitated the creation of Local Action Groups (LAG), which cover all sectors of the community. Local Development Strategies have also been developed setting out plans for their areas, including selection criteria for local projects. Each LAG will be responsible for delivering against their Local Development

Strategy, selecting and funding projects which best meet the priorities for their area and support the delivery of their Strategy.

How do I apply?



The opening and closing dates for schemes/ programmes supported under the Rural Development Programme are advertised and promoted widely. Contact your Local Action Group for information on what is currently open for applications together with further details of each scheme/programme and how to apply. Contact details for Local Action Groups are available on the Rural Development Programme website: www.rdpni.info

What happens next?



The application process is competitive, with assessment and selection of projects conducted by the Local Action Group. Successful applications will be issued with a contract (Letter of Offer), which, on return of a signed acceptance, allows eligible activities and expenditure to commence.

Frequently asked questions



Who can apply?

With the exception of the Diversification into Non-Agricultural Activities, which is directed specifically at farmers and farm families, there will be a wide variety of opportunities available to both individuals and community groups. Applicant businesses must be located in a rural area.

What types of projects can be funded?

The types of projects that can be funded will be dictated by the Local Action Group's Local Development Strategy. Each cluster will be required to deliver funding across all six previously mentioned elements.

What types of projects can't be funded?

- Agricultural products e.g. growing potatoes or breeding cows;
- Retail (except where integral part of production facility or farm shop);
- Mobile Infrastructure (except specialised infrastructure for specific project requirements);
- Any activity that could be funded by another statutory body; and
- Running costs, for example, heat, light etc.

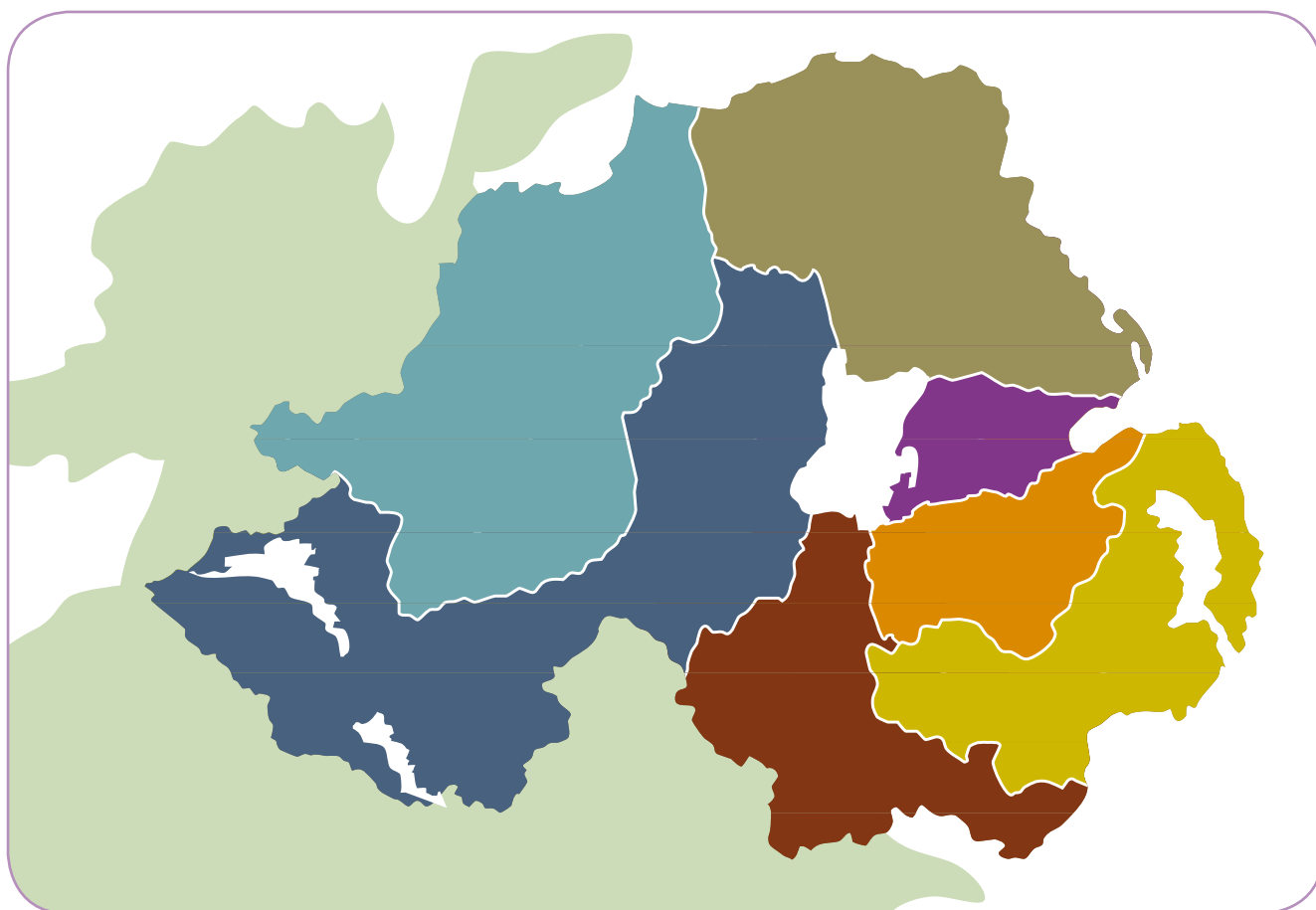
Please Note: The above list is not exhaustive.








Rural Life

Where can I find out more?



If you would like to find out more about what is available in your area please contact your Local Action Group. Local Action Groups are based on the following Council areas, and contact details are supplied overleaf.



-  Ballymena Borough Council, Ballymoney Borough Council, Coleraine Borough Council, Larne Borough Council and Moyle District Council.
-  Omagh District Council, Strabane District Council, Derry City Council and Limavady Borough Council.
-  Magherafelt District Council, Cookstown District Council, Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council and Fermanagh District Council.
-  Armagh City and District Council, Craigavon Borough Council or Newry and Mourne District Council.
-  Ards Borough Council, Banbridge District Council, Down District Council or North Down Borough Council.
-  Antrim Borough Council, Carrickfergus Borough Council or Newtownabbey Borough Council.
-  Belfast City Council, Castlereagh Borough Council or Lisburn City Council.

If you live in the Ballymena Borough Council, Ballymoney Borough Council, Coleraine Borough Council, Larne Borough Council or Moyle District Council area, please write to us at:

North East Cluster, Rural Development Programme, Ecos Centre, Kernohan's Lane, Broughshane Road, Ballymena, BT43 7QA.

If you live in the Omagh District Council, Strabane District Council, Derry City Council or Limavady Borough Council area, please contact:

Tel: 028 8224 5321

Email: development@omagh.gov.uk

Write to us at: North West Cluster, c/o Omagh District Council, The Grange, Mountjoy Road, Omagh, Co Tyrone, BT79 7BL

If you live in the Magherafelt District Council, Cookstown District Council, Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council or Fermanagh District Council area, please contact:

Tel: 028 8676 4714

Email: sward@cookstown.gov.uk

Write to us at: SWARD, Gortalowry House, 94 Church Street, Cookstown, Co Tyrone, BT80 8HX

If you live in the Armagh City and District Council, Craigavon Borough Council or Newry and Mourne District Council area, please contact:

Tel: 028 3831 2588

Email: maria.magennis@craigavon.gov.uk

Write to us at: Rural Development Programme, c/o Craigavon Borough Council, The Civic Centre, Lakeview Road, Craigavon, BT64 1AL

If you live in the Ards Borough Council, Banbridge District Council, Down District Council or North Down Borough Council area, please contact:

Tel: 028 9182 4065

Email: leanne.mccready@ards-council.gov.uk

Write to us at: Down Rural Area Partnership, Development Department, c/o Ards Borough Council, 2 Church Street, Newtownards, BT23 4AP

If you live in the Antrim Borough Council, Carrickfergus Borough Council or Newtownabbey Borough Council area, please contact:

Tel: 028 9448 1311

Email: info@growsouthantrim.com
or sara.campbell@antrim.gov.uk

Write to us at: GROW South Antrim, c/o Antrim Borough Council, Antrim Civic Centre, 50 Stiles Way, Antrim, BT41 2UB

If you live in the Belfast City Council, Castlereagh Borough Council or Lisburn City Council area, please contact:

Tel: 028 9250 9489

Email: padraic.murphy@lisburn.gov.uk

Write to us at: Lagan Rural Partnership LAG, c/o Economic Development Unit, Lisburn City Council, Island Civic Centre, The Island, Lisburn, Co. Antrim, BT27 4RL

Where can I find out more?

If you would like to find out more about the Rural Development Programme, please contact us:

Tel: 0845 3044 509 • **Website:** www.rdpni.info • **Email:** rdp@dardni.gov.uk

Write to us at: Rural Development Programme, Room 141, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SB

or call in to your local DARD office.



Copies of this document can be made available, on request, in other languages and alternative formats for example in large print, Braille, disc, audiocassette (for those with vision difficulties).

For copies please contact:

Rural Development Programme

Room 141
Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast, BT4 3SB

Telephone: 0845 3044 509

Email: rdp@dardni.gov.uk



Department of

**Agriculture and
Rural Development**

www.dardni.gov.uk

AN ROINN

**Talmhaíochta agus
Forbartha Tuaithe**

MÁNNYSTRIE O

**Fairms an
Kintra Fordèrin**