

# Rural Challenge Programme 2009

Information Booklet



Department of  
**Agriculture and  
Rural Development**

[www.dardni.gov.uk](http://www.dardni.gov.uk)

AN ROINN

**Talmhaíochta agus  
Forbartha Tuaithe**

MÁNNYSTRIE O

**Fairms an  
Kintra Fordèrin**



**ANTI POVERTY  
& SOCIAL  
EXCLUSION**

# Rural Challenge Programme 2009

## Information Booklet

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## 1. Introduction

We wish to invite applications for funding for projects under our Anti Poverty and Social Exclusion Challenge Programme (referred to as the Rural Challenge Programme). The aims of this programme are :-

- to assist in tackling poverty and social exclusion within rural communities, and
- to provide project based evidence to inform future policy on rural anti poverty and social inclusion.

The “challenge” aspect of the Programme is for rural groups to identify issues and provide solutions that address the particular and distinct challenges faced by rural areas / communities in relation to their local poverty and exclusion issues. This “challenge” can be met through the development of a series of locally focussed projects which can be funded through this Programme.

These projects will inform future policy on poverty and social exclusion issues and will assist us, other Government Departments and Statutory bodies in developing better services for rural communities across the region.

## 2. Background

The Rural Challenge Programme is one of a number of programmes identified in our Anti Poverty and Social Exclusion Framework. The other programmes deal with issues such as rural Fuel Poverty, Transport and Access, Community Development and Childcare. The Challenge Programme has been developed in response to numerous consultations which recommended the introduction of a programme which would allow rural people/communities to determine practical actions and projects required in their local areas. These actions and projects must not be currently met by us or any other statutory bodies and must directly contribute to addressing rural poverty and social exclusion issues.



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### 3. Best Practice Workshops and Evaluation

An essential element of this Programme will be to ensure that those applying are fully aware of the issues that we seek to address. In order to involve applicants from the very start of the process, Best Practice Workshops will be arranged by us to:

- provide advice on how best to identify the specific poverty and exclusion issues affecting an applicants area,
- provide advice and an understanding on how best to identify and engage with those who are experiencing poverty and exclusion,
- provide advice on how to identify the most suitable responses needed for your community,
- provide an overview of the Programme and the issues which the Programme is seeking to address, and
- provide clarification on the research aspect of the programme.

Applicants **must** attend a Best Practice Workshop event before submitting an application to this Programme and details regarding the dates and venues for these workshops are included in Annex 1 of this booklet.

Also, as gathering information is critical to the long term benefits delivered by this Programme, we will arrange for ongoing evaluations to be held throughout the lifetime of your project. Applicants will be expected to facilitate and be involved in the ongoing evaluation sessions.



#### **4. Target Beneficiary Groups**

In developing this Programme, preliminary research indicated that there are eight Target Groups which should be included in any Programme focussed on tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion issues. In order for your application to be considered eligible for funding, it must focus on assisting at least one of the following target beneficiary groups:

- Children and Young People,
- Lone Parents,
- Unemployed,
- Disabled,
- Carers,
- Elderly,
- Ethnic Minorities,
- Low Paid Workers.

If your project will benefit several of the groups listed above, you will be expected to prioritise and name the principal target group and identify any secondary target groups that will also be assisted. You will be asked to record this information in the Application Form.

#### **5. Programme Themes**

Preliminary research has also indicated that the following themes are most relevant to those experiencing poverty and social exclusion:

- Health & Well Being
- Education
- Housing Issues
- Transport & Access
- Employment
- Low Pay
- Social & Recreational Opportunities (linked to Health and Well Being)
- Enabling delivery of local services in conjunction with service providers.

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You will be asked in the Application Form to identify which of the themes listed is most relevant to your project. You will also be asked to explain how your proposed activities link to the theme(s) and how these will address poverty and social exclusion issues experienced by the target beneficiary group(s).

### 6. Eligible Projects

Applications to this Programme will be accepted for projects that address/tackle local rural poverty and social exclusion issues. Projects may use delivery methods such as providing information sessions, short courses or other initiatives. Funding will not be provided for proposals seeking support for the following: feasibility studies, business plans, environmental impact assessments, and research activities.

### 7. Eligible Organisations

Applications are welcome from voluntary and community based organisations who must at the time of application, have a formal constitution or set of rules and a specific bank account.

You should also note that projects seeking to link or network a number of community based organisations may also be eligible for funding. In this instance, a lead applicant must be nominated and the application form should be countersigned by authorised signatories of all the partner organisations.

### 8. Location of Projects

Applications will only be accepted for projects that are based in or will primarily benefit a rural area. As with the Rural Development Programme 2007 - 2013, for the purposes of the Rural Challenge Programme, rural areas are defined as all those areas outside the statutory development limits of those towns with a population in excess of 4,500 inhabitants plus the areas of Strathfoyle, Newbuildings, and Culmore in Derry/Londonderry Urban Area (OUA) and Milltown, Helens Bay, Crawfordsburn, and Groomsport in the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (BMUA), are eligible for funding.



However, the programme will retain the flexibility to support projects located in more urban settings in cases where the projects will principally benefit rural areas. A robust case must be made in such circumstances to justify the consideration of such an application.

## **9. Equality Considerations**

The Anti Poverty and Social Inclusion Framework was the subject of a full Equality Impact Assessment and all feedback from this consultation exercise has been incorporated into the structure of this Rural Challenge Programme. Under Section 75 of the NI Act (1998) we have a statutory obligation to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. To do this we have to continuously monitor and assess the equality uptake and outcomes of our policies and programmes such as this Rural Challenge Programme. This monitoring is needed to determine if there are any adverse effects or consequences, and if there are, to look at ways to lessen these.

The equality monitoring will be done through the completion of an equality monitoring form by project beneficiaries. We are legally required to conduct this monitoring, but it is voluntary for beneficiaries to complete the form, which will be anonymous. All beneficiaries are encouraged to complete the form as it will greatly help us comply with our statutory duty and in its assessment of the equality uptake and outcomes of the Rural Challenge Programme across different groups of people.

We also expect project promoters who are awarded funding to give due consideration to equality issues in the management and delivery of their projects.

## **10. Assessment of applications**

As there is a limited amount of funding available under this Programme, the process for selection of successful projects will be competitive. The answers you provide in the Application Form will be assessed against detailed eligibility and assessment criteria which are included at Annex 2 and 3 of this booklet.

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As part of the scoring assessment process all projects will be categorised as per the principal target beneficiary grouping which applicants have selected in their application form (Question 2.8). Applications will then be scored and ranked against others in their respective grouping. This should result in 10 applicants from each Target Beneficiary Group receiving funding. If successful, a Letter of Offer setting out the terms and conditions of the grant assistance will be issued to the applicant.

### 11. Funding Information

The Rural Challenge Programme is based upon bottom-up, community-led activities, and in order to determine the grant amount available for individual projects, consideration was given towards allowing the maximum number of projects to proceed and also to providing a level of grant that is sufficient to meet the costs of the activities. Funding is therefore available for up to 100% of eligible costs for 80 projects with a maximum grant of £5,000 per project.

Applicants should demonstrate that the project, from the date of any award of grant assistance, can be completed before 31 March 2011. (It is expected that Letters of Offer for successful projects will issue before the end of January 2010). Your application must record whether the project is time-bound or will become self-sustaining on completion.

Your project will involve the delivery of an information session, short course or some other initiative and also some administrative work (indicative eligible costs are outlined in Annex 4) such as book-keeping, record keeping and time sheets, for example. In order to ensure that you do not have to bear the full costs of this essential administrative work, we can pay a proportion of the grant available towards the cost of these tasks. However, you should note that we can only reimburse administration costs up to 10% of the total cost of your project or to a maximum value of £500. If your application is successful, in order to assess how much time and money you have spent on your projects delivery, we will need you to keep detailed records of the costs that you have paid out during the delivery of your proposed actions. These records may include original paid invoices, timesheets and evidence of work completed. No upfront / advance payments are available through this Programme. Some documentation will be required to support your claim for grant,



but we will provide you with guidance and support on this issue if your application is successful.

Funding under the Rural Challenge Programme cannot substitute grants available from another statutory body, EU or National funding source. However, you should note that you may use funding from other Programmes to support the grant available from the Rural Challenge Programme.

The application must allow for detailed ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the project during its delivery. We will also require, from the applicants, a short written evaluation report on the project outcomes and impacts prior to Programme closure on 31 March 2011.

## **12. How to apply**

An application form can be obtained by contacting:

Rural Challenge Programme Section  
Rural Development Division  
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development  
21 Hospital Road  
Omagh  
Co Tyrone BT79 0AN  
Telephone 028 8224 7727

Or on request by e-mail from [rural.challengeprogramme@dardni.gov.uk](mailto:rural.challengeprogramme@dardni.gov.uk)

The completed form should be signed and returned with any supporting documentation to the above address.



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### 13. Key Dates

It is your responsibility to ensure the completed application form reaches our Rural Challenge Programme Section not later than **5.00pm on Friday 30 October 2009**. If you need advice about any part of your application, please contact us at the above address. We will acknowledge receipt of your application within 5 working days.

Your application will undergo an initial eligibility check expected to take place during November 2009. If your application is deemed to be ineligible you will be notified within 20 working days of the closing date.

If eligible, your application will enter the selection process. Applicants who have been successful should be notified before the end of January 2010.



## Annex 1

### Details of Best Practice Workshops

County	Date	Time	Venue
<b>Antrim</b>	Wednesday 23rd September 2009	7.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.	Houston's Mill, <b>Broughshane.</b>
	Wednesday 21st October 2009	10.00 a.m. to 1 p.m.	Crumlin Community Centre, <b>Crumlin.</b>
<b>Armagh</b>	Thursday 10th September 2009	10.00 a.m. to 1.p.m.	The Courthouse, <b>Markethill.</b>
	Thursday 8th October 2009	7.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.	Ti Chulainn Centre, <b>Mullaghbawn.</b>
<b>Derry/ Londonderry</b>	Tuesday 22nd September 2009	10.00 a.m. to 1.p.m.	The Marina Centre, <b>Ballyronan.</b>
	Tuesday 20th October 2009	7.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.	Glenshane House, <b>Dungiven.</b>
<b>Down</b>	Wednesday 16th September 2009	10.00 a.m. to 1.p.m.	The Lodge, <b>Castlewellan.</b>
	Wednesday 14th October 2009	7.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.	Moneyreagh Community Centre, <b>Moneyreagh.</b>
<b>Fermanagh</b>	Thursday 17th September 2009	10.00 a.m. to 1.p.m.	The Share Centre, <b>Lisnaskea.</b>
	Thursday 15th October 2009	7.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.	The Arc Centre, <b>Irvinestown.</b>
<b>Tyrone</b>	Thursday 24th September 2009	10.00 a.m. to 1.p.m.	Ecclesville Centre, <b>Fintona.</b>
	Thursday 22nd October 2009	7.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.	Sollus Centre, <b>Bready.</b>
<b>Final Sweep up Workshop</b>	<b>Friday 23rd October 2009</b>	<b>2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.</b>	<b>Loughry College, Cookstown.</b>

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### Annex 1

#### Details of Best Practice Workshops

The Best Practice Workshops will be delivered by the Rural Development Council (RDC) on our behalf. In order to be eligible to make an application **you must register and attend one of the workshops** listed (please note you may attend any of the workshops i.e. not restricted to County).

To register and secure your place please contact Samantha or Kerry at RDC on 028 8676 6980 at least 4 working days in advance of your chosen workshop. Directions to the Workshop venues and further information will in turn be issued.



## Annex 2

### Rural Challenge Programme Initial Eligibility Assessment Check List

Criteria
1. The application form must be sufficiently completed, signed and appropriately authorised. (Declaration at end of form)
2. The applicant's status must be appropriate to those eligible to apply.
3. The principal target area of the project must be shown to be rural.
4. The applicants must have attended a Best Practice Workshop.
5. The proposed project must be in line with the stated aims and objectives of the Rural Challenge Programme.
6. The grant aid request must be for £5,000 or less.
7. The project must be completed, including an evaluation report, on or before 31 March 2011.
8. The project must not have commenced.
9. The project must be unable to proceed without this grant aid.

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### Annex 3

#### Rural Challenge Programme: Assessment Criteria and Scoring

##### Preliminary question

Does the project meet all the mandatory criteria in the eligibility checklist? **YES / NO**

(If the answer to the above question is **NO**, then the application will **NOT** proceed to the scoring stage)

##### Maximum available marks

1. About your Organisation	0/15
• Remit and role of organisation.	0/5
• Provision of Audited Accounts (5) Financial Statement (2)	0/5
• Organisations record in developing, implementing and managing projects.	0/5

**N.B.** At this stage the main target beneficiary group identified in your project application will be noted and your application will be ranked against others in that grouping.

2. About your Project	0/75
• Needs are clearly identified and significant.	0/10
• Project is designed through identifying appropriate actions to have a direct impact on these needs.	0/10



## ANTI POVERTY & SOCIAL EXCLUSION

- Relevance of selected theme to main Beneficiary Group. 0/5
- Project complements other relevant Government/Statutory bodies strategies/initiatives relating to addressing Anti Poverty and Social Exclusion. 0/5
- Extent to which applicants have considered the long term sustainability of the project. 0/5
- Extent to which the project demonstrates an innovative approach to engaging with the principal target beneficiary group identified. 0/5
- Impact of grant aid on implementation of your project. 0/5
  - Proceed with no change (0)
  - Delayed (1)
  - Scaled down (3)
  - Not take place (5)
- Project does not displace or conflict with similar existing initiatives. 0/5
- Applicant identifies potential risks to the implementation of the project and shows how any risks / problems will be managed / prevented. 0/5
- Extent of impact of the project. 0/10
- Extent to which your project will deliver a needed service to local socially excluded groups and / or those who are experiencing poverty. 0/5
- Extent to which the project outputs could inform broader rural poverty and social inclusion policy. 0/5



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- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>3. Funding your Project</b>   | <b>0/5</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The percentage rate of support funding provided by the applicant (higher marks will be awarded for projects with a higher % of support funding)</li></ul>                | <b>0/5</b> |
| <b>4. Additional Information</b>   | <b>0/5</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Extent to which any additional information supports the need for the project, the potential benefits to be derived from it and has been independently sourced.</li></ul> | <b>0/5</b> |



## Annex 4

### Indicative Eligible Costs

- Presenter Costs
- Tutor Costs (train the trainer approach will be encouraged/supported)
- Course Development including materials and consumables
- Venue Hire (if not own building)
- Marketing of Information Sessions / Courses / Initiatives
- Recruitment of target participants – innovative approaches to targeting participants will be encouraged/supported (excludes info leaflets/booklets to be provided by delivery agent)
- Providing transportation for participants in order to encourage attendance where not covered by use of SMART pass on Community Transport services.
- Refreshments for participants
- Administration of the Project. Maximum of 10% of grant permitted (max £500.00)
- Minor Capital Works

Note: All courses and information sessions must exclude existing offerings by statutory providers such as Further Education Colleges.



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Copies of this booklet and the application form can be made available on request in alternative formats. For example in large print, braille, computer disk, audio and other languages. If you wish to request the documents in an alternative format please telephone (028) 8224 7727.

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