

Frequently asked questions

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1) Can I apply?

If you have an idea for a new project and you live or operate an enterprise in a rural area then you may be able to apply for funding. To find out if you are eligible -

- Contact our office on either 028 2563 3266 or 028 2563 3368 to discuss your project.
- Complete the expression of interest form and we will assess your eligibility.
- We will be holding a series of pre-application workshops. Make sure that you attend one of these to find out more about the Programme - please contact the office to register. You must attend one of these workshops if you intend to apply.

2) How do I apply?

- You must attend a pre-application workshop.
- If you do not see a suitable date for a pre-application workshop then please contact the MEA LAG office and we will add you to our mailing list.
- All applications must be submitted on-line via www.eugrants.eu.
- We will assess your application and let you know the outcome.

3) What is your approval process?

- Your application will be reviewed by a Project Officer who will visit your site to talk to you about your proposal.
- The Project Officer will then forward the project to an Assessment Panel for scoring.
- Once scored, the project will then be reviewed by the MEA LAG Board who will make the final decision.
- If you are unsuccessful, you can appeal to the LAG Board for reconsideration.
- If you are successful, we will issue you with a Letter of Offer which will specify the items which we have agreed to fund, the amounts that have been granted and the timescale for completion of the project.

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4) How long does it take from application to approval?

- We will endeavour to review all applications as promptly as possible. However the time needed depends upon the number and the complexity of the applications we receive.
- As a rough guide, it will take at least three months for your project to be assessed.

5) What happens at the pre-application workshops?

- We cannot accept your application for funding unless you have attended a pre-application workshop.
- The workshop is an opportunity to find out more about the Programme.
- You will be informed of the date that the call relevant to your application will open and close.
- We will take you through the application process and explain what will be expected of you in terms of procurement, deadlines, paperwork and post project monitoring. You can then decide whether your project is suitable for the Programme.
- Each workshop will last for approximately 2 hours.

6) What should I have to support my application?

- **PLANS** - You must have either a business plan (Rural Business Investment Scheme) or a detailed project plan (all other measures) in place. Templates will be provided.
- **FUNDING** - The Programme will provide funding of between 50 and 75% of the cost of your project. You need to be able to provide us with evidence that you can finance the rest. This is known as “match funding” and you must have evidence of this available at application time. Examples of match funding evidence would be a bank statement showing cleared funds in your account or an agreed bank loan valid for the life of the project.
- **PLANNING approval** - where relevant, you must be able to produce your planning permission. This must be full and not outline permission.
- **COSTS** - you must provide robust procurement documentation to support your project costs.

7) When will I receive my grant funding?

- It is important to realise that grant payments are made retrospectively, that is, after you have paid for the entire cost of your project and only after your claim for payment has been scrutinised by a Claims Officer.
- In other words, it is your responsibility to pay for your project and then to submit a claim to us for grant payment.
- You must therefore have sufficient funding to pay the entire cost of your project up front before the Programme reimburses you. As a result, it is highly important that you plan your cashflow to ensure that you have sufficient funds in place.
- Your grant payment will be made by BACS transfer into your nominated bank account.

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8) I will find it hard to finance the entire cost of my project up front; can any payments be made in advance?

- Advance payments are available in certain cases for community, voluntary and social economy enterprise projects only. No advance payments will be made under the rural Business Investment Scheme measure so plan your cashflow requirements carefully.
- If you do not qualify for advance payments then you can request that your project be broken down into phases. We will then make payments to you upon completion of each phase. Note that the award of phase payments will be subject to approval by the LAG Board.

9) Can I start my project before the LOO?

- We cannot fund any expenditure that you incur prior to the issue of your Letter of Offer.

10) My project involves a capital build, do I need to own the land?

- You do not necessarily need to own the land that you are building on but you will need to supply us with a long term lease.

11) Will anyone know that I have received funding?

- Yes, we will publicise the recipients of our grant funding and also the amounts awarded. This will be on our website.

12) Where can I get sources of match funding?

- See our help and advice section for sources of assistance.