



Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar
gyfer Datblygu Gwledig:
Ewrop yn Buddsoddi mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
European Agricultural Fund for
Rural Development:
Europe Investing in Rural Areas



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): Rural Community Development Fund

The **Rural Community Development Fund (RCDF)** is a grant scheme funded under the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. Under RCDF the Welsh Government offer grants, for funding across a wide range of interventions designed to prevent and mitigate the impact of poverty in rural communities. By addressing the impact of poverty it will also improve conditions which can lead to future jobs and growth.

This document is a “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) log. The Welsh Government will update the FAQ during the implementation of the RCDF. This will be a ‘live’ document. It does not replace the Scheme Guidance or other documents relating to Rural Community Development Fund. **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): RCDF**

Expression of Interest (EOI) Stage

If you have an enquiry concerning the expression of interest application stage please e-mail: RCDF@gov.Wales

Question:	We are in the process of taking over assets for community use which require improvement works. I understand it may be possible to apply to the RCDF for funding and I should be grateful if you would please advise of the dates that applications can be submitted within, and any other information that may be of assistance please?
Answer:	The application process for the RCDF (as for all Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 socio-economic schemes) is in two stages. The first stage will be an Expression of Interest (EOI). Applicants that are successful at EOI stage will be invited to the second stage which is to submit a full application. All applicants must discuss their ideas and proposals with the LEADER Local Action Group (LAG) for their area before submitting their application to the Welsh Government. This is so that the LAGs may check the fit with the priorities of the Local Development Strategy (LDS) for their area and offer help to develop proposals, if required.
Question:	At what stage does an EOI and full application go to the LAG (Local Action Group) for its consideration? Given that the EOI and full application should be submitted to Welsh Government direct, does Welsh Government then circulate these to the LAG or is the applicant expected to do this themselves prior to submitting the bids to Welsh Government?
Answer:	All applicants must discuss their ideas and proposals with the LAG for their area before submitting their EOI application to the Welsh Government. Welsh Government will formally check that the LAG has been involved at full project application stage – there will be a form (standard template) for the LAG to complete.
Question:	Where can I find further detail on the EOI criteria and about which specific themes are open now?

Answer:	<p>The Rural Community Development Fund will provide investment funding across a wide range of interventions designed to prevent poverty and mitigate the impact of poverty in rural communities, improving conditions which can lead to future jobs and growth.</p> <p>The document called “Rural Community Development Fund: Expression of Interest Criteria and application Form” shows what is “open” in this EOI round and the selection criteria which will apply. The EOIs will be assessed, scored and ranked in order of merit according to the published selection criteria. Project proposals will be selected in ranked order until either the funds available have been allocated or the maximum number of applications has been reached.</p>
Question:	What kinds of costs are eligible?
Answer:	<p>Most of the funding available under the Rural Community Development Fund are for capital investments e.g. buildings, or purchasing equipment/vehicles. We can't fund “revenue” costs such as the general running costs for an organisation, general staff salaries or management costs. Take a look at paragraphs 51-54 of the scheme guidance:</p> <p>http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/cap/ruraldevelopment/wales-rural-development-programme-2014-2020/rural-community-development-fund/?lang=en</p>
Question:	Are new buildings eligible under RCDF?
Answer:	A new build could be funded, but the amount of funding may limit expectations as to what could be achieved.
Question:	The Rural Community Development Fund page on the Welsh Government's website specifies ' <i>Basic Services and Village Renewal in Rural Areas</i> '. Does that mean that only activities linked to this theme can apply under the current round? If so, is this the only opportunity to apply for RCDF funds for these activities, or will there be another round which will be open to basic services and village renewal projects?
Answer:	No, the European Commission's title of the Measure 7 is “Basic Services and Village Renewal” which covers all of the sub-Measures. The EOI Criteria and Application form specifies what is open in the current window.
Question:	There is an upper limit set on small-scale infrastructure within the guidance document published, are there any other upper limits?
Answer:	The upper limit of £128,000 grant towards a total project cost of £160,000 applies to sub-Measures 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.7 and also the investment part of Sub Measures 7.6. Applicants can apply as many times as they like (for different proposals) and to different sub-Measures, but each individual EOI application is limited to a total project cost of £160,000.
Question:	The guidance states that the RCDF is an investment fund; the Guidance Notes covers the rates for unpaid voluntary work. Can staff costs and volunteer time be used as match in kind as these are revenue activities?
Answer:	The staff time which can be included is only that relating to activities which are eligible under the RCDF so, for example, if a community group is applying to do alterations to a building to include a room for a crèche then volunteer time for labouring and/or architect/design work would be eligible as in-kind contributions but volunteer time to write the initial application form or to run the crèche service in

	the resulting building would not be.
Question:	Looking at the current EOI selection criteria does a proposal have to meet all of the priority criteria listed? For example does a project addressing access to services e.g. transport, also have to address fuel poverty, in-work poverty and digital inclusion?
Answer:	No, each EOI does not have to score against all of the criteria listed, although the ranking will be done on the total score (i.e. the score that the EOI gets across all 6 criteria). Some project ideas will be able to score against all or more than one of the 4 tackling poverty selection criteria, others may only score against 1.
Question:	In the EOI Criteria and Application Form the section on in-work poverty activities suggest traineeships and increasing skills. Isn't this classed as revenue activity?
Answer:	The RCDF scheme is limited to investment funding and cannot support traineeships and/or apprenticeships directly. It can, however, for example, support childcare facilities (not the running of the childcare service) and/or transport to allow people to access these opportunities.
Question:	Are there any geographical location restrictions being applied to applicants? The RCDF Guidance Notes document lists both rural and service centre wards and LAG information.
Answer:	The Rural Community Development Fund has a geographical targeting (the rural and service centre wards listed in Annex A of the Guidance notes). These wards fall within the eligible area for LAG Local Development Strategies. All applicants must discuss their ideas and proposals with the LEADER Local Action Group (LAG) for their area before submitting their application to the Welsh Government. This is so that the LAGs may check the fit with the priorities of the Local Development Strategy (LDS) for their area and offer help to develop proposals, if required.
Question:	I've not been able to find an updated map of the LEADER LAG areas for the 2014-2020 Programme – has one been released? Also, does a property have to physically sit within the geographical boundaries of the LAG when applying for RCDF programme funds?
Answer:	<p>The LEADER LAG map can be found on the Wales Rural Network pages at the following link: http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/cap/wales-rural-network/local-action-groups/?lang=en</p> <p>The RCDF is for the benefit of the wards listed in Annex A of the guidance so properties would have to be within those wards. It would be possible for a project to span wards in more than one LEADER LAG areas in which case more than one LAG would need to be consulted on the EOI.</p>
Question:	With regard to eligible costs listed within the guidance document for the Rural Community Development Fund: <i>“The purchase of new machinery and equipment, including computer software up to the market value of the asset, for all beneficiaries;”</i> would Apps and the development of Apps would be considered eligible?

Answer:	The development of computer software (i.e. an Application) is the creation of an Intangible Asset so this could be eligible under a capital investment scheme if it delivers the objective of that scheme . However, if the creation of the software is for say gaming purposes or some other recreational pursuit then that would not meet the requirements of a capital investment scheme so it would not be eligible.
Question:	Can an agricultural business (farm) be classified as a Small to Medium Enterprise under this fund?
Answer:	Agricultural businesses can apply under sub-measure 7.7 of the RCDF provided they are a Small to Medium Enterprise.
Question:	I'd be grateful if you could confirm whether or not planning permission and listed building consent are required by EOI stage, or can they follow at application stage?
Answer:	We are only asking for outline information at the EOI stage. At full application stage you should be prepared to provide planning permission and listed building consents.
Question:	Question 3 of the EOI form asks for the total project costs - can these costs be an estimate at the EOI stage or do they need to be final costs? (ie does the community group need to ensure final quotations at this stage?)
Answer:	We don't ask for a final expenditure breakdown at EOI stage. If the applicant is successful in getting through to stage 2 and submitting a project application then the costs would need to be accurate at that point. The project application will need to be supported by a detailed development plan that includes a justification of all costs.
Question:	Can an applicant submit an RCDF application for capital work on a leased building?
Answer:	For a capital investment project such as the refurbishment or renovation of a building we require the application to be submitted by either the owner of the premises or the leaseholder of the premises with accompanying evidence that the owner had given specific permission for the improvements. We would not accept an application from an unrelated third party such as a community organisation that had use of the premises but had no legal title to those premises. We would accept a lease that was on a 'rolling basis' that is it is automatically renewed at the end of each month but we would expect the lease agreement to show an expected period of occupancy such that the benefit of the refurbishment costs can be realised – this would normally be five years from the completion of the works.

Full Application Stage Specific Questions

**If you have an enquiry concerning the full application stage please e-mail:
SMU@gov.Wales**

Question:	When will evidence of match funding be required?
Answer:	An explanation of where the match funding might be sourced from can be provided at application stage, but no evidence is required at that point. Evidence will be required when claiming funds.

Question:	I am assuming claims are retrospective?
Answer:	All claims under RCDF will be retrospective. Retrospective claims consist of expenditure that has been defrayed (incurred) by the applicant, and full evidence of defrayment must be provided by the applicant, ie bank statements as well as invoices or equivalent. The project start date is agreed with the project applicant (project sponsor) before the appraisal is completed and therefore this date is set in the Grant Approval Letter. This date is important because the overall project delivery profile runs from this date.
Question:	How does an organisation running an RCDF project treat internal organisational fees, or recharges, generated by an RCDF project?
Answer:	<p>Under the Rural Development Programme 2014 – 2020 rules no public sector body, organisation or business can claim internal recharges between departments or teams within the one entity that is a beneficiary of the programme. Different rules may apply to other EU funds and also some rules may vary between schemes within a fund. Where one department produces a statement for recharge there is no evidence of defrayment for that cost. For example, if your architect's department sends an "invoice" to the project team you cannot make a payment and show evidence of that payment through a bank statement therefore you cannot provide evidence of defrayment which in turn means that it is not eligible.</p> <p>Under Rural Community Development Fund the Guidance Notes are to be amended to make it clear that you could use the equivalent cost of the architect's time as an Actual Cost Match Funding contribution to the project because the maximum grant rate is 80% and match funding other than cash is permitted under this scheme. I do appreciate that other schemes under other funds may have different interpretations but in this situation where the grant must be paid against eligible expenditure where defrayment must be evidenced there is no opportunity to accept internal recharges.</p>
Question:	How long will it take to assess my full application?
Answer:	We have a ninety day target. This timeframe consists of working days only. It does not include the time taken for an applicant to respond to queries. Each application has a project officer allocated who can respond to enquiries.
Question:	Will my full application be compared with the content of my EOI?
Answer:	Yes. Scheme Management Unit will check if the full application is consistent with the proposal outlined in the EO. The information given in the EOI is not assessed as part of the full application appraisal. The full application is appraised in accordance with the Scheme Guidance and eligibility rules.
Question:	Do my cost heading totals need to be exact at full application stage?
Answer:	At application stage indicative or estimated costs, provided they are reasonable and justifiable, are acceptable. Procurement processes do not have to be followed until the grant has been awarded.
Question:	How will VAT be treated in a full application?
Answer:	If VAT is not reclaimable by the applicant then it can be reclaimed as part of the grant funding. You should include irrecoverable VAT as a separate cost heading in the table provided in the Value for Money section of the project plan (application form).

Question:	Please provide further information on what is required within the F&C section of the project plan?
Answer:	Information is supplied within the How to Apply Guidance Notes. If you require further information please contact SMU via the mailbox: SMU@gov.Wales
Question:	How will professional costs be treated in a full application?
Answer:	Professional fees should be listed as a project cost within the “Value for Money” section of the project plan (application form) and provide an explanation of how these costs have been calculated. Note – professional and technical fees for design and construction is limited to no more than 12% of the eligible capital costs.
Question:	We know that we need to follow procurement/competitive tendering rules by publishing our requirements on www.sell2wales.gov.wales , but do we need to carry out the procurement exercise before we know if we will be awarded a grant?
Answer:	We do not require that you provide evidence of full procurement with the application. If your project is approved then evidence of procurement will need to be kept.
Question:	Please explain the use of Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) in refurbishments?
Answer:	There is no BREEAM requirement on refurbishments this Method applies to new builds only.
Question:	Please explain how to select indicators. What do they mean and what evidence is required?
Answer:	Indicator guidance is provided as part of the How to Apply pack provided as part of the invitation to stage 2. The guidance explains which indicators are mandatory (Programme) and states the minimum number of case level indicators required (for RCDF this is 2). Definitions and evidence requirements are provided.
Question:	What are the expectations regarding a project evaluation?
Answer:	There is no requirement for a project evaluation of RCDF projects.