

Rural Business Development Fund

Guidelines

These notes should be read in full before completing the Application Form. Please refer back to these Guidelines when completing the application form for submission.

For further help please contact: Business@conwy.gov.uk

Introduction

This grant programme has been designed by Conwy Cynhaliol Local Action Group (LAG) who are responsible for delivering the LEADER Programme in Conwy. The LEADER programme is part of the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014 – 2020, which is financed by the Welsh Government and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

This grant programme will be delivered in partnership with the Conwy County Borough Council Business support Team. This is a discretionary grant to support the economic development of businesses in rural Conwy.

Who can apply?

Due to the small-scale of the support available, this scheme is best suited to micro-businesses and small business.

- **A micro-business** has fewer than ten employees and either a turnover of up to €2 million or a balance sheet total of up to €2 million
- **A small business** has fewer than 50 employees and either a turnover of up to €10 million or a balance sheet total of up to €10 million

Eligible businesses can include:

- Sole traders
- Partnerships
- Limited Companies
- Cooperatives
- Social Enterprises

To be eligible to receive investment support, businesses must have been actively trading over 3 months and registered with HMRC

Each business can have no more than one approved project through this scheme.

Eligible Area

Businesses must have an operating address based within an eligible electoral ward in the rural Conwy (dark blue areas only on map below). These eligible areas have been set by the Welsh Government. Please see the map below and use our [post code checker](#) (half way down the page). Postcode format LL260DF).

Conwy Rural Development Plan area wards



What grant support is available?

Businesses can apply for a 50% grant up to a maximum of £5,000.

This would be £5,000 grant funds and £5,000 or more applicant match funding.

The minimum grant value is £1,500.

It should also be noted that the minimum individual item cost is set at £100

Single items and/or related works must have a total value of £9,999.99 or less.

The applicant is required to provide a minimum of 50% match funding towards the costs in their grant application.

The applicant will need to show how this 50% match funding is being financed at application stage. In-kind contributions are not eligible.

The match funding contribution cannot contain any funds that include or have already been used to attract EU funding.

If applicant is VAT registered all costs must be NET.

Non VAT registered applicants must use Gross costs.

Projects must meet one or more of the objectives below

- Recovery / development post covid
- Focus on decarbonisation and the climate emergency
- Town centres / high-street development/ recovery after covid

What can be applied for?

Eligible costs including (but not limited to):

- Equipment including tools and IT hardware
- Marketing materials designed to implement a targeted market plan which should be included in the application (not advertisements)
- Carbon reduction projects i.e. solar panels/low energy lighting
- Digitalisation upgrade i.e. improving/initialising digital approaches
- Training may be eligible if related to the rest of the application and supports the development of a new service or market.

Ineligible Costs:

- Activities which have already started (items cannot be purchased or ordered until grant approval has been given)
- Projects/training to satisfy statutory requirements
- Renewals i.e. replacement of old for new, Maintenance and/or Running Costs
- Projects detrimental to the environment
- Projects without relevant statutory consents (if applicable)
- Purchase of Vehicles
- Items which are not essential for the success of the project
- Purchase of Land and/or Property
- Staff Costs
- Recoverable VAT

- Stock purchases
- Acquisition of assets under Hire Purchase (HP), Extended Credit Agreements or Lease
- individual item cost of less than £100
- we cannot support agricultural activities

Application Process

Full Application

1. It is important to ensure that your application form is fully completed and that all supporting documentation is included at the time of submitting.

This includes:

- Current Business Plan
- Accounts for 1 years *
- Projected Cash Flow & Profit & Loss Statement
- Confirmation of Source of Finance which is part of financing the project
- Confirmation of **Planning Permission and / or Building Regulations (if applicable) including 'Change of Use'.
- Original estimates/quotes for project items/works (1 quote for items/works costing less than £4,999, 3 quotes for any item/works costing £5,000 or more)
- All Statutory Legal Requirements for the Business (if applicable)
- Confirmation of registration with HMRC

** If the business has not been trading long enough for accounts to be available a minimum of 3 months bank statements will be required to evidence trading*

***Offer of funding is conditional on the receipt of the relevant approvals /permission.*

Decisions on applications will be made based on the information provided in the application form, associated evidence and information checks that are conducted from other sources. If any data is incomplete or incorrect or the evidence provided is insufficient we will contact you.

Failure to comply could delay a decision. Please note that the approval timescale does not commence until such time as all the documentation required is received.

You are reminded at this stage not to undertake any expenditure on the project until a formal decision has been reached on the bid and written confirmation of this has been received.

2. *Where asked to do so please provide as much information as possible to explain the project and its benefits and impact*

3. Please read carefully all the information and guidance provided and in particular note and understand all aspects of the application form and guidelines relating to the awarding of the Business Development Grant. In particular you should be aware that:

- **No funding will be paid on retrospective expenditure**
- **No funding will be paid where cash transactions have been undertaken**

Customer Reference Number (CRN)

The applicant will be required to hold a Welsh Government Customer Reference Number (CRN) before proceeding. All organisations that receive payments from the Welsh Government need to have one. If you do not already have one, you can generate one by creating a sign in on Rural Payments Wales (RPW) Online:

<https://gov.wales/login-rural-payments-wales-rpw-online>

- a) Green Tab 'sign in' to RPW Online
- b) Then 'Create sign in details'
- c) All questions need to be answered, e.g. why do you need CRN? – 'Rural Development Programme LEADER funds recipient'
- d) A CRN will be provisionally generated at this point. Keep a record of this number for your organisation
- e) But a BACS form will also need to be printed, signed and posted to the Welsh Government Caernarfon Office. (Rural Payments Wales, PO Box 251, Caernarfon, LL55 9DA). Please ensure that this step is completed even though you are claiming via Conwy Cynhaliol. Failure to complete this stage will result in a delay to your grant payment
- f) You should receive a letter to confirm the CRN has been activated. If you have not received this, you will need to follow this up by contacting the Welsh Government Caernarfon Office
- g) Applicants can contact RPW Contact Centre on 0300 062 5004 if they have problems
- h) Welsh Government notify you of any queries regarding your CRN application via your Rural Payments Wales (RPW) online account. Please check messages and address queries you receive from Welsh Government promptly to avoid delays in receiving your grant payment

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-01/rpw-online-how-to-register.pdf>

Processing Your Application

On receipt of your full application form the project officers will:-

- Check that all the details provided are in order and if not inform you of what further information is required.
- Undertake consultation which may include:
 - A bank reference
 - A search with a credit reference agency in relation to your business. *The agency will keep a record of that search and may share that information with other agencies.*
 - Make enquiries with respect to company director(s) with a credit reference agency.
 - Local searches e.g. Council tax and/or non domestic rates
- Project Officer completes recommendation report

Advising of the decision

- Grants panels meet at regular intervals throughout the year.

- You will be informed of the decision by email.
- If successful, you will be advised of the amount of funding offered and any specific conditions relating to the award.
- Attached to the letter will be the 'Terms & Conditions' contract that you must adhere to.

This has to be *signed and returned within 14 days* as acceptance of the funding offer

Claim Process:

All claims shall be forwarded to conwylocalactiongroup@conwy.gov.uk.

Please include all of the following:

1. Paid Invoices for all purchases (Invoices must be addressed to business)
2. Bank Statement showing payment of all purchases.

Once all information has been received:

- Conwy Cynhalio! will send the applicant an electronic Claim Form (via e-mail).
- Applicant to sign and return form to Conwy Cynhalio! electronically
- Funding will be released to your Business Bank Account by means of BACS payment.

All projects must be completed and claimed by 30th of November 2022.

State Aid Declaration

Industrial De-Minimis Aid Rules

All grants are classed as Industrial de minimis Aid, in compliance with Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid.

The applicant must detail in their application form all public funding received in the last 3 fiscal years.

