

|  |
| --- |
| MARINE ENVIRONMENT AND FISHERIES FUND (MEFF)THIS GUIDANCE NOTE IS FOR SUPPORT FOR FISHING PORTS INFRASTRUCTURE APPLICATIONS |
| SUMMARY |
| Grant aid is available under the Marine Environment and Fisheries Fund fishing port applications.The legal basis for the scheme is: The Fisheries Act 2020 (Scheme of Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024, S.R. 2024 No. 141This Guidance Note is subject to change at any time during the scheme. The date of the latest revision is shown in the footer of this document. |
| USE THIS DOCUMENT FOR DETAILED GUIDANCE ON SUPPORT FOR FISHING PORTS INFRASTRUCTURE APPLICATIONS |
| In addition to this Guidance Note you must also read the General MEFF Guidance Note as it contains information relevant for **all** MEFF applications. We want to give your project the best possible chance at succeeding and have produced a range of resources and guidance which you might find useful. Where to go for further information has been included throughout this guidance note.**It is essential that the scheme delivers value for money and that all applicants are open and honest when making applications under the scheme.** **It is a criminal offence to supply information in the application knowing it to be false or not believing it to be true, and you may be liable for a fine or imprisonment if you do so.** **DAERA will scrutinise your application and may from time to time conduct random checks upon your application and the supporting documents, including contacting proposed suppliers and, in the event of irregularities may in its absolute discretion refuse applications.****In the event that false or inaccurate information is discovered, DAERA will give consideration to investigating the matter further and may take such enforcement action, including criminal prosecution for example under the Fraud Act 2006 as it considers appropriate. In such circumstances DAERA may also seek to recover any grant paid.****You are reminded that if your project is approved and grant offered, specific conditions will apply which will be set out in the Offer Letter.** **Any breach of these conditions may lead to recovery of any grant paid through, if necessary DAERA may seek recovery through appropriate criminal or civil action.****If the grant is not used for the purpose for which it was granted DAERA may seek recovery of any grant paid through appropriate criminal or civil action.****Projects that have been physically completed or fully implemented prior to receiving a written acknowledgement from DAERA, even though they may meet the scheme objectives and priorities, cannot be funded. Projects can commence after receiving a written acknowledgement from DAERA. Any costs incurred between receiving a written acknowledgement from DAERA and receiving your written decision may not be eligible if your project is not approved. Such costs are incurred at your own risk.****In exceptional circumstances, costs incurred prior to submission of your application to DAERA and up to a value of 10% of the total eligible project costs can be considered eligible for reimbursement at the funding rate applied providing they are directly related to your project you are applying for and essential to bringing the application to submission stage. The eligibility of these costs are at DAERA’s discretion and are not guaranteed and are subject to the approval of the full project and are undertaken entirely at the applicant’s own risk. Please contact DAERA for more details.****It is the responsibility of you as the applicant to ensure that the project which is the subject of this application is technically viable, complies with all relevant health and safety legislation and any other project specific safety requirements. This is not the responsibility of DAERA.** |
| TYPES OF PROJECTS YOU CAN APPLY FOR |
| **This support is for improving infrastructure at fishing ports including, landing sites, auction halls, shelters and facilities for waste and marine litter collection.** Measure 6.a Improved infrastructure at fishing ports Types of projects you can apply for but not limited to:* Refurbishment of existing harbour infrastructure for operational reasons
* Development of new facilities and infrastructure at ports
* Enhancing port safety

Applicants must comply with all relevant legal requirements of their projects. |
| ELIGIBLE COSTS |
| Please note this table is for guidance only and is not exhaustive or binding. If you are unsure whether an item is eligible, please check the General Guidance and if you are still unsure contact DAERA. Scheduled or preventive maintenance costs of any piece of equipment which keeps a device in working order shall not be eligible for support. Only those costs necessary for and directly related to the installation of items to be funded shall be eligible for support.  |
| Table of Eligible Costs

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Item/Area | Eligible Costs | Ineligible Costs |
| Improved infrastructure at fishing ports (Measure 6.a)  | increasing the quality, control and traceability of the products landed, increasing energy efficiency, contributing to environmental protection and improving safety and working conditions, the MEFF may support investments improving the infrastructure of fishing ports, auctions halls, landing sites and shelters, including investments in facilities for waste and marine litter collection.**For the purposes of MEFF shelters are structures for the sheltering of fishing vessels.**  | Support shall not cover the construction of new ports, new landing sites or new auction halls. |
| The MEFF may support investments in fishing ports, auction halls, landing sites and shelters. |
| In order to improve the safety of fishermen, the MEFF may support investments in the construction or modernisation of shelters. |

***TO APPLY FOR PROJECTS FOR FISHING PORT INFRASTRUCTURE, PLEASE SELECT THE “IMPROVEMENTS TO SHORE BASED FACILITIES” APPLICATION FORM ON THE E-SYSTEM.***Items and services that are statutory or mandatory requirements of law and byelaws cannot be funded by the MEFF.Preventative or scheduled maintenance costs are not eligible for funding and only those costs necessary for and directly related to the installation of items as approved by DAERA are eligible for support under the MEFF.The MEFF is designed to assist those who cannot afford to fund projects without support. If it is considered that you can afford your project without support your project will not be approved. |
| INFORMATION REQUIRED TO APPLY FOR FUNDING |
| Before you proceed with creating an application you may wish to have the following items at hand or be aware that they will be necessary to accompany your application when it is submitted. * A business case – if the total cost of your project is £25,000 or more, or **the proposed investment would have an impact on the operation’s profitability, income or operational costs** then you will need to write a business case using the template provided in the Business Case Template document.
* Financial information - current and expected turnover and balance sheets.
* Quotes for costs to be incurred – advice is provided in this guidance on what you need to supply.
* Company/charity and Value Added Tax (VAT) Registration numbers if applicable to your circumstances.
* Organisation headcount numbers if applicable to your circumstances.
 |
| DEFINITIONS |
| In these notes:* **You** means the applicant. You can employ an agent or consultant to help you complete your application form, but you must sign the form. You will be responsible for ensuring that all of the terms and conditions for grant are fulfilled. Responsibility for the content of the application and any supporting information and documentation rests with you and cannot be transferred to your consultants. In particular, this means that you will be expected to retain ownership of the work which is being funded.
* **We** means the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).
* **Fisheries area** means an area with a sea, river or lake shore, including ponds or a river basin, with a significant level of employment in fisheries that is functionally coherent in geographical, economic and social terms and is designated as such by a Member State.
* **Fisherman** means any person engaging in commercial fishing activities, as recognised by the Member State.
* **Small–Scale Coastal Fishing** (SSCF) means fishing carried out by fishing vessels of an overall length of 11.99 metres or less and not using towed fishing gear as listed as per The Common Fisheries Policy (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.
* **Vessels operating exclusively in inland waters** means vessels engaged in commercial fishing in inland waters and not included in the Union fishing fleet register.

The information provided in this Guidance Note must only be taken as a guide to the grants which are available. The legal basis for the grants is The Fisheries Act 2020 (Scheme of Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024, S.R. 2024 No. 141 |

**When you have selected the appropriate application form on the E-System you will be asked to complete the application as follows:**

**Part 1** **About You**

You will be asked to provide details about yourself such as your name, address and telephone numbers. You will also be asked your gender if you do not self-identify as either male or female, select ‘Other’. If you would prefer not to give your gender then you have the opportunity to select ‘Prefer not to say’.

## What Type of Business or Organisation Do You Represent?

You will be asked what type of business or organisation you represent. You must choose **one** of the options. A sole trader is someone who is running their own business as an individual and is therefore self-employed. You can have staff working for you, but you must be solely responsible for running the business. A joint partnership is a group of sole traders or organisations who are applying for funding for a project together. Answer ‘**Other**’ if your organisation is neither of these, you will be able to tell us what type of organisation it is in the next question.

## Proof of Identification

If you are a sole trader or a joint partnership, then you have to provide identification. If you are a ‘**Sole trader’** or ‘**Joint partnership’** you will need to provide a copy of either your passport or your driver’s licence. You will then need to take it to your solicitor, post office or a DAERA Port Officer, who can sign the copy and certify that the copy you send is taken from an original document. If the copies you provide are not from an original document and have not been certified, your application may be rejected. If you do not have photographic ID, we will accept two different utility bills from the last 3 months where your name and home address are clearly shown. Please note that we will not be able to return the copy of the document to you. Do not send original identification documents to DAERA.

## Authority to Commit Your Organisation

If you anything other than a sole trader, you must confirm that you have the authority of your organisation or joint partnership to apply for MEFF funding. This may be verified as part of our eligibility checking. If you are a joint partnership, then a signed and dated letter from all of the other partners must be provided to show proof of authority to act on their behalf.

## Organisation/Business Name

You will be asked to give the name of the organisation/business that you are applying on behalf of, if this is relevant. The name of your business needs to be the same as that listed on the Companies House website.

## Value Added Tax (VAT) Number (if applicable)

If you are registered for VAT then enter your VAT number. **To Note** - Grants claimed under MEFF schemes must normally be based on expenditure exclusive of VAT. If however, you or your organisation is not registered for VAT, you may claim grant including VAT.

## Relationships to Any Other Organisations

Give the name and relationship of any organisations which are related to yours, if applicable. For example, your company may own a subsidiary company.

## Alternative Contact Details

If you would like us to contact someone else about the progress of your application, perhaps because you might be away for a period of time, then enter their contact details into the space provided. Give their full name, address (including postcode), telephone numbers and email address, and state their relationship to you. For example, this might be ‘son’, ‘father’, ‘consultant’ or ‘agent’. This person cannot sign the application form, or any Acceptance of Grant made to you as the applicant. If you have used an agent or consultant to help you complete the application form, then they must countersign the form alongside you as the applicant, to prove that they have been involved.

Applicants must ensure that any agent or consultant used has knowledge of the MEFF rules and regulations as these can change during the programme as policy priorities of Northern Ireland change. Costs associated with using private agents or consultants are not eligible for funding.

# Part 2 About Your Project

You will be asked to estimate your expected start and end dates for your project. This should be in the format DD/MM/YYYY. Think about how long your project will take to complete and make sure you add on a few days for possible delays. You will be required to start and complete your project within the timescale entered in your application. It is your responsibility to provide a realistic timetable. If your project takes less time than you think, it won’t affect your ability to claim your funding when you are ready to. Extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and the grant award may be cancelled if a claim is not submitted within the prescribed period.

**Inland Fishing**

You will be asked if your application relates to Inland Fishing? Inland fishing means fishing activities carried out for commercial purposes in inland waters by vessels or other devices.

## Tell Us Your Position With Regard to Planning And Environmental Consents/Authorisations.

If this is ‘**Not applicable’** then you do not have to provide any information. If you have ‘**Applied for and received’** then complete the table in the application. If you have ‘**Applied for but not yet received’** or ‘**Needed- haven’t yet applied’** then you must list the descriptions of the consent/authorisations and enter ‘to be confirmed’ in the space provided. You will need to provide us with a copy of each consent/authorisation alongside this application form.

No offer of funding can be made until all planning consents/authorisations have been received and copies sent to DAERA. In some circumstances an Offer in Principle can be issued pending receipt of consents/authorisations.

If your planning consents and/or licences are not in place when you apply to DAERA for funding, you should supply details of when these are expected and forward them to DAERA as soon as they have been received. An offer of funding cannot be issued without required planning consents and/or licences being in place. It is possible you can receive an offer in principle if your project is eligible and meets the requirements of the scheme. An offer in principle is not an offer of funding and you cannot claim funds until you receive an offer of funding.

## Have You Considered the Marine Policy Statement, or Any Adopted Marine Plans in Force in the Area(s) Your Project Will Take Place?

If you have considered the Marine Policy Statement, or any adopted marine plans in force in the area(s) your project will take place, as part of your project development, then answer ‘**Yes**’ to this question. If you answer ‘**Yes**’ then explain how you have considered the Marine Policy Statement, or any adopted marine plans in force in the area(s) your project will take place, as part of your project development. In particular have any Marine Planning policies influenced this project? If so please give the policy reference and details.

If you answer ‘**No**’ then explain why you have not considered the Marine Policy Statement, or any adopted marine plans in force in the area(s) your project will take place, as part of your project development. See the following website for more information on Marine Plans:

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/marine-planning-in-Northern Ireland

# Part 3 Your Project Costs

You will need to provide details of your project including the costs of the items you would like to apply for. You will need to provide quotes for these items. Below is a table of the numbers of quotes we require.

You can find out if you are a public applicant or a private applicant in the General Guidance.

Minimum Number of Quotes Required

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Individual Items With a Value (excluding VAT) of: | Number of Quotes or Tenders |
| Up to £5,000 | Two price checks with suppliers to ensure value for money has been achieved; this can include internet price checks. The price checks should be documented and retained on file as an audit trail. |
| £5,000 to £30,000 | At least two original quotes/tenders **(if there is an incumbent supplier, then use the incumbent plus two further tenders).** If at least two quotes have not been provided, then an explanation why must be provided. Quotes must provide a breakdown of the total project costs in order to demonstrate value for money for each part of the proposed investment.Applicants are also required to provide a copy of the invitation to quote/tender document that was issued to prospective suppliers.  |
| £30,000 toEU Thresholds | Publicly advertised tender competition Thresholds. |
| EC Threshold[[1]](#footnote-1) | Official Journal of the European Union |

* Work contracted to different contractors or items of equipment bought from different suppliers are individual items.
* Labour costs of a contractor/supplier for fitting can constitute a separate item.
* You should obtain at least the minimum number of quotes for any individual item, as shown in the table and include all original quotes, signed and dated by the supplier with your application form.
* In exceptional circumstances we may consider accepting fewer quotes than the minimum numbers. For example it may not be possible to obtain three quotes for specialist equipment. If you are unable to provide the minimum number of quotes or tenders required, you should speak to DAERA for advice and your application should explain why this has not been possible.

The quotes and tenders you send must:

* come from suppliers that trade independently of each other and don’t share any ownership
* be from the last 3 months and be valid
* be comparable in terms of the quality, size, quantity, and type of product, if you’re using multiple quotes to show you’ll get value for money when buying a product

Don’t send quotes or tenders that come from suppliers you’re related to or that your business is linked to.

Quotes supplied must include:

* a detailed and itemised breakdown of costs
* the supplier’s address, phone number and a contact name
* the supplier’s VAT number, if they’re VAT registered and they included VAT on the quote
* the supplier’s company registration number, if they’re a limited company

These documents will all be used to show that you’re getting the best value for money in your project.

Applicants must ensure that the companies requested to quote for items or services for their project know that their quote is being submitted as part of an application of funding to the MEFF scheme in Northern Ireland.

All quotes provided must come from independent companies and will be verified by DAERA, which reserves the right to seek independent advice on the validity and value for money of quotes and tenders supplied. DAERA may contact your suppliers directly.

See the General Guidance for information on how to deal with any quotes you may have in Euros.

# Part 4 Your Project Funding

## How Will Your Project Be Funded?

We need to know how your project will be funded and where this money will come from. This includes funds you are intending to seek as well as those already obtained. Part of your project funding will come from grant funding and the remainder from yourself or another source. This can include private savings, money from your organisation, a loan or another grant and is referred to as your match funding. Your match funding should be in place before you apply to the MEFF. If your match funding is not in place at the time of application, an Offer Letter will not issue until you have demonstrated that the total funding is in place to deliver the project. You must indicate this in your application form. Contact DAERA for advice if you think this will affect you.

**Grant Rates**

Total public money in the following tables is the maximum grant rate for each category. The grant rate is variable up to this maximum and there is no guarantee of assistance. The Private column shows the minimum amount of private money applicants will have to contribute to the project.

Most commercial projects will be eligible for a maximum of 50% grant support; the exceptions are detailed in the table below. Also some projects which can show they meet all 3 criteria in the last row of each table may be eligible for higher rates of assistance, again these are maximums and there are no guarantees.

Some projects may have other national funding from bodies such as local authorities, coastal communities fund, enterprise companies. If applicable the details of such funding must be entered on your application forms.

**Grant Rates Key;**

SSCF – Small scale coastal Fishing – vessels 11.99m or less not using towed gear

PO – Producer Organisation

SME – Micros, small and medium enterprises – see General Guidance note for further advice

| **Measure 6a Fishing Port Infrastructure** |
| --- |
| Type of Project | Grant Rates as Percentages of Eligible Costs |
| Total public money % | MEFF % | National other %\* | Private % |
| Public | 100 | 100 | N/A |  |
| Private | 50 | 50 | N/A | 50 |
| Private (organisations of fishermen/collective) +10% | 60 | 60 | N/A | 40 |
| Private (POs) +25% | 75 | 75 | N/A | 25 |
| If any of the types of applicant above has a project in the category below, the grant rates above will be superseded by the rates below; see note 3; |
| Projects which meet all the following three criteria – see General Guidance for details;1. Project has collective interests2. Project has collective beneficiaries3. Project has innovative features (if applicable)  | 50 - 100 | 50-100 |  | 0-50 |

Note 1 An applicant may be able to secure funding from another public source to match the MEFF funding; if not, the applicant will need to provide their own (private) match funding

Note 2 The IB may decide to provide the public match funding if no other source of public funding is available and the project is judged to make a strong contribution to a priority policy objective

Note 3 These projects can receive up to 100% of the total eligible expenditure from grant funds

**In Kind**

In Kind costs are those where no actual costs have been incurred.

For example, an organisation allowing a member of staff to work on an MEFF funded project for 1 day per week, but while paying the person is not an In Kind cost. Alternatively, the same person volunteering outside of work hours, for which they are not paid, is an In-Kind Cost.

As no actual costs are being incurred, In Kind costs cannot receive a financial contribution from the MEFF scheme. However, In Kind costs may be an important part of delivering a project.

When applying for funding, In Kind costs should not be included in the actual costs associated with the project but should be detailed within either the application form or the business case to explain why these are important.

In Kind costs should not exceed 10% of the total budget for a project

**Leases**

On land or buildings – where an applicant has leased land or buildings within their project for example the fitting out of a leased building into a processing unit. The land or building must have a lease remaining of at least 10 years.

In certain exceptional circumstances the lease period can be reduced however this is at DAERA’s discretion and the file/e-system must be updated to show the decision and reasons.

Leased items (e.g., Hire Purchase) – items that comprise part of a project for which funding is being applied for must be paid for in full by the applicant before claiming. Items applied for which have payments remaining on them are not eligible for reimbursement. Payments on leased goods are not eligible for reimbursement.

**Leasing**

Where leasing an item rather than buying it makes value for money sense even if it won't meet Durability of Operations (the rule that projects and items with projects must be retained and not modified by the applicant for a minimum of 5 years following the end of the project) it can be considered for grant support. Items can include but is not limited to plant for site works; porta-cabins for temporary workspaces and other equipment only needed for a limited time but is required for the delivery of the project.

Where leases are part of your project the appropriate numbers of quotes must be supplied to ensure value for money is delivered. You must also provide a rationale with your application explaining why the use of leased items is better value for money than purchase.

## Estimated Claim Dates

You will be asked to provide the forecast date or dates on which you expect to claim your grant money, if you are successful. You are encouraged to consider making a number of claims throughout the life of your project. The total forecast amount (£) you will claim should add up to the total grant amount you expect to be awarded.

You will be expected to claim on these dates and must seek DAERA approval to change them by informing us in writing. The final claim date of your project will be detailed in you Offer Letter.

All final claims by successful applicants must be submitted to the DAERA by the date specified in the offer letter.

##

## Previously Sought or Awarded Funding for This Project?

We need to know if you have applied for or have been awarded a grant from another source for this project including European Union funding. Your MEFF grant may be reduced if you answer ‘**Yes**’. Please provide further details if you answer ‘**Yes**’, including who provided the grant and how much it was for.

## Previously Applied for or Awarded European Union (EU) Grants for An**y** Fisheries Projects?

You will need to tell us if you have ever applied for or received an EU grant for any fisheries-based projects previously (excluding this application form). **You cannot match an MEFF grant with another grant.**

#

# Part 5 What Will Your Project Achieve?

**What Are the Targets and Benefits of Your Project?**

**Targets**

Targets tell us what your project will achieve and how it will contribute to the development of your business. Targets are set by yourself based on your knowledge of your business and project. We may work with you to develop these targets further.

We will use these targets to measure the progress and success of your project. These targets and any benefits you have outlined will be included in your Offer Letter.

Good targets must be specific to your business and project, be able to be easily measured, must be directly achievable by your project, be realistic and have timescales to make them easy to assess.

There are explanations and examples in the table below;

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Example target** | **What makes it a good target?**  |
| The new filleting line throughput will increase from 100 fillets per hour to 200 fillets per hour | In this example the filleting line is the main element of the project and so will directly influence the throughput of fillets. The target should relate directly to filleting line. Making a target achievable is important as we don’t want you to tell us something you will struggle to meet. Make sure your target is something you can control to have the best chance of meeting it. We want your project to be a success. |
| The profitability of the business will increase by 5% in the first year increasing to 10% after 3 years. | This target is measureable. You will know much your profits have increased from previous years and will be able to measure this easily in future years. The example also has an annual timescale on it which makes it easy to calculate. Measurements can be almost anything depending on your project including but not limited to fuel usage, days lost to breakdowns/maintenance, increases in sale prices/value or profits made.  |
| The improved throughput and reliability of my processing lines will allow my business to increase its customers by 5 in the first year and continue to increase in the following 4 years | The throughput increase in this example will directly affect the number of customer’s orders that can be fulfilled. The numbers of new customers can be easily counted and the evidence provided. You must make sure that your targets are specific to your project. You must be able to control the activity that relates to your target to have the best chance of meeting them. |
| The business will buy 95% of its fish from boats landing in a 10-mile radius | In this example the intention to buy local fish can easily be monitored and reported on. The percentage figure should be realistic and challenging but not so high that you are likely to miss it. We want you to achieve what you tell us so make sure you leave a small margin, just in case. Targets should be able to be met by you without too much difficulty. If you make them unrealistic and overestimate your achievements and you don’t reach them you may put your funding at risk. |
| 10 more fishing vessel berths will be made available to the catching sector in my port in the first 2 years and a further 10 in the subsequent 3 years. | This target has two clear timescales, the first at 2 years and the next at 5 years. These can be easily reported on and offers a way to assess your progress during the project. Putting timescales on your project helps you to keep an eye on progress. The length of time depends on the project but in most cases we would expect to see a minimum of 3 years. Timescale will also help you report on your progress. |

**Benefits**

You will need to describe the expected benefits of your project on yourself, your organisation and the wider fisheries sector. For example, you could describe how installing new and more efficient refrigeration equipment will enable you to get better quality fish back to shore without increasing your catch.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Financial benefits | When writing about the benefits of your project, you should include any financial benefits. For example an increase in profitability, turnover or job creation. Explain how you will determine your project has been a success and has been value for money.Confirmation whether your project will result in safeguarding jobs including those which are under threat (jobs can be safeguarded by a project only if the completion of your project will directly contribute to the prevention of staff being made redundant).You must provide details of how you have calculated any financial benefits, including what discount rates are applied. You should indicate how the benefits of your project will continue to be delivered after the grant support comes to an end. Additionally, you should provide details on whether your project will result in increased profitability (either in terms of reduced losses or increased returns) and whether your project will lead to increased turnover and/or demand. |
| Environmental benefits | For example, relieving pressure from pressurised fishing stocks or discards. You should set out any benefits on the environment associated with your project. These may include improvements to air quality, water quality, wildlife habitats, biodiversity and the use of primary materials. |
| Other benefits | Such as social benefits. You should set out any expected social benefits associated with your project. This might include improvements to your company’s reputation which is very real but harder to prove or whether your project will provide benefits to the local community e.g. establishing a network. |
| Monitoring | Outline how you will measure these benefits during your project and after its completion. Make sure they are relatively easy for you to monitor, you do not have to make things difficult for yourself.  |

If you do not meet the targets and benefits originally agreed and set out in the offer letter issued to you by DAERA then the level of achievement of the targets and benefits will be considered. DAERA will take a proportionate approach to this consideration and where possible work with you to address the issues. DAERA must protect the public funding elements of the MEFF scheme and any match funding wherever possible so recovery of funding already paid to you or the withholding of funding outstanding may occur if it is considered necessary.

## Will Your Project Go Ahead as Planned if an MEFF Grant is Not Awarded?

You will be asked if your project will go ahead as planned if MEFF funding is not awarded to you. If it will but only part of what was planned will happen, then you should answer ‘**Yes- in part’**. If your project will go ahead as planned Answer ‘**Yes- in full**’, and if your project will not go ahead if an MEFF grant is not awarded answer ‘**No**’.

If you answer ‘**Yes- in part**’ or ‘**No**’ then you will need to explain why and what might change in the box. For example without the grant money it may take longer for your project to be completed, or perhaps only part of your project can go ahead, or it won’t be able to go ahead at all. If you answer ‘**Yes**’ to this question then you may not be eligible for a grant.

**Part 6 Promoting Equality and Diversity**

You will be asked to provide information about which section or sections of the Section 75 groupings that your Project is intended to benefit. You must also describe how your project will promote equality of opportunity for and good relations between the groups indicated under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

**Part 7 Declaration and undertaking**

Once you are satisfied that you have completed the form correctly you must sign and date it. Your application will not be valid if you do not enclose all the correct information and documents as requested.

**Part 8 Data protection Act**

This section informs you how your personal data will be used by DAERA in compliance with the, Data Protection Act 2018.

# Part 9 What To Do Now

**If you are ready to apply for funding you should make sure you have addressed the following (if applicable);**

1. Certified Copy of your ID (Passport/Driving Licence/Utility Bill(s) (If Applicable)

If you are a sole trader or a joint partnership then you have to provide identification. . If you are a sole trader you will need to provide a copy of either your passport or your driver’s licence. If you do not have photographic ID, we will accept two different utility bills from the last 3 months where your name and home address are clearly shown. You will then need to take it to your solicitor, post office or a DAERA Port Officer, who can sign the copy and certify that the copy you send is taken from an original document. If the copies you provide are not from an original document and have not been certified, your application may be rejected. Please note that we will not be able to return the copy of the document to you. Do not send original identification documents to DAERA.

1. **Letter To Show Proof Of Authority For (Joint) Partnerships (If Applicable)**

If you are a joint partnership, then a signed and dated letter from all of the other partners must be provided to show proof of authority to act on their behalf.

1. Planning Consents and/or Authorisations Needed To Enable Your Project To Proceed (If Applicable)

You will need to provide a copy of all the planning consents and/or authorisations if applicable. No offer of funding can be made until all planning consents/authorisations have been received and copies sent to the MMO. In some circumstances an Offer in Principle can be issued pending receipt of consents/authorisations. Contact DAERA for further advice.

1. A Business Case (If Applicable)

You will need to write a business case if your project has a total cost of more than £25,000 or **the proposed investment would have an impact on the operation’s profitability, income or operational costs**. A business case template with guidance can be found on the DAERA website.

**e) Your Organisation‘s Finances**

**If your project has a total value of up to £25,000**

You should provide a copy of your organisation’s accounts for the last three financial years to demonstrate that your organisation is financially sound. These can be audited or non-audited. If you are a new company you should provide other evidence of trading.

If your organisation is one or two years old, you only need to provide the organisation’s accounts for the financial years that you have been in operation.

If your organisation is new, you should provide a cash flow forecast for a minimum of 5 years. See General Guidance for an example cash flow forecast.

If your organisation is currently loss making, this does not necessarily mean that your application cannot be considered. However, you will need to explain carefully in your application form the steps you are taking to make your organisation financially viable, including the contribution you expect your project to make to this.

You must also tell us about any interest rates on start-up finance that is not clear from the Cash Flow Forecast.

**If your project has a total value of between £25,000 - £100,000**

You should provide a copy of your organisation’s accounts for the last three financial years to demonstrate that your organisation is financially sound. These can be audited or non-audited. If you are a new company you should provide other evidence of trading.

If your organisation is currently loss making, this does not necessarily mean that your application cannot be considered. However, you will need to explain carefully in your application form the steps you are taking to make your organisation financially viable, including the contribution you expect your project to make to this.

If your organisation is one or two years old, you only need to provide the organisation’s accounts for the financial years that you have been in operation.

If your organisation is new, you should provide a cash flow forecast for a minimum of 5 years. See General Guidance for an example cash flow forecast.

If your organisation is currently loss making, this does not necessarily mean that your application cannot be considered. However, you will need to explain carefully in your application form the steps you are taking to make your organisation financially viable, including the contribution you expect your project to make to this.

All applicants must provide a cash flow forecast for a minimum of 5 years and a discounted cash flow. See General Guidance for an example cash flow forecast.

You must also tell us about any interest rates on start-up finance that is not clear from the Cash Flow Forecast.

**If your project has a total value of more than £100,000**

You should provide a copy of your organisation’s accounts for the last three financial years to demonstrate that your organisation is financially sound. These can be audited or non-audited

If your organisation is new, you should provide a cash flow forecast for a minimum of 5 years. See General Guidance for an example cash flow forecast.

If you are an organisation that is one or two years old, you only need to provide the organisation’s accounts for the financial years that you have been in operation.

If your organisation is currently loss making, this does not necessarily mean that your application cannot be considered. However, you will need to explain carefully in your application form the steps you are taking to make your organisation financially viable, including the contribution you expect your project to make to this.

All applicants must provide a cash flow forecast for a minimum of 5 years and a discounted cash flow. See General Guidance for an example cash flow forecast.

You must also tell us about any interest rates on start-up finance that is not clear from the Cash Flow Forecast.

A full financial and economic appraisal will be conducted on your evidence and you may be asked for further information.

**Please note that we will not be able to return the copies of any documents to you.**

f) All Quotes

You must include all quotes with your application form.

**g) All projects, where there is a workforce of one or more persons**

Whether permanent or temporary workers, you must comply with any sanitary rules appropriate to the UK. You must tick the relevant box on you application to indicate that you have considered the above.

**h) You must confirm that you have read the associated General Guidance and** Support for Improvements to Shore-Based Facilities If you have not ticked this box your application will not be accepted by DAERA.

# Document Retention

If your application is successful, you must keep all documents related to your project for 5 years from the date of your last MEFF claim, including:

* licences
* consents
* quotes
* invoices
* receipts or other documents which record your spending
* all accounting documents related to your application
* claim forms

You must give DAERA any information or documents that they ask for at any stage.

DAERA may give your name and address to an independent person they’ve hired to evaluate your project.

You should also keep your project documentation under a separate accounting system or accounting code to ensure it is easily differentiated from your businesses other accounts and transactions.

**Durability of Operations**

To ensure the effectiveness, fairness and sustainable impact of the intervention of the MEFF, provisions guaranteeing that investments in businesses and infrastructures are long-lasting and prevent the Funds from being used to undue advantage should be in place.

Therefore, items purchased using public funding from the MEFF must be owned and used for their original purpose for a minimum of five years, except where State Aid rules provide for a different period or the items are leased, see the “Leasing of items or equipment section” for more advice.

In the case of a project operation comprising investment in infrastructure or productive investment, and where the applicant is not a micro, small or medium enterprise (SME), the applicant will be required to repay the funding contribution from the MEFF if, within 10 years of the final payment to the project, the project or its activity is subject to relocation outside of Northern Ireland.

Some or all of the funding for projects that do not meet the Durability of Operations above will be recovered.

**Part 10 Ready to Apply?**

The E-system can be accessed on the link below:

[MFF E System](https://mffs.marinemanagement.org.uk/MFFS/Public/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fMFFS%2fApplications%2fApplicationAction.aspx%3fctxid%3d&ctxid)

The E-system is simple to use and you will be able to log-in and see the status of your application and upload documents such as quotes and invoices.

**Part 12 Contact Details**

DAERA Fisheries Grants Unit

First Floor

Rathkeltair House

Market Street

Downpatrick

Co. DOWN

BT30 6AJ

**Telephone;**

[02844618190](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5C1497892%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CPOVY6SR4%5C0)or [02844618099](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5C1497892%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CPOVY6SR4%5C0)

**Email;**

MEFF.queries@daera-ni.gov.uk

You will receive an acknowledgement of your application within 5 working days of receipt by DAERA. We will aim to inform you in writing within 8 weeks if your application has been successful or not, provided you have supplied all the necessary information and documentation. If it has been successful then you will be sent an Offer Letter which will contain further instructions.

If you are unsuccessful, please refer to the DAERA website for more information on re-applying, appealing and the Department’s complaint procedure.

1. Currently £139,688 for goods and services or £5,372,609 for works [↑](#footnote-ref-1)