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| **SOCIAL FARMING CAPITAL GRANT SCHEME 2021** |

**Guidance Notes**

**Introduction**

The **Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs** (DAERA) is offering capital grant aid from its **Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Programme** to farmers currently or planning to be involved in **Social Farming** to support capital improvements on their farm to achieve Social Farming Standards.

Applicants must have:-

* already delivered Social Farming services **and/or** completed Social Farming-related training **and/or**
* registered their interest in Social Farming with Rural Support’s Social Farming Support Service **and**
* have signed up to complete Social Farming Standards.

**Applicants who received a grant from the Social Farming Capital Grant Scheme 2020 are not eligible to apply.** Specific details on eligibility requirements are provided within these Guidance Notes.

**The Social Farming Capital Grant Scheme is open for applications between 7 June 2021 and noon on 25 June 2021.**

Only apply if you have read these Guidance Notes and can meet the Scheme’s eligibility criteria. You can find out more about the TRPSI Programme by following the link below:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/rural-development/tackling-rural-poverty-and-social-isolation>

**Contact Details**

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| Social Farming Capital Grant Scheme | Email: [socialfarming.grant@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:socialfarming.grant@daera-ni.gov.uk) |
| DAERA  Rural Affairs Division (West), |  |
| Sperrin House, |  |
| Sedan Avenue, Lisnamallard, |  |
| OMAGH, |  |
| Co. Tyrone BT79 7AQ |  |
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**The Grant Scheme**

Grants are available to participants who are currently involved or planning to be involved in the provision of Social Farming services to support capital improvements on their farm to achieve Social Farming Standards **and have not received a grant from the Social Farming Capital Grant Scheme 2020**. The Social Farming Standards enable Social Farmers to provide clear evidence of service quality excellence and practically demonstrate their professionalism in delivering Social Farming.

The Social Farming Capital Grant Scheme can provide funding of up to **50% of the total capital costs** associated with your project, up to a **maximum grant of £4,999**. The **minimum grant awarded will be £500**. You are expected to **contribute a minimum of 50% match funding** towards the cost of your project and this must be in the form of a ‘cash’ contribution i.e. it cannot be a labour or ‘in-kind’ contribution. The minimum total project cost will be £1,000 and the maximum total project cost will be £20,000.

You must have completed your project and incurred all costs for which you intend to claim grant aid by **29 October 2021.** You must claim your grant by **3 December 2021**. No time extensions will be given. You must complete the application form fully and accurately in order to allow us to identify which applications are best suited to the aim of the Scheme.

**This grant scheme accepts application and claim documentation in electronic form. You must use the same email address throughout the process for submitting your application form and any Letter of Offer and claim documentation.**

## Stage 1 – Eligibility Criteria

You will only be eligible for a Social Farming Capital grant if you meet all of the following criteria:

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| 1. You have been involved in Social Farming either through delivery after 1 July 2014 **or** have attended Social Farming-related training after 1 July 2014 **or** have registered your interest with Rural Support’s Social Farming Support Service before 1 June 2021\*¹; 2. You have registered to complete the Social Farming Standards prior to or on the date of submission of your application |
| 1. You undertake farming activities |
| 1. You can complete the project by **29 October 2021** and claim your grant by **3 December 2021.** |

**If you answer ‘NO’ to any of the above 4 questions, your application will not proceed.**

\*¹ - DAERA will seek confirmation from Rural Support’s Social Farming Support Service. Where confirmation cannot be provided through this search, the applicant will at DAERA’s request be asked to provide confirmation.

**Stage 2 – Assessment Criteria**

If you meet all of the Stage 1 Eligibility Criteria, your application will be assessed according to the Stage 2 Assessment Criteria. Your application will be scored against the following Criteria:

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| * Suitability of the proposed project for Social Farming activities * Relevance of your project to improve Welfare, Health and Safety and / or Access |
| * Benefits of the proposed project to help achieve the Social Farming Standards |
| * Risks to completion of proposed project * Experience of Social Farming to date |

**What can be funded?**

Grant aid must be used to meet costs associated with **capital** equipment or the purchase / improvement of a capital asset. If you are modifying a building or structure we may ask for proof of ownership or leasing arrangements. You must be able to explain how your proposed actions link to Social Farming activity.

You must be able to demonstrate that you can purchase your capital equipment or make material adjustments to buildings (ensuring appropriate planning permission and statutory approvals are in place) and therefore complete your project within the timescales of the Scheme.

You must provide a minimum of 2 quotes / price-checks for each item involved in your project and these quotes must be submitted with your application.

**What can’t be funded?**

As this is a Capital-funding scheme, the following types of activity **cannot** be funded:

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| * General maintenance | * Training | * Costs already incurred |
| * Motorised vehicles | * Staff / Volunteer expenses | * Second Hand equipment |
| * Clothing, Uniforms | * Hospitality, Food, Drink | * Feasibility Studies / Reports |
| * Livestock/Animals |

## Please also note that the Social Farming Capital Grant Scheme funding cannot be used to:

## Pay for Running Costs and / or Consumables

## Pay for Labour costs not directly associated with purchased Capital items / works

## Fund agricultural production

## Match fund another project

## *This list is not exhaustive and if you are in doubt about the eligibility of your application, please contact DAERA for confirmation.*

**Key Information**

Your application will be considered against the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Criteria. It is anticipated that this Scheme will be over-subscribed so DAERA will use the Criteria to prioritise those applications that are best suited to the aim of the Scheme. You will be notified in writing of the outcome of your application within 2 to 4 weeks following the closure of the call for applications.

**Please note:**

1. Only one application per applicant and one grant award per applicant (subject to assessment) will be permitted.
2. The grant award will be issued to the Head of Holding associated with the Farm Business ID.
3. You **must not start** your project until DAERA has conducted a pre-contract meeting with you and you have agreed to the terms and conditions of the grant. This could be a face-to-face meeting or a virtual meeting depending on Government guidelines at the time. If your application is successful, DAERA will contact you to arrange a meeting with you. Please see Annex 2 – ‘Key Steps’ which provides you with further details on the full process.
4. You must incur the initial cost of your purchases,pay for them through your **farm business’s bank account** and then claim your grant once your project is completed. **NO advance payments** will be provided.
5. Following completion, you must provide evidence of your purchase (photographic evidence, serial number(s), etc.). Your project may be selected by DAERA for a verification check to ensure your grant aid is being used for the purposes intended.
6. This Scheme does not involve funding from the European Union however all awards will be made on the basis of *de minimis* aid under EU Regulation 1407/2013.

## How to apply

This Scheme is open for applications from **7 June 2021** until

**noon on 25 June 2021.**

Download the Application Form from **https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/initiatives-tackle-rural-poverty-and-social-isolation-trpsi. If you are having problems downloading the application form, please email** [**socialfarming.grant@daera-ni.gov.uk**](mailto:socialfarming.grant@daera-ni.gov.uk) **and documents can be emailed to you.**

Return your completed Application Form along with your electronic attachments by email to: [**socialfarming.grant@daera-ni.gov.uk**](mailto:socialfarming.grant@daera-ni.gov.uk)

**You must use the same email address throughout the process for submitting your application form and any Letter of Offer and claim documentation.**

In exceptional circumstances only, if you are unable to submit your form online, the completed Application Form and supporting information should be returned in a sealed envelope to us at the address shown on the front page of this document.

**The following documents *must* be included with your application:**

* Written, like-for-like, quotations from at least 2 different suppliers for every item that you wish to purchase. *(See Annex 1 of these Guidance Notes for further details).* *Please note DAERA will be undertaking random checks on quotes submitted with your application*

The onus to ensure that your application is received before the closing date rests solely with the applicant. Therefore please ensure that you leave sufficient time to submit your application online or use sufficient postage to ensure delivery by the closing date.

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL LATE OR INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS BE ACCEPTED.**

**If you would like more information about the Social Farming Capital Grant Scheme or have a specific query, please e-mail:** [**socialfarming.grant@daera-ni.gov.uk**](mailto:socialfarming.grant@daera-ni.gov.uk) **and a member of staff will contact you.**

**The Social Farming Capital Grant Scheme is funded by the**

**Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) as part of its**

**Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Programme.**

**Annex 1**

**Tendering and Quotations**

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| Total Estimated Cost per Item | **Action & Minimum Number** | **Advice** |
| Up to £5,000 | **At least 2 price-checks per item from different suppliers / internet quotations** | * ‘Like-for-like’ quotations must be sought * Documented evidence of the price-checks must be submitted with your application and Annex A completed. * **Do not** simply list website addresses/ provide links to websites as we **will not** check these. * Written Quotes should be dated & addressed to the applicant |
| **£5,001 - £30,000** | **2 Written Quotes** |

**We will calculate your grant on the cost of the lowest quote. If you choose a higher quote, we will still only contribute on the basis of the lowest cost.**

**Please note a random check may be undertaken with the supplier of your quote.**

**Annex 2**

**Key Steps in the Scheme**

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| **Submit your Application** |  | ***“Make sure you submit your on-line application before noon on 25 June 2021.”*** |
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| **Eligibility & Assessment Process** |  | ***“We will use Stage 1 Eligibility and Stage 2 Assessment Criteria.”*** |
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| **Notification of Outcome** |  | ***“We will write to you about 2-4 weeks from the close of the call.”*** |
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| **Formal award of grant**  **(Letter of Offer)** |  | ***“This will detail what we expect you to do.”*** |
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| **Pre-contract telephone meeting** |  | ***“We will explain the Terms & Conditions at a pre-contract meeting. Don’t start your project until you have had this meeting.”*** |
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| **Purchase and pay for your**  **eligible items** |  | ***“Make sure you have incurred your costs and paid them from your farm business’s bank account by 29 October 2021”***  ***“You’ve completed your project!”*** |
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| **Submit your grant claim and supporting documentation** |  | ***“Make sure you submit your claim to us along with all of the essential supporting documents by 3 December 2021.”*** |

**Please remember – you must supply all relevant documentation with your application e.g. written / documented price-checks. We may contact you if we require further information to determine the suitability of your application.**

**Failure to supply these documents before the closing date will result in your application being deemed ineligible.**

**If successful, the Letter of Offer Contract will be issued to the Head of the Holding in your farm business. If the Head of the Holding is not the person involved in Social Farming, you must ensure that Section 1.2 of the Application Form is fully completed.**

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| **Closing Date for receipt of completed application forms is:**  **noon on Friday 25 June 2021**  **No LATE or INCOMPLETE applications will be accepted.** |

