

|  |
| --- |
| Maritime and Fisheries Fund NI (MFF)  THIS GUIDANCE SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH SUPPORT FOR PARTNERSHIPS, INFORMATION SHARING, ADVISORY SERVICES, JOB CREATION AND TRAINING APPLICATIONS |
| SUMMARY |
| Grant aid is available under the Maritime and Fisheries Fund NI (MFF) programme 2021-2022.  The legal basis for the scheme is: European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015  This 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 GUIDENCE ON SUPPORT FOR PARTNERSHIPS, INFORMATION SHARING, ADVISORY SERVICES, JOB CREATION AND TRAINING APPLICATIONS |
| This Support for Partnerships, Information Sharing, Advisory services, Job creation and Training guidance isfor projects taking place in Northern Ireland.  In addition to this Guidance Note you must also read the **General MFF Guidance Note** as this contains information relevant for **all** MFF 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.  **DAERA Fisheries Grants Unit administers the MFF scheme on behalf of Northern Ireland tax payers. It is essential that the scheme delivers value for money and that 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 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, and 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 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. 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 |
| The Support For Partnerships, Information Sharing, Advisory services, Job creation and Training guidance should be used for projects relating to: advisory services; partnerships between scientists and fishermen; promotion of human capital, job creation and social dialogue; support for the systems of allocation of fishing opportunities and production and marketing plans.   * **Advisory Services (Article 27)** in order to improve the overall performance and competitiveness of operators and to promote sustainable fisheries.   Support shall be granted to operators, organisations of fishermen, including Producer Organisations, or public law bodies.  These projects shall be provided by scientific, academic, professional or technical bodies, or entities providing economic advice that have the required competences. Contact DAERA for further advice.   * **Partnerships between scientists and fishermen (Article 28)**   Funding under this article can be granted to public law bodies, fishermen, organisations of fishermen, Fisheries Local Action Groups and non-governmental organisations.   * **Promotion of human capital, job creation and social dialogue (Article 29)**   Support for promotion of human capital, job creation and social dialogue may be granted to self-employed fishermen, and may also be granted to spouses of self-employed fishermen or, where and in so far as recognised by national law, the life partners of self-employed fishermen**.**   * **Production and marketing plans (Article 66)**.   The preparation and implementation of production and marketing plans. This support shall only be granted to Producer Organisations and associations of Producers Organisations.  Expenditure related to production and marketing plans shall be eligible for support from the MFF only after approval by DAERA.  Support granted per Producer Organisation per year shall not exceed 3 % of the average annual value of the production placed on the market by that Producer Organisation during the preceding three calendar years. For any newly recognised Producer Organisation, that support shall not exceed 3 % of the average annual value of the production placed on the market by the members of that organisation during the preceding three calendar years.  Applicants under production and marketing plans may apply for an advance of 50 % of the financial support after approval of the production and marketing plan.  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 MFF General Guidance and if you are still unsure contact DAERA.  Table of Eligible Costs   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Item/Area | Eligible Costs | Ineligible Costs | | Advisory services (Article 27) | Feasibility studies and advisory services that assess the viability of projects potentially eligible for support under this Chapter |  |  | | The provision of professional advice on environmental sustainability, with a focus on limiting and, where possible, eliminating the negative impact of fishing activities on marine, terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems | | the provision of professional advice on business and marketing strategies | | **The feasibility studies, advisory services and advice referred to above shall be provided by scientific, academic, professional or technical bodies, or entities providing economic advice that have the required competences**  **The support for Advisory services shall be granted to operators, organisations of fishermen, including producer organisations, or public law bodies** | | Partnerships between scientists and fishermen  (Article 28) | The creation of networks, partnership agreements or associations between one or more independent scientific bodies and fishermen, or one or more organisations of fishermen, in which technical bodies may participate |  |  | | The activities carried out in the framework of the networks, partnership agreements, or associations referred to above  **The types of projects referred to above may cover data collection and management activities, studies, pilot projects, dissemination of knowledge and research results, seminars and best practices** | | The projects referred to under *Partnerships between scientists and fishermen* may be granted to public law bodies, fishermen, organisations of fishermen, FLAGs and non-governmental organisations | | Promotion of human capital, job creation and social dialogue (Article 29) | Professional training, lifelong learning, joint projects, the dissemination of knowledge of an economic, technical, regulatory or scientific nature and of innovative practices, and the acquisition of new professional skills, in particular linked to the sustainable management of marine ecosystems, hygiene, health, safety, activities in the maritime sector, innovation and entrepreneurship |  |  | | Social dialogue at Union, national, regional or local level involving fishermen, social partners and other relevant stakeholders | | **Support referred to under *Promotion of human capital, job creation and social dialogue* may also be granted to spouses of self-employed fishermen or, where and in so far as recognised by national law, the life partners of self-employed fishermen** | | Production and marketing plans  (Article 66) | **DAERA may grant an advance of 50 % of the financial support offered after approval of the production and marketing plan providing the Producer Organisation (PO) implements the plan immediately** |  |  | | The MFF shall support the preparation and implementation of production and marketing plans. |  |  | | **Support granted per PO per year under this Article shall not exceed 3 % of the average annual value of the production placed on the market by that producer organisation during the preceding three calendar years. For any newly recognised producer organisation, that support shall not exceed 3 % of the average annual value of the production placed on the market by the members of that organisation during the preceding three calendar years.** | | Funding for Production and marketing plans shall only be granted to POs and associations of POs |   Items and services that are statutory or mandatory requirements of law and byelaws cannot be funded by the MFF scheme  The MFF 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 (that is, grant funding and your own money added together). Use 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).  **Fisherman** means any person engaging in commercial fishing activities, as recognised by the Member State.  **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 coherent in geographical, economic and social terms and is designated as such by a Member State.  **Inland fishing** means fishing activities carried out for commercial purposes in inland waters by vessels or other devices.  **Vessels operating exclusively in inland waters** means vessels engaged in commercial fishing in inland waters and not included in the Union fishing fleet register.  **A public law body** is an organisation financed, managed or supervised by the government.  **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 per The Common Fisheries Policy (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019  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 European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 |

# Part 1 About You

You will be asked to provide details about yourself such as you 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 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. 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 are anything other than a sole trader, you must confirm that you have the authority of your organisation or joint partnership to apply for MFF 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 you will need to enter your VAT number. **To Note** - Grants claimed under MFF 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 MFF 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

**Project Duration**

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.

# 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 a sole supplier, then use the sole supplier 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 to  EU 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 MFF 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 MFF. 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 next columns are for information and show how the maximum grant is split between European funds and national funds. 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 form.

**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 for further advice

| **Article 27 Advisory Services** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Type of Applicant | Grant Rates as Percentages of Eligible Costs | | | | | | |
| Total public money % | MFF % | | National other % | Private % | | |
| Public | 100 | 100 | |  |  | | |
| Private | 50 | 50 | |  | 50 | | |
| Private (SSCF) + 30% | 80 | 80 | |  | 20 | | |
| Private (organisations of fishermen/collective) +10% | 60 | 60 | |  | 40 | | |
| Private (POs) +25% | 75 | 75 | |  | 25 | | |
| If any of the types of applicant above has a project in which meets the criteria 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 interests  2. Project has collective beneficiaries  3. Project has innovative features (if applicable) | 50 - 100 | | 50-100 | 0-50 | | 0-50 |

| **Article 28 Partnerships between scientists and fishermen** | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Type of Applicant | Grant Rates as Percentages of Eligible Costs | | | | | | | |
| Total public money % | | MFF % | National other % | | Private % | | |
| Public | 100 | | 100 |  | |  | | |
| Private | 50 | | 50 |  | | 50 | | |
| Private (SSCF) + 30% | 80 | | 80 |  | | 20 | | |
| Private (organisations of fishermen/collective) +10% | 60 | | 60 |  | | 40 | | |
| Private (POs) +25% | 75 | | 75 |  | | 25 | | |
| If any of the types of applicant above has a project in which meets the criteria 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 interests  2. Project has collective beneficiaries  3. Project has innovative features (if applicable) | 50 - 100 | | 0- 50 | 0-50 | | 0-50 | | |
|  |  | |  |  |  | | |  | |
|  | | | | | | | | |
| **Article 29 Promotion of human capital, job creation and social dialogue** | | | | | | | | |
| Type of Applicant | Grant Rates as Percentages of Eligible Costs | | | | | | | |
| Total public money % | | MFF % | National other % | | | Private % | |
| Public | 100 | | 100 |  | | |  | |
| Private | 50 | | 50 |  | | | 50 | |
| Private (SSCF) + 30% | 80 | | 80 |  | | | 20 | |
| Private (organisations of fishermen/collective) +10% | 60 | | 60 |  | | | 40 | |
| Private (POs) +25% | 75 | | 75 |  | | | 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 interests  2. Project has collective beneficiaries  3. Project has innovative features (if applicable) | | 50 - 100 | 0- 50 | 0-50 | | | 0-50 | |

| **Article 66 Production and marketing plans** | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Type of Applicant | Grant Rates as Percentages of Eligible Costs | | | |
| Total public money % | MFF % | National other %\* | Private % |
| Private (SSCF) + 30% | 80 | 80 |  | 20 |
| Private (POs) +25% | 75 | 75 |  | 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 interests  2. Project has collective beneficiaries  3. 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 MFF 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

**In Kind Funding**

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 MFF 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 MFF 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 work spaces 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 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 MFF 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 Grants for Any Fisheries Projects?

You will need to tell us if you have ever applied for or received a grant for any fisheries-based projects previously (excluding this application form). **You cannot match an MFF 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?** |
| Professional advice on environmental sustainability will be provided to appropriate individuals in the region contributing to ongoing development in this area | In this example the professional advice is the main element of the project so targets must relate directly to what the professional advice will achieve  Making a target achievable is important as we don’t 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 |
| 3 networks will be set up in the first year rising to 5 at the end of year 2. Each network will have a minimum of 10 active members | This example has lots of good measurements to make and assess. The numbers of networks is easily identifiable as are the numbers of active members. This example also has timescales and is achievable  Measurements can be almost anything depending on your project including but not limited to events, participants, increases in sale prices/value or profits made |
| The project will look at ways of reducing the physical and biological impacts of fishing on the sea bed in the region leading to practical testing of solutions for a minimum of 1 year | This target is specific to the project as the testing of the solutions will be the keep objective of the funding. This example also has a timescale of a year which can be easily measured  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 |
| Systems that attempt to contribute to the elimination of discards will be trailed in the region, expected discard reduction will be <1% | This example target provides a clear percentage that is expected to be achieved. The percentage given should be based on research into the area to ensure that whatever figure is given while challenging is also achievable  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 |
| The first network will be up and running within 9 months of project commencement with a further 3 networks running within 3 years of project commencement and a total of 6 by year 5. | This target has clear timescales on it, the first at 9 months and then at 3 years and 5 years. These provide clear milestones to assess progress and make any adjustments necessary to make sure you meet the target  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 benefits associated with your project. This might include improvements to your company’s reputation which is very real but hard 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 MFF 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 MFF Grant is not Awarded?

You will be asked if your project will go ahead as planned if MFF 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 MFF 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 Applicant's 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. 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 an 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 the 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. 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. A business case template with guidance can be found on the DAERA website.

**d) 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 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 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 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 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. 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 you are a new company you should provide other evidence of trading.

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. 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.**

e) All Quotes

Include all quotes with your application form along with evidence that the quotes were requested in writing.

**f) 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.

**g) You must confirm that you have read the associated General Guidance and this Support for Partnerships, Information Sharing, Advisory services, Job creation and Training Guidance**

**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 MFF 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 MFF fund, provisions guaranteeing that investments in businesses and infrastructures are long-lasting and prevent Funds from being used to undue advantage should be in place.

Therefore items purchased using public funding from the MFF 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 an 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 MFF 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 11 Contact Details**

DAERA Fisheries Grants Unit

First Floor

Rathkeltair House

Market Street

Downpatrick

Co. DOWN

BT30 6AJ

**Telephone;**

028 9052 8094 or 028 9052 8093

**Email;**

[MFF.queries@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:MFF.queries@daera-ni.gov.uk)

You will receive an acknowledgement of your application within 10 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 £122,976 for goods and services or £4,733,252 for works* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)