



RDP LEADER Fund Information

How much money is available?

We are releasing £400,000 for revenue projects. This funding will only be available for new project ideas. **This fund cannot support existing projects or fund the continuation of any projects/programmes.**

We are able to fund up to 80% of the overall cost of your project. This 80% is capped at £80,000 (overall project worth £100,000).

The Cwm Taf Local Action group reserves the right not to allocate all of the money released. Any money not allocated to projects on this occasion will be returned to the Local Action Group central fund for use in future calls.

In exceptional cases the Local Action Group reserves the right to award higher amounts for projects than the stated cap and should the situation arise that a number of excellent, innovative projects come forward, increasing the amount of money available is at the Local Action Group's discretion.

How long should a project last?

We would expect project interventions to last for six months up to a maximum of thirty six months. Projects must start within 3 months of the date of the approval letter.

What themes will this round of funding focus upon?

We would welcome projects which will fit into one or more of the following themes:

- Exploration of Digital Technology
- Renewable Energy at a community level
- Adding Value to Local Identity & Natural & Cultural Resources
- Exploring new ways of providing non statutory services
- Facilitating pre commercial development, business partnerships and short supply chains

What is eligible for support?

- Staff costs
- Mentoring
- Training
- Research
- Studies
- Pilot Projects
- Expertise
- Marketing
- Translation

What are we looking for?

This is a competitive process and projects will need to be community led, respond to community need and contribute strategically to the resilience of Rhondda Cynon Taf & Merthyr Tydfil's designated rural areas. Projects must be able to sustain themselves long term, after funding intervention has ceased.

Any funding will need to provide benefits across at least one rural ward.

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) project themes are purposefully broad to encourage a range of innovative ideas to come forward.

Should you wish to include any supporting documentation (such as a Business Plan) as part of your Expression of Interest submission you are welcome to do so but it is not compulsory. A Business Plan will be requested if you are invited to proceed to submit an application.

Based on the consultation process undertaken to date for the programme, we have included below some information which you may find helpful to guide the development of any project ideas for the different themes.

There are details of other organisations who can provide further support listed on the Contacts Page within this pack.

Exploration of Digital Technology

Consideration should be made of the connectivity of the area in which you wish to pilot your project.

What types of innovation could be implemented to encourage communities to interact with technology and become "digitally included". Projects must not duplicate any existing projects or activity.

It is expected that all projects will have some digital element to them.

Facilitating Pre-Commercial Development, Business Partnerships & Short Supply Chains

The focus of this theme will likely be aimed at co-operative and partnership working. You might like to consider the benefit to the community from any pilot project put forward under this theme. i.e

growth in employment, overall rural investment, attracting customers and other enterprises into rural wards.

Networks and supporting projects should not duplicate existing activity.

Exploring New Ways of Providing Non-Statutory Services

Project ideas under this theme should demonstrate a new way of thinking about service delivery to make it sustainable after funding.

How will services which the Council no longer provides but are needed within your community work across ward boundaries and how much buy in is there from the community they effect?

You may wish to think about what the wider benefits to the community would be (Business Development for instance) and whether shared services would work (e.g. using existing buildings already in use to provide extra services)

Adding Value to Local Identity & Natural & Cultural Resources

Projects could provide health benefits to the community, perhaps through the innovative use of the rural environment.

Could Leisure and Tourism aspects be incorporated into a project to enhance economic benefits to the community?

New ways of getting all ages to engage and interact with their heritage, culture and environment and encouraging them to take ownership and pride in their area.

Renewable Energy at a Community Level

What innovations could be implemented which have a return on investment to the community?

Please consider the limits, plans and consent needed as well as the opportunities of running a project under this theme.

How will any project work across ward boundaries and connect to existing schemes.

Please Note

The detail above is not a complete list of all the considerations to take into account when developing your project. Should you wish to discuss project specifics, please contact the Rural Cwm Taf Co-ordinator, Joanne Nicholas – Joanne.Nicholas@Merthyr.gov.uk 01685 727089.

Welsh Government reserve the right to comment on any Expressions of Interest or Applications submitted.

What is ineligible for Funding?

This is not an exhaustive list....

- Services that are a statutory requirement of the Local Authorities;
- Existing projects/services;
- Capital costs (A Capital item for these purposes is classed as equipment purchased with a value greater than £10,000 **and** retained for more than 12 months);
- aid or other assistance that would constitute State aid or impact upon the competitiveness of the market in respect of a business, enterprise, undertaking or 'economic operator';
- capital or revenue grants or other forms of direct or indirect assistance;
- the purchase of buildings;
- the purchase of cars, vans, motorcycles, bicycles and any other form of personal transport (for whatever purpose);
- the purchase of vehicles for external transportation (such as lorries, buses, vans, minibuses or any other kind of vehicle used to transport goods or people);
- any physical site work or other expenditure incurred before the project start date without prior written approval from the grantor;
- temporary works not **directly** related to the execution of the project;
- maintenance costs for existing buildings, plant or equipment;
- costs of arranging loans, VAT and other taxes recoverable by the beneficiary, administrative and staff costs or compensation paid to third parties for expropriation, etc.;
- payments for activity of a political nature;
- depreciation, amortisation and impairment of assets purchased with the help of a European grant;
- contingent liabilities;
- contingencies;
- dividends to shareholders;
- interest charges (unless under an approved State Aid scheme);
- service charges arising on finance leases, hire purchase and credit arrangements;
- costs resulting from the deferral of payments to creditors;
- costs involved in winding up a commercial company;
- compensation for loss of office;
- bad debts arising from loans to employees, proprietors, partners directors, guarantors, shareholders or a person connected with any of these;
- payments for gifts and donations;
- personal entertainments;
- statutory fines and penalties;
- criminal fines and damages;
- legal expenses in respect of litigation;
- reclaimable VAT

Match Funding

Match funding can be provided in cash or in kind (e.g. staff time, volunteer time). If choosing to use in kind match, this will need to be appropriately evidenced and may, as a result, reduce the amount of project funding you receive.

For example, a project might have total costs of £16,432.

The maximum amount of RDP grant that can be paid to that project by the LEADER measure is £13,145.60 which is 80% of the total project cost.

If the project was supported by in kind match funding of voluntary unpaid labour to the value of £6,000 then the actual costs incurred would be £10,432.

In this situation the maximum RDP grant payable would be £10,432 (which represents a 63.5% grant rate based on the total project costs with the other 36.5% being the in kind match funding from the voluntary labour).

Match Funding can be contributed from other funding streams (e.g. Big Lottery) but not from other European projects or programmes.

What happens if an EOI/Application is unsuccessful ?

If unsuccessful you will be contacted in writing explaining why the EOI failed or why the application did not meet the required criteria. Having an unsuccessful EOI or application does not stop you from applying again in any future calls for projects.

If a project is deemed ineligible or unsuccessful for RDP LEADER funding, the Cwm Taf Local Action Group and the respective departments in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council will advise on the potential for funding or assist with funding searches in order to support the organisation in achieving their aspirations.

What happens if an EOI/Application is successful?

If successful at EOI stage, you will be contacted in writing and provided with an application form (including unique ID reference), guidance for application form completion and a deadline for submission. As part of the process your organisation will be invited to attend a Local Action Group meeting.

If successful at EOI stage you will be required to submit a Business Plan as part of your application.

If successful at application stage, you will be contacted in writing and a funding agreement will be written and submitted to your organisation for signature. This will include aspects such as:

Monitoring of Outputs and Outcomes

Successful applicants will be required to report on a number of relevant indicators as part of your project delivery. These indicators will be set by Welsh Government and monitored by the Rural Cwm Taf Co-ordinator. We reserve the right to visit you, undertake audits with Welsh Government and ask for such information on a quarterly basis or as and when required. Audits and monitoring will be required to be undertaken after the project funding has ceased.

A failure to meet targets could result in a clawback of some or all of the allocated fund. This will all be set out in a Funding Agreement which you will be required to sign before your project can commence.

Publicity

All material created as part of a project must recognise the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and show the LEADER logos. All materials must be submitted to the Rural Cwm Taf Co-ordinator for approval and be bi-lingual (Welsh/English). Advice on this will be provided by the Rural Cwm Taf co-ordinator.

Welsh Government and the Cwm Taf Local Action Group reserve the right to publicise information and case studies which will include information on RDP projects as and when required.

Successful projects will be part of newsletters, press releases, social media activity and any other publicity information developed by the Rural Cwm Taf Co-ordinator and Local Action Group.

Finance

Claims will be submitted quarterly to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC are the Lead Administrative Body) in line with Welsh Government defined timescales. Projects will need to adhere to these timescales and submit evidence and information as required. Evidence required will include such things as invoices/receipts and proof of payments.

Organisations will receive quarterly payments from MTCBC in line with their project spend on an 80/20 basis.

Regular meetings with the Rural Cwm Taf Co-ordinator and MTCBC Finance Officer will be a requirement of the funding, as will occasional attendance at Local Action Group meetings to report on progress.