



**An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara**
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Rural Innovation and Development Fund (RIDF)

**Call for Proposals:
Agri-Food Tourism measures**

January 2025

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1. Call for Proposals

Organisations and economic operators are invited to submit one proposal that meet one or more of the objectives detailed at 1.2 below.

1.1 Agri-Food Tourism Measures

Agri-food tourism is broadly the practice of offering an activity or activities as part of a visit to areas of well-known agricultural produce and to sample and taste the local or regional cuisine or specialties. Agri-food tourism includes a wide variety of activities that involve the links between agriculture and the food produced at the local or regional level. It may involve staying on farm or touring food trails and events, participation in agricultural endeavours or buying produce direct from a farm or market. Agri-food tourism also encompasses local food, farmer and artisan market schemes that support and are paired with local and seasonal food producers and artisan crafts. Funding is available under the Rural Innovation Development Fund (RIDF) for agri-food tourism measures in rural areas.

1.2 Objectives

The objective of this call for proposals is to provide, on a competitive basis, funding to activities or items that relate to the promotion and/or development of innovative agri-food tourism projects which can demonstrate that they will be self-sustainable in the longer term. These initiatives should be underpinned with the objective of energising the rural economy by encouraging innovative job creation and sustainable enterprise development and should align with goals and actions of the Food Vision 2030 Strategy (<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c73a3-food-vision-2030-a-world-leader-in-sustainable-food-systems/#food-vision-2030>) which refers to opportunities for primary producer diversification into rural and agri tourism and eco-tourism (Goal 3, Mission 2), as well as developing linkages between local food and tourism offerings (action 14, Goal 4, Mission 3). The initiatives should also take account of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specific targets to double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers by 2030 (2.3); to devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products (8.9); and to provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets (14.b).

Delivery of initiatives should seek, where possible, to limit environmental impacts or operate in a way that is environmentally sustainable in order to align with environmental goals of Food Vision 2030 and of the SDGs.

It is envisaged that one or more of the following elements will be included in the proposal:

- Linkage of agri-food/drink or local food/artisan markets experiences with existing tourism initiatives.
- Food/drink festivals/markets or trails or series,
- Events which promote local food/artisan market experiences.
- Showcase events which promote local produce, crafts, businesses, authentic culinary or traditional skills.
- Inter-county collaborations which integrate and promote inter-county or regional agri-food experiences.
- Allow eligible existing local rural food/artisan markets to continue, to maximise their potential and/or expand.

- Assist rural communities who have already taken verifiable steps to establish a local food/artisan market to progress to opening stage.
- Funding for supports (such as websites, service provider networks, guidance/handbooks etc) or the development of agri-food trails/experiences that can be used beyond 2025.

2. Funding

- Funding will be provided by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) to part fund initiatives designed to promote agri-food tourism. The **maximum** amount that will be paid to any project is €25,000 (incl VAT).
- Funding for capital works will not be considered.
- Funding will be awarded on a competitive basis and applicants should note that there is no guarantee of funding.
- The financial contribution will not exceed 70% of the total eligible costs of the proposal and the costs must be necessary to carry out the actions proposed in the work plan.
- Funding is **not** payable in respect of any works undertaken prior to the official letter of offer for approved projects.
- Applicants must confirm that they are not receiving any other state funds in respect of any activity proposed in their application.
- Applicants should also note that if they are successful there is no guarantee that the full amount of funding requested will be provided and initiatives may be part funded depending on the number of applications received.
- This tranche of funding will be provided for 2025 only. Any activities accepted for funding must be structured in sufficient time to allow payments to be made by end 2025. Delays by applicants in completing agreed projects or in submitting invoices beyond this time period will result in non-payment of funds. Receipts for expenditure for the **full cost of the project** must be submitted prior to any payments being made.

3. Eligibility

This Call for Proposals is open to agri-food tourism initiatives which:

- Are situated outside the administrative boundaries of Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford.
- Are up and running and currently operating or expect to be operational in 2025.
- Are community-based and use (not necessarily exclusively) locally sourced inputs, such as food produce, local crafts, etc. Those initiatives planning to begin must demonstrate that they can comply with this requirement.
- Can demonstrate that their proposal is, or can be, sufficiently advanced to allow final payment to be correctly made by the Department by end 2025 at the latest.
- Can demonstrate the funding is for current expenditure (i.e. is not for capital expenditure).
- Can demonstrate the organisations economic and financial standing to prove that the organisation is financially sound. Applicants must declare in the submission that they can provide evidence supporting their financial standing (i.e. a copy of the organisations audited accounts for the last 3-years).
- Meet the objectives outlined at section 1.2.

3.1 Ineligible Activities and Funding

- Funding for capital expenditure will not be considered.
- Salary costs, fees, expenses, travel and subsistence or other personal remuneration to clients or proposers will not be eligible for funding under this scheme.
- Please note that costs incurred as a result of the application process will also not be eligible for funding under this scheme.

4. Application Procedure

4.1 Application and Submission

- Applications on the attached official application form must be submitted electronically to the following email address: ridf@agriculture.gov.ie.
- The deadline for receipt of applications to the above address is: **12:00 noon on 24th February 2025**. Applications received after that time or date will not be considered.
- The email must contain the name and contact details of the contact person/authorised officer as the acknowledgment of the application and subsequent correspondence will issue to this named person.
- Fully completed application forms with full details of the project proposal, including financial details must be lodged by the stated deadline.
- All information should be incorporated within the application form as no additional documentation (such as business plans, spreadsheets etc) will be considered.
- Information on the application form should **not** exceed the maximum word count specified.
- Application forms which are incomplete by the proposal deadline will be regarded as ineligible.
- An all-inclusive fixed price proposal in Euros (€), exclusive of VAT, is required, with individual cost breakdown, as relevant.
- Unsolicited documentation, including representations, letters of support, etc., is not permitted and applicants should note that canvassing of this nature may disqualify them from the process.
- Applicant must prove tax compliance for payment of funding.

4.2 Evaluation - Eligibility and Award Criteria

- All applications received by the deadline will be screened for eligibility. Ineligible applicants will be informed as soon as possible after the deadline for receipt of applications.
- Applications have no guarantee of success but will be considered on a competitive basis against the other proposals received, the award criteria and the overall objectives of this Call for Proposals.
- All applications meeting the eligibility criteria will be marked against the following award criteria:
 - (a) The quality and technical merit of the proposed initiative: A detailed project plan including content, how the project links with the objectives of the call for proposals, an analysis justifying the need for and demand for the proposal, timelines for actions and methodology to be undertaken must be submitted as part of the application.
 - (b) The quality and experience of the proposed team leading the initiative and their degree of involvement, engagement with stakeholders, and links to national/local development strategies.

- (c) Outputs, long-term impact and sustainability expected from the initiative and scale of the initiative (such as scale of service users reached, number of potential beneficiaries, projected visitor numbers, job creation, business expansion and geographical reach).
- (d) The quality of arrangements for evaluation of the initiative and the value for money to be achieved: A detailed description of the arrangements for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the initiative including the provision of progress reports, the value for money to be achieved and timetable of expected costs.

4.3 Evaluation Committee Outcome and Service Level Agreement (SLA)

- The conclusions of the evaluation committee will be communicated, by email, to both successful and unsuccessful submissions in respect of their submitted proposal.
- The applicant(s) of the successful proposal(s) must indicate their commitment to proceed with the project within one week of the date of the letter of offer. If part funding is offered, the applicant must confirm their acceptance of this funding and submit a revised breakdown of the costs that this funding would provide for or indicate the source of the balance of funding within one week of the letter of offer.
- On receipt of the indication of commitment, a Service Level Agreement and a Confidentiality Agreement will be drawn up for signature by the successful applicant and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

5. Reporting

- Progress reports will be required from the Service Provider on a regular basis and provision of an end of project evaluation report is required before the expiry of the Service Level Agreement.

6. Data Protection, Retention and Sharing Arrangements

Information contained in applications under the RIDF and subsequent contracts will be treated as confidential and will be classified as “restricted data” subject to the DAFM data retention policy. For third party contracts, where DAFM is the contracting authority the data retention period is 6 years following completion of the project.

Information contained in any application form submitted under the RIDF will be used by DAFM for the purposes of processing your application. Any personal information which you provide will be processed in compliance with current Data Protection legislation.

Information contained in applications under the RIDF and subsequent contracts may be shared in order to process any information supplied that is necessary for the performance of the awarded contract. For the RIDF, data sharing of application information internally with DAFM and externally with third parties would include for the purposes of processing the applications, assessment of submitted applications by the Evaluation Committee, the award of contracts and the payment of funds to the service provider.

7. Further Information

Any enquiry about the call for proposals under the scheme should be addressed to: ridf@agriculture.gov.ie

Terms & Conditions of the Scheme

- The funding under the Rural Innovation and Development subhead is provided for under the current expenditure provision of the 2025 Estimates for the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine. Therefore funding will not be provided for capital expenditure items.
- All approved project(s) must be managed by the relevant successful applicant who will take legal and financial responsibility for same.
- The project must be situated beyond the administrative boundaries of the five largest cities (Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford).
- Only (1) project per organisation/economic operator is permitted.
- Joint applications covering a number of organisations/economic operators are welcome and desirable. In such cases, one point of contact must be named. This named person will be the contact point for correspondence, must be authorised to accept the award letter, submit payment claims on behalf of the group and assume overall responsibility for effective delivery of the project. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine will not act as an arbitrator between members of a joint application.
- Maximum funding contribution will not exceed the total approved for the successful project(s) costs and in any case up to a maximum of €25,000 (incl VAT).
- The project must be initiated during 2025 and monies expended during 2025. However, this does not preclude projects which will come to fruition in 2025 but require essential preparatory work to be undertaken in 2025.
- **The funding is not payable in respect of any works undertaken prior to the official award letter.**
- The applicant must indicate their commitment to proceed with the project within one week of the date of the letter of offer and also agree to take over responsibility for the completed works, if relevant.
- **All projects that are approved must incorporate the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine logo on any material produced or presented relating to the project to highlight the role of funding from the Department.**
- In the event that the applicant(s) of the approved project(s) does not intend to proceed with any particular approved project this Department should be informed immediately.
- **The successful applicant(s) cannot be in receipt of, nor have an application pending for funding from any other source for any of the activities awarded funding under the proposal.**
- Progress on the successful project will be monitored by the Department using desk assessment and on-site visits, where necessary. For this purpose, officers of this Department or agents authorised to act on its behalf shall be allowed access to a beneficiary's premises at all reasonable times for the purpose of assessing the progress of the project and examining the financial and other records relating to it. Records must be maintained for six (6) years after the completion of the project.
- Additional information may be required from time to time in respect of approved projects. All requests from the office must be furnished promptly whenever requested.
- Any application failing to meet the above criteria will not be considered for funding.
- Applicants must be tax compliant and provide tax clearance certificate/access number.

Financial reporting conditions

- An award letter, a Service Level Agreement (SLA) and a Confidentiality Agreement will issue to the successful applicants. This correspondence will outline the contractual obligations and conditions that will apply to the funding.
- Successful applicants will be paid on foot of the SLA outlining the contractual obligations that include the funding schedule, as appropriate, and in accordance with the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, 1997, as amended. It is the Department's policy to pay contractors and suppliers electronically to nominated bank accounts. The successful applicant will be obliged to provide these details.
- Payment of funds, which are not fully supported with the necessary documentation, will not be accepted and may result in non-payment of funds.
- Incomplete or inadequate funding submissions, which require amendment after the 28th **November 2025** will not qualify for payment and no application for payment after that date will be considered.
- **The applicant must verify that they have not sought, received or intend to apply for grant aid from any other state agency in respect of the work now being grant aided.**
- The applicant must comply with DPER circular 13/2014 – Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds.
- The applicant must maintain records for all financial transactions relating to this project on a separate file and make these and all supporting documents available as and when required by the Customer.
- All documents relating to transactions involving expenditure on the approved investment must be retained for six (6) years after the completion of the project and made available, when required for inspection, to officers of this Department.
- In the event of failure by a beneficiary to comply with any or all of the payment conditions, payment of funds may be reduced, suspended or cancelled. Furthermore any monies not paid in 2025 will not qualify for payment in 2026 or subsequent years.
- The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine reserves the right to recoup any payment made which is later found to be in breach of any of the conditions or terms of this scheme.



APPLICATION FORM FOR AGRI-FOOD TOURISM PROJECTS 2025

1. Applicant Details

Name of Applicant:	
Address:	
Tax Registration No.:	
Tax Clearance Access No.:	
Name of Lead Contact(s)/Authorised Officer	
Contact Details of Lead Contact(s)/Authorised Officer	
Telephone:	
Email:	

1.2. Eligibility Criteria / Terms and Conditions (See Call for Proposals for further details)

	YES	NO
I confirm that the agri-food tourism initiative proposed satisfies the eligibility criteria at section 3 of the Call for Proposals.		
I agree to the Terms and Conditions of the Scheme and the Financial Reporting conditions outlined in the Call for Proposals.		

2. Project Overview

Project Name:	
Location(s):	
Proposal Summary: (Max 200 words)	

3. Proposal Details.

When completing section 3 please refer to the Call for Proposals, in particular to the objectives and evaluation and award criteria, to ensure sufficient information is provided to assess the application.

3.1. The quality and technical merit of the proposed initiative (30%) Max 1500 words

(A detailed project plan including content, how the project links with the objectives of the call for proposals, an analysis justifying the need for and demand for the proposal, timelines for actions, and methodology to be undertaken must be submitted as part of the application. (Additional documentation (such as business plans, spreadsheets, charts etc.) should not be submitted with this application).

Type here...(Max 1500 words)

3.2. Quality of the proposed team and engagement with stakeholders (30%)

Max 1000 words

(The quality and experience of the proposed team leading the initiative and their degree of involvement, engagement with stakeholders and links to national / local development strategies)

Type here...(Max 1000 words)

3.3. Outputs and long-term impacts (25%) Max 800 words

(Detail the beneficial outputs and long-term impact and sustainability expected from the initiative and the scale of the initiative (such as scale of service users reached, number of potential beneficiaries, projected visitor numbers, job creation, business expansion and geographical reach)

Type here...(Max 800 words)

3.4 Quality of arrangements for evaluation of the initiative, value for money to be achieved and timetable of costs (15%) Max 600 words

(A detailed description of the arrangements for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the initiative including the provision of progress reports and the value for money to be achieved)

Type here...(Max 600 words)

Timetable of Costs

(Provide details of proposed timetable of expected costs)

Type here... (Max 100 words)

3.5 Proposal Costs

a) Itemised Costs (Please vary headings as appropriate)

	Total €
Materials	
Sub-total	
Overheads	
Sub-total	
Other	
Sub-total	
VAT (if applicable)	
Total Expenditure	

Sources of Funding (Detail any other sources of funding for the proposal)

Source of Funding (name and contact details)	Financial Support (€)	Non-Financial Support (please describe)
Outline how the balance of the project will be funded?		

I request funding of € **(the amount you are requesting in funding)**
towards the cost of eligible expenditure estimated at € **(the total cost
of the proposed programme)** that does not exceed 70% of the total eligible
costs of the proposal, subject to the information that I have outlined in this
application in response to this Call for Proposals.

4. Declaration by Authorised Officer of the Applicant

Note: All questions must be answered, declaration completed and dated or otherwise the application will be deemed incomplete.

(The “Authorised Officer” is the person who will take legal and financial responsibility for the proposal and will be the contracting party with Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine)

I confirm that all information and declarations are true and accurate and that none of the activities proposed in this application are already funded from other State funds other than the Grant-in-Aid to the Local Authority/Authorities.

Name of Authorised Officer / Contact Person: (Block capitals)

.....

Signature of Authorised Officer / Contact Person:

.....

Contact details (telephone number and email):

.....

.....

Date:.....

Closing date/time for receipt of proposals is: 12 noon on 24th February 2025

Please complete pages 9 to 17. All details should be provided in the application form and the maximum word count specified should not be exceeded. **Additional documents should not be submitted** as part of the application as no additional information will be considered.

Applications should be returned to ridf@agriculture.gov.ie