

grow

south antrim

GROW South Antrim Newsletter

Issue 1

Winter 2009/10

Generating Rural Opportunities Within South Antrim

Welcome to the Winter 2009/10 and first edition of the GROW newsletter, which will keep you up to date on the Rural Development Programme in South Antrim, and the funding opportunities available.

GROW is proud to be the first cluster in Northern Ireland to allocate funding under the NI Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 and we would encourage rural people & local businesses to come forward with project ideas and find out how they could benefit from the programme.

Funding is available under a wide range of themes, offering excellent opportunities to those living and working in rural areas to shape their future and tackle the challenges they face. We look forward to supporting more projects and investing in local rural communities to make a real difference to the quality of life in rural South Antrim, especially in these difficult economic times. The key message is that by investing together, we can grow together.

Vera McWilliam
Local Action Group Chair

Janet Crilly
Joint Council Committee Chair



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Programme Update

GROW has now awarded over £425,000 to 17 farmers and rural businesses across Antrim, Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey Borough Councils, which will lead to a total investment of almost £1million in the area.

We celebrated becoming the first group to award funding for farm diversification and business creation and development under the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2007-2013 with a visit from Minister for Agriculture & Rural Development, Michelle Gildernew MP MLA.



Congratulating the successful applicants Minister Gildernew stated: "Since its launch, the enthusiasm and interest that has been shown for the Rural Development Programme has been tremendous. Presenting individuals with funding offers is what the programme is all about and it gives me a great sense of pride to see what we are achieving across the RDP."

Local Action Group Vice Chair, Brian Duffin, commented: "It is encouraging to see that in the tough climate, farmers and rural businesses are adapting and being forward thinking. As the first projects in Northern Ireland to benefit from this funding, we look forward to seeing them put their ideas into action."



About GROW

GROW is one of seven clusters delivering the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 across Northern Ireland and has been allocated a budget of approximately £8.89million to support rural communities in South Antrim.

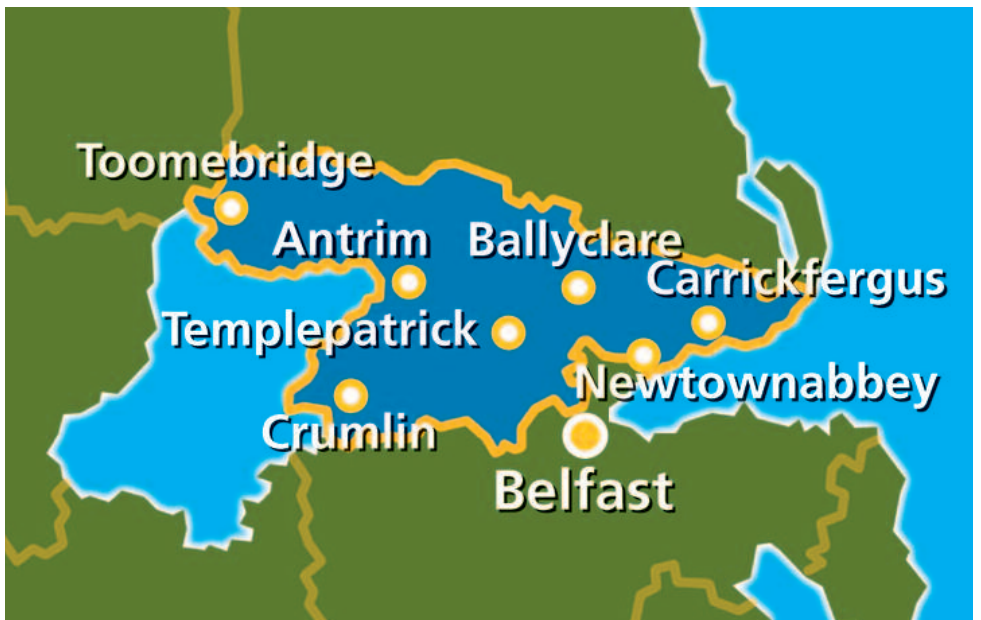
Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey Borough Councils and implemented by a Local Action Group, comprising representatives from the local business, community, agriculture and council sectors. The Local Action Group uses its knowledge and expertise to assess applications and make funding recommendations.

Local people making local decisions...

The GROW area represents 3 Council areas: Antrim, Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey and is made up of 2 groups - a Local Action Group and a Joint Council Committee.

The GROW area stretches from Toomebridge to Whitehead and covers rural areas of Antrim, Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey Borough Councils. For advice on whether you are based in a rural area, contact the GROW office.

The Programme is strategically delivered by a Joint Council Committee representing Antrim,





Joint Council Committee Members

Antrim Borough Council



Cllr Annemarie Logue



Cllr Danny Kinahan
(JCC Vice-Chair)



Cllr Trevor Clarke



Who

Carrickfergus Borough Council



Ald Patricia McKinney



Ald David Hiditch

Newtownabbey Borough Council



Ald Paula Bradley



Cllr Janet Crilly
(JCC Chair)



Cllr Etta Mann



Local Action Group Members

Antrim Borough Council



Ald Mervyn Rea



Cllr Henry Cushinan



Cllr Mel Lucas

are we?

Carrickfergus Borough Council



Cllr Isobel Day



Cllr Lynn McClurg



Cllr Jim McClurg

Newtownabbey Borough Council



Cllr Vera McWilliam
(LAG Chair)



Ald Paul Girvan



Cllr Jim Bingham



Cllr Noreen McClelland

Social Partners



Sharon Parkes



John Farr



Bob Adams



Brian Duffin



Edward Adamson



Roy Kennedy



Ian Kernohan



Kelli Bagchus



Sam Crowe



Victor Hart



Farm Diversification

The aim of this measure is to provide support for farmers and members of farm families to diversify into non-agricultural activities in order to generate additional income, increase the sustainability of the farm business and create additional employment.

Level of Support:

Up to 50% of total project costs

Maximum Grant:

£50,000

A total of 13 farm diversification projects have been awarded funding under the first call for applications and a total of £372,765 in GROW funding has been committed under this measure.

Andrew Graham of Westwind Turbines and Peter Geary of Antrim Hills Spring Water are just two of the successful applicants so far.

Andrew Graham - Westwind Turbines

Andrew approached GROW South Antrim for funding to assist him in the much-needed expansion of his business.

The Aldergrove based company, which manufactures wind turbines, was securing high level orders and needed to increase capacity and meet the high demand for the product.

Westwind Turbines has been awarded a total grant of £23,912, which will allow the company to purchase new equipment, increasing productivity and increasing a family farm income.





Peter Geary - Antrim Hills Spring Water

Antrim Hills Spring Water, based in Straid, was the first Northern Ireland company to bottle spring water.

The business was awarded a total grant of £50,000 to purchase new specialised equipment which will enable them to produce innovative new water and soft drink products for the wholesale, retail and food service markets.

This award of funding will further develop the work of this growing local company and increase its sustainability for years to come.



Business Creation & Development

GROW offers support to help develop the local rural economy, assisting new businesses to set up and enabling existing businesses with less than 10 employees to expand or diversify. By boosting rural enterprise, this measure aims to create employment opportunities and nurture innovation and entrepreneurial talent.

Level of Support:

Up to 50% of total project costs

Maximum Grant:

£50,000

A total of 8 businesses have been awarded funding under the first call for applications and a total of £209,990 in GROW funding has now been committed under this measure of the Programme.

John Wann - Aulino Wann & Associates

Based in Whitehead, Aulino Wann & Associates offers environmental consultancy services to a range of customers in the public and private sectors.

John was awarded £4,454 to purchase new equipment which will improve the efficiency and capability of his business. This will enable the company to expand and increase the range of services he can offer to customers.



Stephen and Colin were awarded funding of £50,000 to set up a new business on the Green Road, a rural area outside Ballyclare.

The business offers for hire two indoor 3rd generation turf pitches suitable for 7-a-side sport such as football, rugby and hockey.

The Soccer Shed will provide a safe and dry environment for sports training and development and a facility for use by clubs, youth organisations, cross community projects and schools and other groups.



Tourism & Heritage

Funding is available for new and existing tourism providers to boost tourism in rural South Antrim, with the objective to increase the number of visitors to our rural areas, encourage them to stay longer and enhance their stay through activities and a high quality experience, which will persuade them to return. Support is also available to preserve and upgrade rural heritage and to use the natural and built environment as the basis for sustainable economic growth.

Level of Support:

Private Businesses: Up to 50% of total project costs

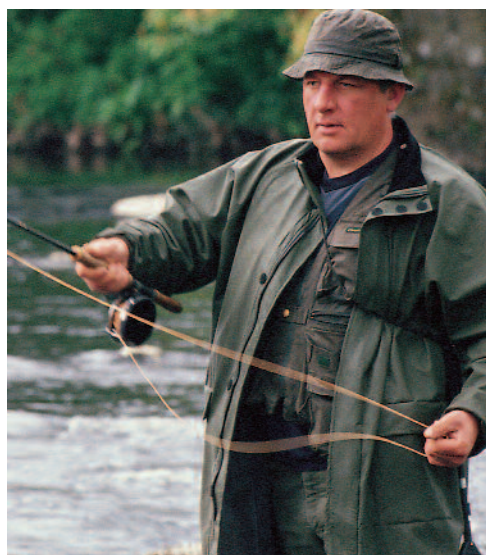
Maximum Grant: £50,000

Not-for-Profit Organisations: Up to 75% of total project costs

Maximum Grant: £250,000

Antrim, Carrickfergus & Newtownabbey Borough Councils - South Antrim Fishing Festival

The South Antrim Fishing Festival, a joint application from the three councils of Antrim, Carrickfergus, and Newtownabbey, was the first iconic tourism project to be awarded funding from GROW South Antrim. Grant aid of £79,228 has been awarded to the festival which aims to highlight the local area as a unique angling hotspot and to enhance this popular tourist activity within the South Antrim area.





The fishing festival will be held over April, May and June 2010 in cooperation with local angling clubs and facilities and will host events and activities to suit all ages and interests, giving everyone a chance to take part.

3 Flagship Events

Each of these all day events will include culinary demonstrations by professional chefs using local produce, fishing demonstrations from experts, a fish market and a variety of exhibition marquees and family entertainment.

9 Smaller Events

To complement the 3 flagship events, each council area will hold three smaller events throughout rural South Antrim during the three month festival, ranging from fishing competitions to angling demonstrations and coaching sessions.

Schools Outreach Programme

Primary schools across the rural South Antrim area will be given the opportunity to participate in an angling themed craft or activity programme to introduce them to the angling discipline.

Food Voucher Booklet

Local cafés, bistros and restaurants will offer discounts and deals on their sea food & game menus throughout the festival.

This festival will be marketed extensively throughout the UK and Ireland, attracting visitors and tourists to the area, and strengthening South Antrim's image as a top angling destination.



Basic Services

With the aim to enrich basic services for the economy and rural population, this measure aims to improve the quality of life in rural areas by enhancing living conditions, making areas more attractive and developing the wellbeing of rural communities.

Level of Support:

Private Businesses: Up to 50% of total project costs

Maximum Grant: £50,000

Not-for-Profit Organisations: Up to 75% of total project costs

Maximum Grant: £250,000

Crumlin Together – Crumlin Youth United

Crumlin Together, a community organisation which provides facilities, information and support for the local community, was awarded £60,330 in GROW funding to develop a youth project called 'Crumlin Youth United'.

The Youth United project will complement and enhance the youth services already provided by Crumlin Together in Crumlin Youth Zone by offering increased activities and programmes, including an 'after school drop in' facility.

The programmes will cover a variety of topics, from drug and alcohol

abuse to personal development and wellbeing. These programmes will empower young people to make informed choices and encourage them to take an active role in the community and their area.



There are two phases to this strand of the Programme: the first is to offer support to rural villages and communities to prepare integrated action plans, and the second phase is to implement the actions which are identified by these plans. These actions will promote the development of the community as a whole and improve its infrastructure, kick-starting regeneration.

Level of Support:

Private Businesses: Up to 50% of total project costs

Maximum Grant: £50,000

Not-for-Profit Organisations: Up to 75% of total project costs

Maximum Grant: £250,000

To date, the Village Renewal theme has only been open for applications under Phase II, for villages with a plan already in place. One project, Crumlin Village Enhancement Initiative, has been awarded funding of £5,000 towards technical assistance costs. It is hoped that Phase I of the Programme will be open in early 2010.

Crumlin Village Enhancement Initiative

Antrim Borough Council has been awarded £5,000 towards preparing the concept design and costing for an Environmental Improvement Scheme for the village of Crumlin. This is the first phase in a planned larger scale regeneration of the village.





What happens once an application is submitted?

Eligibility Check & Acknowledgement

An eligibility check is carried out and we will acknowledge your application within 2 weeks of the closing date.

Financial Projections

When your application is acknowledged, we will ask that you complete and submit a financial projections form.

Site Visit

Upon receipt of your financial information, we will be in contact with you to arrange a site visit to gather additional project details.

Economic Appraisal

Staff will use information from your application and site visit to complete an economic appraisal on your project.

Assessment Panel

An Assessment Panel, made up of Local Action Group members, will score your application based on set criteria.

Local Action Group Meeting

The Local Action Group will approve the application score and make a recommendation to the Joint Council Committee that the project should or should not be awarded funding.

Joint Council Committee Meeting

The Joint Council Committee will approve this decision.

Decision

You will be informed of the outcome of the assessment process. If your application is successful, a Letter of Offer is issued to the project and funding is awarded.

GROW will reopen for applications under the following themes in 2010:

Farm Diversification	June 2010
Business Creation & Development	June 2010
Rural Tourism	June 2010
Basic Services	22 Feb - 22 Mar 2010
Rural Heritage	22 Feb - 22 Mar 2010
Village Renewal Phase I & II	To be confirmed

Support for Applicants

**GROW staff can offer guidance at any stage of your application.
Support is also available from:**

College of Agriculture Food & Rural Enterprise Business planning courses	028 8675 7500 joe.mulholland@dardni.gov.uk
DARD Rural Enterprise Advisers Advice and guidance on farm diversification	028 2566 2823 claire.anderson@dardni.gov.uk 028 2766 0111 gerry.burns@dardni.gov.uk

Your Local Enterprise Agency

Antrim Enterprise Agency	www.antrimenterprise.com 028 9446 7774 kerry@antrimenterprise.com
Carrick Enterprise	www.ceal.co.uk 028 9336 9528 info@ceal.co.uk
Mallusk Enterprise Park	www.mallusk.org 028 9083 8860 info@mallusk.org

Support for Not-for-Profit Organisations

The Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) provides free advice and a service to review applications before they are submitted to funders.	www.nicva.org 028 9087 7777 neil.irwin@nicva.org james.laverty@nicva.org
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**'The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development: Europe
investing in rural areas'.**



Carrickfergus Borough

