

## Rural Direct briefing 7b

### Supporting your Full Proposal: submissions *after* 16 November 2011

#### Changes to assessment Criteria

Please note that there are new assessment criteria to be used for proposals submitted on or after 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011. **This briefing only refers to proposals submitted after 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011.** For proposal submitted *before* 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011 refer to Rural Direct briefing 7a - Supporting your full proposal: submissions *before* 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011.

In order to make the best possible proposal for a Rural Priorities Contract the online proposal must be supported with a substantial amount of evidence, all of which must be submitted to the Case Officer by the submission deadline. The offline submission should consist of an **Outcome Plan** and all relevant **appendices**.

#### What is an Outcome Plan for Rural Priorities?

In Rural Priorities applications Outcome Plans are pro forma documents, which ask for specific information about your project. There are three kinds of outcome plan that you could be asked to provide a **Business Outcome Plan** (Regional Priorities 1-7 and 26 -32) or an **Environment Outcome Plan** (Regional Priorities 8 –25) or if a proposal includes Forestry options, a **Forestry Outcome Plan**.

A template for each plan can be downloaded from the Rural Priorities website. They can be found in the list of forms on the front (Map) page towards the bottom in a box on the left hand side. You should download the Microsoft Word format Outcome Plans. These can be typed into, saved emailed to the Case Officer or uploaded on Rural Payments Online.

#### What information is needed to complete an Outcome Plan?

Each plan has 6 sections:

**Section 1 – Further Information** Provide further detail, if necessary, of how the options, described in the **online Proposal screens** will be carried out by the business, or on the property, identified in your application.

**Section 2 - Specialist Advice** Insert any specialist advice you have received and ensure this has been reflected in the detail provided in Sections 1 and 2.

Specialist advice is required:

- where the option guidance does not prescribe in sufficient detail how you should implement the activity on your property, or
- where the guidance specifically asks for a specialist management plan, or
- where you have been advised by your Case Officer to seek specialist advice.

**Section 3 – Proposal Assessment** If necessary, use this section to provide additional evidence to that entered into the online Regional Priority Supporting Statement of how and why the **assessment criteria** will be met.

**Section 4 – Consents and Approvals** Insert references to any specific approvals, licences, quotes and consents you have been advised to obtain and attach as **appendices** to this outcome plan.

**Section 5 – Legal and Financial Eligibility** This section must be completed to demonstrate that you are legally and financially able to undertake the work in the Proposal. Please refer to the Legal and Financial Eligibility Guidance, <http://bit.ly/yATT8T>. If required to complete two different Outcome Plans, this section only needs to be completed in one Plan.

**Section 6 – Application Checklist for Applicants/Agents** This section should be completed to inform the Case Officer of all the supporting documentation being submitted with the application. If required to complete two different Outcome Plans, this section only needs to be completed in one Plan.

### Actual Costs

If you are applying for Actual Costs then it is necessary to provide:

- a completed Quotations and Funding Sources Table, <http://bit.ly/ztoyS8>
- 2 'like for like' quotes for each actual cost item
- letter(s) from funding body(ies), including bank
- 3 year cash flow projection and 3-year projected Profit & Loss Account for proposals with actual costs that have an overall value greater than £20,000.

### The 14 Assessment Criteria

In any application for Rural Priorities contracts it is essential that you outline exactly how your project will meet the 14 assessment criteria. Each criterion is explained on the Rural Priorities website but Rural Direct has also produced a checklist to assist community groups with their applications.

You should note that you must explain how you will meet the 14 criteria, in order, for every option that you have selected.

You must address all of these criteria for each option you select in the online Supporting Statement and/ or in section 3 of the Outcome Plan. Please see: *Briefing 7 An Introduction to Completing your Full Proposal* for more information about the online proposal.

Criteria	What would get you a high score	Examples / Notes
<b>Scale of Contribution to Regional Priority</b>		
Quality	Identifying the particular importance to the RPAC's regional priorities or support for one of the 6 national targets	Clear evidence of how the project will meet the demand and need identified e.g. filling a gap or allowing important services to continue and grow.
Quantity	Showing that you intend to commit as much as is possible or reasonable of your available resources	For community groups in receipt of grant funding for major projects the financial value of the contribution from the group itself may be relatively low.

Criteria	What would get you a high score	Examples / Notes
Collaboration	Where your project links to other projects applying for rural priorities funding, the collaborator's proposals must be compatible and genuinely add value to the applicant's proposals.	Linked or integrated assets across more than one land holding, e.g. path network, view points within a tourist trail
Integration	If the separate Options you have chosen complement one another As well as complement each other, to qualify for a 'high' rating under this criterion, each option selected should genuinely add value to the proposal and contribute to the selected regional priority in their own right.	Management of a woodland (Axis 2 Option 45 ) to produce timber suitable for chipping for new wood fuel plant (Axis 3 Option 2).
Multiple Outcomes	You deliver more than one regional priority. Note this is not for the delivery of sub priorities.	Conversion of an old building into a Community Centre could meet community priorities (31) as well as historic/ vernacular building priority (15)
Innovation	Where, as a result of your circumstances or choice of Options, you can demonstrate greater contribution to the selected regional priority through adoption of new and sound ideas, technology, skills or methods of delivery which, at a minimum, are novel for the region in which the Proposal is based.	Using new technology for cladding of the building that reduces the environmental impact. Note: It is expected that scoring a 'High' for innovation would be an exception rather than the norm.
Contribution to National Targets	Links with current government national targets: 1. Encouragement of young new entrants into farming 2. Nationally important nature sites e.g. SSSI's; 3. Woodland expansion to mitigate climate change 4. The conservation of Red Squirrels 5. Improvement in the quality of Scotland's surface and ground waters by reducing diffuse pollution. 6. Increasing the area of organically managed farmland in Scotland.	Community groups may not score high on this criterion unless they are managing community woodland.

Criteria	What would get you a high score	Examples
<b>Value for money</b>		
Additionality <i>Please note this criterion was amended after 16 November 2011</i>	If you confirm the project will not proceed without funding assistance from rural priorities.	For many community groups the only source of funding for the proposed activity will be grant funding, without this the group would not undertake the project.
Added Value	Where your proposal secures or enhances an existing activity regardless of whether you have previously received public funding for that activity	The introduction of new activities that complement or continue existing management funded under previous schemes such Rural Stewardship Scheme, Scottish Forestry Grant Scheme, Natural Care Agreements, etc., but which also deliver a regional priority
Long-term Benefit	Where you can demonstrate that the activities proposed will provide benefits which last longer than the terms of your rural development contract and so provide enhanced public benefit	A building, piece of equipment or a community facility that will be operated and available beyond the term of the Rural Development Contract period (5+years)
Qualitative Contribution <i>Please note this criterion is only appropriate to applications submitted after 16 November 2011</i>	Where you can demonstrate greater contribution to the regional priority by improving on the minimum activities referred to or described in the option guidance.	It is necessary to undertake activities to a higher standard than any statutory requirement.
<b>Management of Risk</b>		
Meeting Demand	Showing an immediate demand for a product or service that is currently not being met in your region.	A community plan initiated by the Community Planning Partnership identifies the need for a particular community service. Customer or community survey highlights demand for new product/service.
Minimise Impacts	Where you have recognised and acted appropriately to minimise potential external impacts resulting from the proposal (e.g. impact on your neighbours, other local or associated businesses or the wider environment as appropriate)	Cannot claim benefits that are required by statute, regulation or other consents (eg planning conditions) Pay specific attention to any negative impacts highlighted at Statement Of Intent stage. Take on board the advice provided by specialist advisors or comments made in a consultation process.
Demonstrate Feasibility	Where proposal can be successfully completed within the specified timescales, to the agreed standards, that the payment will be realistically claimed within the defined timescale and any non-SRDP funding can be/has been secured.	The existing business can be operated whilst the new enterprise is set up e.g. hire of a portakabin to house the mother and toddlers group when the hall is closed for renovation. Track record of organisation and/or individual members of organisation Letter of commitment from other funding bodies, bank or other sponsor

## Other supporting evidence – your appendices

In addition to providing a completed Outcome Plan all relevant appendices should be provided and can be referred to throughout the supporting statements. Although there is an exception for single quotes and estimates for community groups, applicants will be required to submit a Quotations Table prior to the issue of a Rural Priorities contract. It will strengthen your application if these documents can be referred to and made available at an early stage rather than have your Case Officer request them.

From 9 May 2011 it is mandatory for all documentation for **new** cases to be stored electronically. You can upload this documentation yourself or if you do not have an electronic copy you can send a paper version to your Case Officer / or the RPAC office dealing with your case and they will scan the documents for you. The supplementary information which constitutes the appendices section of your Proposal must be submitted within 5 calendar days of the submission of your Proposal. Assessment of your Proposal will only take place once the relevant documents have been received. As part of the assessment your Case Officer may contact you for more supporting documentation if necessary.

The appendices you require will vary but it is likely that you will need to provide:

- Quotations and Funding Sources Table: include two quotes or estimates for items of expenditure: Evidence of all match funders
- Detailed financial management plans for the delivery of the project – including a realistic three year cash flow profile and the assumptions the plans are based upon
- Specialist advice
- Consents and Licences
- Bank Statements
- Your constitution
- Business Plan
- Risk Management Plan
- Evidence of need, such as surveys, community consultations and letters of support
- Organisations policies – such as Equal Opportunities, Child Protection
- Last two full years' accounts and financial health statements
- CV's or similar giving the relevant skills/ experience of the individuals responsible for taking the project forward
- Letters of approvals, Landlord Notification forms if required
- Insurance certificates

The appendices you provide will be your opportunity to show that your group is capable of delivering the project you propose to undertake, that you have planned it adequately and that you have sufficient evidence of eligibility. Appendices should also support your case for meeting the 14 assessment criteria.

It is likely that the RPAC will be particularly interested in how you will ensure that the aspect of the project they are being asked to fund will be delivered rather than the wider or longer term aims of the organisation or group. Therefore even a good Business Plan may not be enough to demonstrate feasibility. For example for the renovation of a social enterprise building you will need to provide an analysis that demonstrates the group can manage the building works and interior fit out, that the risks of such a capital project are understood and that adequate contingency measures are in place to deal with any problems. The Case Officer may request

further supporting documentation if they feel there are gaps in the information provided. They may also ask for revisions. It is worth submitting as soon as you are ready rather than waiting for the deadline. This maximises the time the Case Officer will have to come back for clarification or further information.

### **Meeting Eligibility Criteria**

For every option chosen it is essential that your full proposal and supporting evidence show that you meet all the eligibility criteria. These will vary depending on the option. For example one potential eligibility issue for community applicants is adequately demonstrating community need and demand for projects. There are no definitive or universally accepted methods for this and it can be difficult for small rural communities to satisfy this condition. It may be necessary to provide evidence of significant community consultation and feasibility/option appraisal work as part of your full proposal.

Rural Direct can offer individual support to rural community groups developing their applications to help identify and address potential eligibility issues.