

Article from Agriland

Tips from the top on the traditional farm buildings scheme



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When it comes to applying for the traditional farm buildings grant – administered by the Heritage Council in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture – awareness of tips and traps can really make a difference in achieving a successful outcome.

Agriland asked Anna Meenan, project manager, GLAS traditional farm buildings grant scheme at the Heritage Council, for some tips from the top.

12 Top Tips

1: Don't Gloss Over GLAS

If your building is not on a Green Low-Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS) holding, don't apply.

2: Take Your Time

We say it should be easy and cheap to make an application and we mean that, we really do.

Owners know their buildings better than anyone and that comes across in those applications. But it will take time to complete the form.

The best applications we have received every year have been completed by the farmer.

On the other hand, some of the poorest have also been made by farmers. Why? They were last minute rush jobs, so get cracking now if you intend to apply.

3: Think Of It As Your CV

Ever since an applicant told me that she treated the application as if she was writing a CV for her building, I quote that to everyone. It's good advice.

4: Bear In Mind The Bigger Picture

This isn't a 'doing it up' scheme. It's called the traditional farm buildings grant scheme but the scoring criteria don't just take the actual built fabric into account.

Architectural heritage interest accounts for 20% so the other criteria matter just as much. It encompasses: landscape; habitat value; climate change mitigation; and best value.

All carry equal weight.

5: Climate Change Mitigation Matters

Answers on climate change mitigation tend to be poor. You're a farmer in the GLAS scheme. We expect better.

6: Be Specific

Repeating what we say in terms and conditions/selection criteria to complete answers to questions isn't particularly helpful and is too general. They're just pointers.

Answers should be site **specific** as in specific to your project and what you're going to do and how you think your particular project meets the criteria.

7: Get In The Picture

Photographs the size of thumbprints aren't helpful. Several good photographs are better than a string of photographs that tell us nothing. We don't know your building and will not be visiting it at application stage. The photographs shine a light on the building.

If you want your application to receive careful consideration, put an effort into taking and captioning the photographs that accompany it.

8: Fix It

Look at your building. What do you think needs fixing?

We're about fixing, not replacing unless there is a very good reason not to do so.

9: Thinking Big Isn't Always The Way To Go

Yes, there are grants of up to **€25,000** but small grants can go far and be quite focused.

Don't propose lots of unnecessary works so that you can 'hit' the €25,000 grant.

10: Get Into Investment Mode

Look on a grant as an investment in your building for the farm. There is a focus on buildings that are in use in the selection criteria. It matters.

If your building is not useful to your farm now, how will we know it ever will be? It could represent a very poor investment of grant aid.

11: Stick To The Knitting

Use the official application form, don't amend it or leave a blank space on it.

This thing of leaving blank spaces and advising to 'please see attached document' – well we can't. A blank space tells us nothing.

12: Don't Delay

Don't wait until the last minute to complete your application. The deadline is the deadline.

If you get stuck, email me at: ameenan@heritagecouncil.ie.

Lastly, **keep calm**. There are plenty of tips on: www.heritagecouncil.ie, as well as case studies of successful applicants, as featured on *AgriLand*.