



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



The European
Agricultural Fund
for Rural
Development:
Europe investing in
rural areas

2014 to 2020 European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme

**Call for Applications to support investments to
create and develop micro and small rural
businesses in Cheshire and Warrington**

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

Managing Authority	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Local Enterprise Partnership Area	Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership
Call Reference	03RD15BS0001
Deadline for the submission of applications	Friday 27 November 2015 at 1700 hours

Read the [Growth Programme](#) guidance. This explains what applicants must do to apply for a grant, how grant applications are assessed and how to meet the terms of a grant funding agreement if an application is successful.

Contents

1. Call Context
2. Call Overview
3. Outputs to be delivered
4. How to apply
5. Information to consider before making an application
6. Support
7. Submitting applications

1. Call Context

1.1. Background

A single European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Growth Programme has been set up to combine three separate European Funds. These are:

- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- European Social Fund (ESF)
- part of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

The Growth Programme provides funding to help projects in England that create jobs and economic growth. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has responsibility for managing EAFRD. Rural Payments Agency (RPA) manages these grants on behalf of Defra.

Government has allocated £177 million of rural development funding from EAFRD for grants in the Growth Programme. These grants are available for:

- funding and developing micro, small and medium-sized rural businesses including food processing
- funding for small scale tourism infrastructure and tourism co-operation

1.2 Local Enterprise Partnerships

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) are private sector-led partnerships between local authorities and businesses. Each LEP has set out in its ESIF strategy the local priorities for this funding the aim of which is to achieve economic growth in its area. There are 39 LEPs covering England, 37 have an allocation of rural development funding. To apply for this funding the project must be located in a rural area in England.

1.3 Other Rural Development Funding

Other rural development support for agricultural and forestry businesses will be available through LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs), the Countryside Productivity Scheme and Countryside Stewardship.

1.4 Local Context

This call invites applications for investments that support the growth of micro and small businesses in rural areas of Cheshire and Warrington. Grants are available for new and existing rural businesses seeking capital investment to help them grow and create new jobs. The call is open to

farm businesses that are looking to diversify in to non-agricultural activities.

Cheshire and Warrington has a large number of businesses in a range of different sectors. It has more businesses per head than the national average, a high business start-up rate and a low level of business closures.

Cheshire and Warrington LEP aims to double the output of its local economy by 2030, creating 75,000 new jobs. Rural businesses in the area have strengths in particular sectors. This call seeks to build on these sectors to create new jobs and grow the economy.

Tourism

[Cheshire and Warrington's ESIF Strategy](#) identifies tourism as an important sector for rural growth. It generates £2.57 billion for the local economy, the majority of which is from day visitors. The draft [Destination Plan](#) for Cheshire highlights the need to invest in quality accommodation to increase the number of overnight visitors to the area. There is also a need to invest in visitor experiences based on local strengths such as equestrian and food and drink.

Equine

Cheshire and Warrington's ESIF Strategy identifies equine as a sector with the potential for significant growth. The British Horse Racing Industry Confederation says that the sector is the second largest contributor to the local economy after agriculture. Cheshire and Warrington can build on this opportunity to develop a cluster of new and existing innovative equine businesses.

Other Important Sectors

Cheshire and Warrington's ESIF Strategy identifies the following sectors for support:

- advanced engineering
- life sciences
- chemicals
- energy and environmental services
- agri-tech
- food and drink

Applications from businesses within these sectors are a priority for this call.

2. Call Overview

2.1 Purpose of the Call

Theme – Developing micro and small businesses

This call seeks applications that support micro and small businesses.

The Government wants to see a thriving rural economy. This call provides support for:

- micro and small-sized businesses seeking to expand and create jobs

By providing EAFRD investment support for new and expanding businesses, Cheshire and Warrington LEP wants to see an increase in rural jobs, particularly in higher paid, more highly skilled jobs; and in Gross Value Added to the rural economy.

2.2 Support Available

This call seeks applications from micro and small businesses in rural areas of Cheshire and Warrington. Grants are available for investments in new technology, processes and equipment that will increase productivity and create new job opportunities.

The aim of this call is to support rural micro and small businesses in Cheshire and Warrington to develop and grow. Applicants must show how their project will help create new sustainable jobs and increase the productivity of their business.

This call is open for applications from all rural micro and small businesses. However, the sectors identified in 1.4 above are a priority for support.

Potential applicants can access support and advice using the [Business Growth Service](#).

Examples of support include:

- investment to improve the quality of accommodation on offer to visitors that will increase the number of overnight visitors and create wider benefits to the local tourism economy
- investment in visitor attractions, including niche products and services, that encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more
- construction or establishment of workshops, factories and other premises and facilities, and in plant and machinery

- investments in food and drink processing equipment and facilities where the input is not an annex 1 agricultural product (see further information at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/food-processing-grants-growth-programme>)

2.3 Size of grants available

Grants will be available from £35,000 up to €200,000 euros (approximately £140,000). State aid rules will apply which may affect the amount of grant offered. Further details on state aid rules are available from gov.uk.

Applicants can apply for a grant to cover up to 40% of the project's total eligible costs. The minimum total eligible cost of a project for this call would therefore be £87,500

Applicants must pay for any costs not covered by the grant with private funding, such as savings or a bank loan, not other public funds. If private funding isn't used, RPA may ask the applicant to repay any grant money already paid and may cancel any future payments.

2.4 Total Funding Available

The total grant funding available for this call is **£450,000**. Funding will be offered to a maximum of 12 projects, but the actual number of projects supported may be lower, dependent upon the scale and range of the projects coming forward. All applications are competitive and for this call RPA will assess applications after the close of the deadline.

3. Outputs to be delivered

Applicants need to show how their project will contribute to the achievement of the following total outputs for the call:

- 18 jobs created
- Increase in wage bill of applicant business
- Additional number of day visitors (tourism applications)
- Additional number of overnight visitors (tourism applications)

Applicants will need to be able to demonstrate how they will deliver the outputs, committed to within the proposal along with any methodology used. Further details on the evidence requirements for each output will be available at full application stage.

Applicants will also need to ensure robust project management systems are in place that will capture and record the outputs. A detailed description of the systems will

need to be provided at full application stage. All projects will be required to collect evidence to show that outputs have been achieved and report progress with each claim.

4. How to apply

There are two stages to the application process. Applications will be assessed at both stages and only the strongest will be successful. The 2 stages are:

- Stage 1: an outline application
- Stage 2: a full application

Further details on how to apply for a grant and an outline application form are available from gov.uk. The applicant will only be invited to submit a full application if their outline application is successful.

Work must not start on any part of a proposed project before the applicant has received and signed a grant funding agreement from the RPA. This includes ordering or paying a deposit on materials or equipment.

5. Information to consider before making an application

5.1 Eligibility

There will be standard eligibility requirements for each type of grant offered. Applicants will need to refer to gov.uk for further information on each of the types of grants available.

5.2 Register with Rural Payments

Before applicants can submit an application for a grant from the Growth Programme, they will need to register on [Rural Payments](#). If the applicant is already registered on Rural Payments, they will not need to do this again.

5.3 Cross Cutting Themes

All applications received under this call must demonstrate how the Cross Cutting Themes have been addressed in the project design and development. The cross cutting themes for all projects are sustainable development and equality and diversity. Further details on these can be found in the Outline Application form.

5.4 Quotes

Applicants must ensure that they obtain best value for money when buying goods or services. Important information on the number and format of the quotes required to demonstrate best value are available from gov.uk. Applicants will be required to submit these if invited to develop a full application.

5.5 Publicising the Grant

When a project is successful in obtaining rural development funding through Growth Programme, the grant beneficiary will be required to publicise the grant. The RPA will provide beneficiaries with further information with the grant funding agreement but they may expect beneficiaries to:

- mention it in any press releases or when communicating with customers, for example in newsletters and on their website (if applicable); and
- display a poster, plaque, or billboard, including EU logos, depending on the amount of funding received and the type of investment.

If the applicant does not do this, the RPA may apply a penalty by deducting payment from the grant.

6. Support

Guidance on how to apply for a Growth Programme grant is available at www.gov.uk/government/collections/growth-programme-grants-for-the-rural-economy. Applicants can call the Rural Payments helpline on 03000 200 301 or Email GPEnquiries@rpa.gsi.gov.uk for further support if required.

7. Submitting applications

Send the completed outline application form to growthapps@rpa.gsi.gov.uk. The RPA will email to confirm that they've received it.