



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 in
visitor attractions, tourist information and small
scale tourism infrastructure in the rural areas of
Dorset**

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

Managing Authority	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Local Enterprise Partnership Area	Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership
Call Reference	09RD15TO0002
Deadline for the submission of applications	Friday 8 January 2016 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 improve and expand the tourism offer in rural Dorset, attracting additional day and overnight visitors that stay longer and spend more.

The [Dorset ESIF strategy](#) identifies tourism as providing significant levels of employment in the rural areas of Dorset. The strategy also identifies that

businesses reliant on tourism have the potential to increase productivity and job numbers by:

- developing new activity exploiting the local natural and cultural assets
- co-ordination and collaboration of the offer of the visitor economy

The Dorset ESIF strategy shows that the majority of food service and accommodation providers are small businesses concentrated in the rural areas of East, West and North Dorset and the Purbecks. The strategy identifies the need to develop new attractions and activities in these areas to improve the tourism offer.

The [Dorset Destination Management Plan](#) shows that during the last 6 years, overnight visits to Dorset fell by 3.6%, whilst across England the numbers have grown by 1.6%. The plan says this fall is due to the lack of activities, events and festivals that exploit rural Dorset's natural and cultural heritage. The Dorset LEP wants to extend the visitor season to make it a year-round destination by developing and promoting new activities, events and festivals outside the peak tourism season.

The tourism plan has 5 objectives:

- raise the profile of Dorset as a destination for visitors
- capitalise on the countryside and coastal resources in Dorset
- enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the tourism offer
- support the development of tourism businesses
- strengthen the Destination Management delivery structures and processes

2. Call Overview

2.1 Purpose of the Call

Theme – Supporting tourism in rural areas

This call seeks applications that support investments in the tourism sector in rural areas.

The rural tourism sector offers a significant opportunity for growth in developing the all year round destination offer and improving the quality of tourism products. This can benefit the wider economy of rural areas through high spend on rural attractions and accommodation as well as an increase in tourism based enterprises and job opportunities.

By providing EAFRD investment, Dorset LEP aims to support the creation of distinctive and high quality destinations based on what each individual

destination can offer. Projects that show benefits to multiple tourism business are encouraged.

This call seeks to provide support for:

- rural businesses and communities seeking to invest in recreational and small scale rural tourism infrastructure

2.2 Support Available

This call seeks applications from:

- new and existing tourism businesses in rural areas
- farmers seeking to diversify into tourism
- rural landowners
- communities in rural areas

Grants are available to develop new and existing visitor attractions, events and festivals and small-scale infrastructure.

The aim of this call is to attract more visitors to stay in rural Dorset for longer and spend more in the local economy. Applicants must show how their project will:

- capitalise on the countryside and coastal areas of Dorset
- enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the Dorset tourism offer

Examples of support include:

- projects to develop access infrastructure to help people connect to the environment, such as off road cycling and walking trail networks
- projects to put in place small scale infrastructure, such as interpretation panels or information for an area that has a geographical, historical or cultural significance for Dorset
- new events to promote the local character, produce or geography, especially outside of peak season
- new events and activity that bring businesses together to promote the local character or feature of an area and encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more

Applications that meet at least one of the following criteria are a priority for this call:

- creation of new sustainable jobs
- infrastructure and events in places identified in the Destination Plan as having evidence of need
- creation of employment opportunities for the young and unemployed
- collaboration among a number of rural businesses in Dorset

This call will not support:

- projects that only benefit a single business
- projects that update an existing product without any expected growth

2.3 Size of grants available

Grants will be available for this call from £35,000 up to €200,000 (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 for commercial projects can apply for a grant to cover up to 40% of the project's total eligible costs. The minimum total eligible cost of these projects would therefore be £87,500.

Projects that have some income but are not expected to make a profit (semi-commercial projects) can apply for a grant to cover up to 80% of the project's total eligible costs. The minimum total eligible cost of these projects would therefore be £43,750.

Projects that have no income (tourism enhancing projects) can apply for a grant to cover up to 100% of the project's total eligible costs. The minimum total eligible cost of these projects would therefore be £35,000.

The applicant must pay for any eligible costs not covered by the grant with private funding, such as savings or a commercial bank loan. If private funding is not used, the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) can reclaim any money already paid and withhold future grant payments.

2.4 Total Funding Available

The total grant funding available for this call is **£300,000**. Funding will be offered to a maximum of 8 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 specific call applications will be assessed 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:

- create 40 new full time equivalent jobs
- 5% increase in the 15 million recorded visitor trips each year
- number of businesses benefiting from the investment

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 to 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 0300 0200 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.