



2014 to 2020 European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme

Call for applications to support investments in new and existing rural micro and small businesses in New Anglia

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

Managing Authority	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Local Enterprise Partnership Area	New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership
Call Reference	24RD15BS0002
Deadline for the submission of applications	<p>Friday 30 September 2016 at 1700 hours with review points at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday 8 January 2016 at 1700 hours • Friday 1 April 2016 at 1700 hours • Friday 1 July 2016 at 1700 hours <p>RPA expects that the call will be open for 12 months. The call may close early if RPA receives enough good quality applications.</p>

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.

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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 contribute to the development of measurable and sustainable growth in the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) area's rural business sector.

By 2025, NALEP aims to create at least 90,000 new jobs, establish 10,000 new businesses and increase the contribution of the local economy to above the national average.

Most of NALEP is rural with nearly half of the population living in rural areas. Over 50% of the businesses in Norfolk and Suffolk are located in rural areas. A large number of these businesses are in the agricultural, forestry and manufacturing sectors. Around 77% of these are micro or small businesses.

The [NALEP ESIF Strategy](#) highlights the challenges faced by its rural economy such as:

- low business start-up rates
- an ageing workforce

Both the ESIF Strategy and the [NALEP Sector Growth Strategy](#) identify the following priority sectors that are nationally competitive but have the potential for growth and the creation of new jobs. These are:

- food and drink
- tourism
- advanced manufacturing

The aim of the LEP is to develop and grow these sectors by supporting new and existing businesses to increase productivity and create new jobs.

This call invites applications from new and existing micro and small businesses in NALEP rural areas, particularly within these three priority sectors. All applications must create a minimum of 2 full time equivalent jobs.

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
- farmers or members of the farm household diversifying into non-agricultural activity

By providing capital investment support for new and expanding businesses, NALEP wants to see an increase in the number of jobs and in GVA for the rural economy.

2.2 Support Available

This call seeks applications from micro and small businesses and farmers located in the rural areas of NALEP. Grants are available for investments to develop and grow these businesses.

The aim of this call is to create new jobs and increase the productivity of micro and small businesses in the rural NALEP area. Applications must create a minimum of 2 full time equivalent jobs. Applications that meet one of the following criteria will be a priority for support:

- rural businesses in one of NALEP's priority sectors seeking to expand
- farmers seeking to diversify into non-agricultural activity
- new and existing rural businesses in the tourism sector

Examples of support include:

- investment in new technology, processes or equipment to improve productivity
- farm diversification into non-agricultural activities
- construction and development of workshops, factories and other premises and facilities
- investment in plant and machinery
- visitor attractions, including niche products and services, that encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more
- investment to increase the star rating of accommodation by improving the guest facilities
- investment to increase the capacity of overnight accommodation

Project proposals must not displace existing provision. Repairs or maintenance costs, or investments to retain current star rating of accommodation are not eligible for support.

2.3 Size of grants available

Grants will be available 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 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, Rural Payments Agency (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 **£1,000,000**. Funding will be offered to a maximum of 28 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:

- minimum of 40 new full time jobs created
- increase in wage bill on the current position
- increase in GVA on the current position
- increase in the number of day visitors on current position (for tourism projects)
- increase in the number of overnight visitors on current position (for tourism projects)

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 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.