

Pilot Rural Growth Networks

Frequently Asked Questions

Date: 22 March 2012

Contents

1. General.....	1
Q. Where are the pilot Rural Growth Networks going to be established?.....	1
Q. Where are the pilot Rural Growth Networks going to be established?.....	1
Q. What is a pilot Rural Growth Network?.....	1
Q. What will the Rural Growth Network initiative achieve?.....	1
Q. Why did you choose these particular pilots RGNs out of all the applicants?	2
2. Funding for women	2
Q. Why is funding being allocated specifically for women?	2
3. Funding for individual businesses.....	2
Q. Can individual businesses apply for funding from RGNs?.....	2

1. General

Q. Where are the pilot Rural Growth Networks going to be established?

A. Five Rural Growth Network (RGN) pilots will be established during 2012/13 in Cumbria, Devon & Somerset, Durham & Northumberland, Warwickshire and Swindon & Wiltshire.

Q. Where are the pilot Rural Growth Networks going to be established?

A. Five Rural Growth Network (RGN) pilots will be established during 2012/13 in Cumbria, Devon & Somerset, Durham & Northumberland, Warwickshire and Swindon & Wiltshire.

Q. What is a pilot Rural Growth Network?

A. The Rural Growth Network initiative will test different mechanisms aimed at supporting rural businesses and stimulating sustainable economic growth in rural areas. Each of the pilot proposals has been developed by a local private/public sector partnership to address identified barriers to growth and capitalise on local opportunities. Each pilot is different, but all involve the creation of a network of enterprise hubs across a defined rural area which

- provide accommodation, infrastructure and facilities designed to help rural enterprises start up, innovate and grow;
- act as a focal point for a range of support for the micro and small business sector in that area;
- have a particularly strong focus on supporting women led rural enterprises
- facilitate knowledge transfer, mentoring and training and skills development across a wide range of rural businesses;
- stimulate a whole Local Enterprise Partnership / Local Authority area to recognise, celebrate and promote rural entrepreneurship

Q. What will the Rural Growth Network initiative achieve?

A. The RGN initiative will stimulate faster and more widespread growth, employment and economic activity in rural areas, driven by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) or Local Authorities (LA).

The pilot RGNs will test different mechanisms and models that can be utilised by LEPs / LAs to stimulate sustainable rural economic growth. The learning from these pilot areas will be shared quickly with other LEPs or LAs to encourage and support them to take similar action.

Q. Why did you choose these particular pilots RGNs out of all the applicants?

A. These five pilot proposals were assessed as the strongest against the published selection criteria and together offer an opportunity to test a variety of different mechanisms and models for stimulating sustainable rural economic growth in different types of rural area.

We left some flexibility as to the number of pilots to enable a balance to be struck between identifying a good mix of pilots across different rural areas and providing sufficient funding to each pilot to enable significant growth benefits to be achieved. Having assessed all the proposals against the published selection criteria we have chosen five RGN pilots which we believe represent the best use of the £15m start up fund.

We believe the mix of pilots will provide rich and practical evidence to support LEPs or LAs across the country to take action to stimulate sustainable economic growth in rural areas.

2. Funding for women

Q. Why is funding being allocated specifically for women?

A. Women are about half as likely as men to be engaged in entrepreneurial activity and women who say they intend to start a business are much less likely than men to translate their interest into action, so much of this potential is lost. It is vital that the skills and talents of everyone are used to support our economic growth, which is the Government is providing additional funding to support women entrepreneurs. Enterprises led by women are being targeted in this way to establish good practice, serving as a demonstration to other rural areas (not only in RGNs) of what can be achieved by addressing the barriers faced by women which stop them from getting on the entrepreneurial ladder.

3. Funding for individual businesses

Q. Can individual businesses apply for funding from RGNs?

A. Each RGN Pilot has different elements and will adopt different approaches. A number of them will include some form of funding offer for individual businesses. Each pilot RGN partnership will now develop their proposals in more detail, working closely with Defra, and will provide information on what is on offer locally as their pilots are launched.

© Crown copyright 2012

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/ or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or e-mail: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk