Growth Programme: How to complete an outline application form

This is advice about filling out the outline application form for Growth Programme grants. For guidance on the Growth Programme, details about the available grants and information on how to apply, read the Growth Programme guidance on GOV.UK.

The outline application form

The outline application form is used to provide a summary of the applicant's proposed project.

Applicants should clearly explain:

- the location of the proposed project
- what the project will do
- how it will be delivered
- how much it will cost
- who will benefit from it
- how it will create jobs and increase business turnover

Provide enough information in the outline application form to clearly explain the project. This will help assessors to understand and review the application, and it will be more likely to succeed.

How the information is used

The information provided in the form is used to check that the project is eligible. It's also used to assess the application against the criteria set out in the 'call for applications' and the Growth Programme guidance.

Applications are assessed only on the information provided – we won't contact applicants to ask for missing information.

Applicants should:

- read this guidance document thoroughly
- explain things clearly – assume that the reader is not familiar with the proposed project
- explain any acronyms
- ensure the proposed project meets the conditions in the 'call for applications'
- fill in the form correctly and answer all the questions

Be clear about what the project can achieve. A full application may be rejected if it's found that a project cannot achieve the targets described in the outline application.

Supporting information

No supporting documents are required at this stage.

However, where appropriate, applications should refer to:
- economic data and reports
- government or industry guidance
- independent verification

If an outline application is endorsed, these details will be needed for the full application.

It is not acceptable to simply state, "The project will be delivered in accordance with Growth Programme requirements," as a response to any part of this application form. Applicants should clearly describe how they will meet these requirements.

Before making an application

Applicants should read:

- the relevant 'call for applications'

- the relevant local enterprise partnership (LEP) ESIF strategy – each 'call for applications' will explain where to find this

- the Growth Programme guidance on GOV.UK

- information about the submission deadline (read page 13 – late applications will not be accepted)

Register with Rural Payments

Before they can apply for a Growth Programme grant, applicants need to register at: http://www.ruralpayments.service.gov.uk/ (if they haven't already done so).

Important checks to make before submitting an application – or your application will not be accepted

- Complete every box on the form.

- Submit your application in the right format – see page 13.

- Send your application from the correct email address – see page 13.

How to fill out the outline application form

This application form is an excel spreadsheet. There are 2 sections to this form, on 2 different tabs. Please complete **all** the questions on both tabs in full. Please use sentence case, not block capitals.

Tab 1 – Applicant and project details

Section 1 – Applicant and business/organisation details

A1 & A2 Please provide the name and gender of the main contact in the applicant business. This must be the name of the person who is registered with the online Rural Payments service for the business and who is linked to the business reference numbers in A6. The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) will use this for all future correspondence. Please provide the title, first name and surname of the main contact. This must not be the agent.

A3 For the main contact in the applicant business, please provide their job title or details of their role/position in the organisation.

A4 Give the full name of the business/ organisation who will be receiving the grant. Where this is a registered company, this will be the full registered name of the business and will be the name in the annual accounts for the business. This must be the business name that is registered with Rural Payments and linked to the reference number in A6. RPA will use this for all future correspondence.

A5 Please provide the full postal address of the applicant business. This should be the main postal address for the applicant business. If the business has multiple addresses, it should be the address that all postal correspondence, such as the grant funding agreement, should be sent. This must be the address that is registered with Rural Payments for the business and linked to the reference number in A6. This can be outside of the LEP area in which applicants are applying for funds.

Please provide the postcode of the applicant business in the following format: XX00 0XX

Telephone number: For the main contact in the applicant business, please provide the landline telephone number.

Mobile number: For the main contact in the applicant business, please provide the mobile telephone number. It is helpful for us to have both landline and mobile telephone numbers.

Email address: For the main contact in the applicant business, please provide the email address. This will be the email address we will use to contact the applicant to discuss a project. This should be an email account that is regularly used and monitored.

A6 – Single Business Identifier number

Please enter the Single Business Identifier (SBI) number here. It is very important that this number is provided on the outline application form. The SBI must be for the applicant business name and address as given in A4 and A5. Applications cannot be accepted or assessed without an SBI or if the SBI and business details on the application form do not match with the information on Rural Payments.

Some applicants already have an SBI number. Other applicants will get their SBI number when they register with the online Rural Payments service: https://www.gov.uk/claim-rural-payments which they must do before they apply for a grant.

Applicants must still register with Rural Payments even if they already have an SBI number.

A7 Choose the appropriate option from the list which describes the legal status of the applicant business named in A4.

A8 Business/organisation size classification
This depends on the number of full time equivalent (FTE) employees and the financial performance of the applicant's business.

Choose the appropriate option. Large businesses cannot apply for Growth Programme grants.

Check the size of a business

Some grants are only available to certain sizes of business. Use the table to find out how a business size is defined for these grants.

The size of the business depends on the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees and its financial performance. All businesses must meet the FTE employee limits as well as either the turnover or balance sheet totals. Use the table to check the size of a business.

Company category	Number of FTE employees		Turnover		Balance sheet total
Micro	Under 10		€2m (about £1.4 million) or less		€2m (about £1.4 million) or less
Small	Under 50	AND	€10m (about £7.0 million) or less	OR	€10m (about £7.0 million) or less
Medium-sized	Under 250		€50 million (about £35 million) or less		€43 million (about £30 million) or less

What is an FTE employee?
Anyone who works a minimum of 30 hours per week counts as 1FTE employee. A person working 30 hours a week for 3 months of the year would be 0.25FTE employee. FTEs include business partners and directors.

If any person, including a business partner or director, works more than 30 hours per week they still count as 1FTE employee.

A9 Applicants should enter the number of employees of their business, as a full time equivalent.

A10 Applicants should choose the most appropriate option from the dropdown list to describe their business activities.

A11 Other applicant reference numbers

- If the applicant business is a limited company and registered with Companies House, please provide the company registration number. If not applicable, please enter N/A

- If the applicant business is registered for VAT with HM Revenue & Customs, please provide the VAT number. If not applicable, please enter N/A

- If the applicant business is a charity, please provide the registration number. If not applicable, please enter N/A

A12 Please choose from 1 of the 3 options. The options are under 40, over 40 or applicants can choose not to disclose these details.

A13 If the answer is 'yes', please provide details to include full name, position within the business and the dates of disqualification or inclusion on the individual insolvency register.

A14 If the answer is 'yes', please provide full details of employee numbers, turnover and net assets.

Definition of linked businesses
A business will be treated as one business if it is linked to one or more enterprises. The applicant therefore needs to consider the FTE employees and financial information of any other businesses to which they are formally connected. Enterprises are linked where any of the following is true:

- one enterprise holds a majority of the shareholders' or members' voting rights in another
- one enterprise is entitled to appoint or remove a majority of the administrative, management or supervisory body of another
- a contract between the enterprises, or a provision in the memorandum or articles of association of one of the enterprises, enables one to exercise a dominant influence over the other
- one enterprise is able, by agreement, to exercise sole control over a majority of shareholders' or members' voting rights in another.

For full details see this SME definition:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/sme_definition/sme_user_guide_en.pdf

Applicants need to provide this information for all linked enterprises:
- number of employees;
- turnover; and
- balance sheet information.

Please note that the number of employees, turnover or balance sheet total of linked businesses may make an application ineligible.

A15 a – d This question should only be completed if the applicant business is a farm, horticulture or forestry business. If this does not apply, please move straight to question A16.

The question is divided into 4 sections. The first 3 are specific to each sector. Applicants need to complete those that are relevant to their business.

a) agriculture
b) horticulture
c) forestry

A15 d Producers of fresh fruit and vegetables may be part of the RPA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Aid Scheme and defined as a Producer Organisation – see: https://www.gov.uk/funding-for-fruit-and-vegetable-sellers#producer-organisations-on-the-fresh-fruit-and-vegetables-aid-scheme . If the applicant's business is part of this scheme, please provide the name of the Producer Organisation and details of any funding that has been received through this scheme.

If applicants have already had (or can get) funding for their proposed project through the scheme, they can't also apply for a Growth Programme grant.

A16 If the applicant answers 'yes', they need to provide details of any previous public funding that they or their business have received since 2007.

Applicants must tell us if they have received any European funding, including but not limited to:

- European Social Fund (ESF)
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)
- European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund Structural Funds (EAGGF)
- Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)
- England Rural Development Programme (ERDP)
- Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF)
- Forestry Commission
- LEADER

Applicants should also tell us if they have received any public sector funding from organisations including but not limited to:

- a local authority
- a regional development agency
- Business Link
- Objective 1

Section 2 – Agent details

A17 – A20 While it is not a requirement to do so, applicants may wish to work with an agent, consultant, or business manager on their application. If an agent / consultant / business manager is completing the form on behalf of an applicant, their full details must be provided.

Section 3 – Project details

A21 Project name.
Please provide the name of the project that will be included in correspondence and on publicity information. This should be concise and clear and in the following format: Business Name: 3 descriptive words (maximum of 3 words). For example, A Applicant and Partners: Tomato Packhouse Innovation.

Name and unique identifier of ‘call for applications’.
Applications are submitted in response to a ‘call for applications’. The call for applications document will have a specific name and reference number. Enter these on the application form. The application cannot be accepted without this information.

Theme of ‘call for applications’.
Each call for applications also has a specific theme. Find the theme in section 2.1 of the call for applications document (‘Purpose of the call’). Enter that theme here. The application cannot be accepted without this information.

LEP area/s
State the LEP area that the applicant business and project is located in. The application cannot be accepted without this information. The application cannot be accepted without this information.

For the majority of projects, the project will be located in one LEP area. However, if a project is located in more than one LEP area, applicants should state all LEP areas that their project will cover. Read the list of the LEP areas in Appendix 1.

Lead LEP area
If the project is covered by more than one LEP, state the name of the LEP that is the lead area. (This is likely to be where the project is located).

A22 Provide a brief and concise description / summary of the project beginning with the words, ‘This project will…’. Use no more than 100 words.

A23 Location/address for the project. This question has 4 sections.

a) Please answer if the project will be located at a specific location, with a postcode, by selecting ‘yes’ or ‘no’ from the dropdown box options. If the answer is ‘no’ please explain the reason why. All capital / construction projects will be located at a specific location.

b) If you have answered ‘yes’, please answer whether the project will be at the same location as specified in question A5 by selecting ‘yes’ or ‘no’ from the dropdown box options. If the answer is ‘No’, provide the full postal address and postcode of where the project will be located.

c) Identify if the project is located in any of the listed areas / zones and if there are any other designations on the project location that will need to be taken into account when planning and delivering the project. Please complete every question with a yes or no answer. Please do not leave any boxes blank.

d) Answer if the project will be located on rented / leased / tenanted land or premises by selecting ‘yes’ or ‘no’ from the drop down box options. If the answer is ‘yes, identify which of the three tenancies apply.

If applicants answer ‘yes’ to any of the questions, they should provide details of their rental, lease or tenancy agreement. Where applicable, include the end dates of the current agreement.

A24 The figures in the table will be automatically calculated and entered when the financial table in tab 2 – ‘Project Costs and Financials’ is completed. Please do not try to type answers into these boxes. Please check the figures are correct when all the details in tab 2 – ‘Project Costs and Financials’ are complete. Remember – the **minimum** grant is £35,000.00

A25 If the applicant’s business is registered for VAT purposes, this should be 0. This section shows the amount of VAT that applicants wish to include in their grant application, due to their business not being able to recover VAT. The figure here is automatically calculated and entered when applicants complete the financial table in tab 2 – ‘Project Costs and Financials’. Please do not try to type an answer into this box. Please check the figure is correct when all the details in tab 2 – ‘Project Costs and Financials’ are complete.

A26 In this section, applicants are asked to provide key milestones for their project – the important steps for project delivery. For many projects these will only be initial indicative dates at this stage. It is important that assessors can understand the key stages within the project and when these might be achieved.
Please also state:

- The proposed start date – the date that applicants intend to start work on their project and start incurring eligible costs. Applicants must please be aware that they cannot start any works (or commit to any costs) until their grant application has been approved and they have received a grant funding agreement with the project start date.
- The proposed project completion date – applicants should state the date when they will have completed the project works, incurred the costs and paid all project invoices.

Remember that milestone dates should correspond with the financial dates in B1.

Section 4 – The business case

A27 Briefly, in no more than 100 words, explain what the project is, what it will do and what it will achieve. Please be as clear and concise as possible.

A28 Explain how the project will be delivered, expanding on the answer to A22. Provide concise information on how the project is to be delivered, and by whom. Briefly explain the specific activities, the people involved and their roles, the target beneficiaries and where the activity will take place, for example, part of a LEP area, a whole LEP area, a specific address or wide-ranging.

A29a Applications must be made in response to a call for applications issued by the LEP which covers the applicant’s area. For this question, explain how the project proposal meets the requirements set out in the call for applications.

In order to apply, applicants will also need to ensure and confirm that their project is in a rural area, where this is specified in the call for applications. If you are unsure if your project is in a rural area, please contact RPA: 0300 0200 301

A29b Projects must also meet:

- the objectives of the Growth Programme (read the Growth Programme guidance); and
- the priorities in the relevant LEP’s strategy (the call for applications will explain where to find this)

For this question, explain how the project proposal meets the objectives of the Growth Programme and the LEP’s ESIF strategy priorities.

A30 Briefly set out how your project will address environmental sustainability.

All projects should seek to ensure that their activity does not have adverse effects on the environment and applicants need to demonstrate that they have thought about how the project is likely to impact, positively and negatively, on the area in which it will be sited.

Positive environmental impacts could include:

- improvements in energy efficiency
- reduction of carbon emissions
- using renewable energy
- enhancing natural habitats
- reducing waste generation
- using recycled materials

Negative environmental impacts could include:

- visual impact
- significant increases in traffic
- pollution (including noise and dust)
- impacts on wildlife habitats – these might be short-term impacts (for example, whilst the project is being constructed), or longer-term impacts from the ongoing presence and use of a facility

A31 Briefly explain how the project will take account of equality and diversity. What steps have applicants taken to understand the potential impact, both positive and negative, of the project on different equality groups and communities including race, gender, age and disability?

Section 5 – Justification

A32a In less than 500 words, provide a clear case to explain why the project is needed. Briefly outline the market opportunity/demand for the development/ activity proposed. For example, if a project is improving or expanding a tourism facility, what is the evidence of market demand for the proposed level of facilities?

A32b Applicants need to consider whether there are any similar businesses nearby that might be affected, either positively or negatively, by their project. Applicants should provide details of any businesses who are offering similar services / products as they are proposing to deliver, and explain how their project will not negatively affect these businesses. Using the tourism project example again, applicants should be attracting new customers, not competing for the same customers already using the other tourism businesses in their area.

Section 6 – Permissions

A33 Please detail all the permissions (such as planning), consents and licences that will be required for the proposed project. Documents such as an Environmental Impact Assessment may need to be produced before work can start. Applicants need to understand the timescales for these and tell us whether the permissions and consents have been applied for, when they are expected, or if they have already been obtained.

Section 7 – Outputs

A34 Outputs are the direct and measurable products of a project as a consequence of project activities.

Please refer to the required outputs to be delivered for the relevant call for application and list the types and numbers of outputs that the project will achieve. The outputs should be:

- consistent with proposed activity, project scope and LEP ESIF strategy
- appropriate to the size of the project and the project description
- logical, that is, there should be a clear logic chain linking outputs to inputs
- achievable – applicants should be able to deliver what they say they can deliver here

A35 If this is an application that only covers one LEP area, please enter N/A in the answer box and move to question A36. If the project application covers more than one LEP area, please insert the different LEP area names and provide the percentage of outputs that will be achieved in each LEP area.

A36 The outputs should link with the project's activity and objectives. Applicants should explain their methodology for forecasting the outputs in question A34 here. Applicants may also be able to provide brief details of the baseline starting position for the outputs to be achieved.

Section 8 – Project management

A37 Applicants should briefly outline how they will manage their project and who will be involved. Describe who will take day to day responsibility for the project, who will have overall responsibility, how the applicant business is structured and how delivery of the project may impact on the business.

If applicants have previously received grant funding, they should explain their experience in managing a grant-supported project.

If applicants have previously been involved in delivering grant funded projects and have incurred irregularities, they should tell us what steps they will take to learn from previous errors and implement changes to avoid it happening again.

A38 It is important that applicants are able to accurately report the outputs the project will deliver and that they are able to provide evidence for them. Briefly describe how the applicant will manage the recording and monitoring of outputs.

Section 9 - Financial management

A39 It is important that applicants are able to accurately account for expenditure that will be supported by the grant, and that costs not associated with the project are not included in any grant claims. Please briefly describe how the financial aspects of the project will be managed. Will checking eligible defrayed expenditure be a manual task or will there be accounting systems able to recognise if costs have been incurred and paid for? Who will check the eligibility of costs before they are incurred and before they are claimed and who will sign these off?

A40 How will the applicant's business manage its cash flow during the grant period and cover costs of the project and all other everyday business expenditure?

Section 10 – Confidential information

A41 Outline applications will be provided to the members of the LEP Area ESIF Committee for them to provide advice regarding the application and how it meets the LEP ESIF strategy. However, it is recognised that there may be some information which applicants would not wish to be shared with the LEP Area ESIF Committee. This information should be provided in this box and RPA will not automatically share this with members. Applicants should note that RPA as a public body is subject to Freedom of Information Act and therefore may be forced to disclose this information unless it is able to legitimately refuse such a request on the grounds of one of the exemptions.

If applicants choose to use this box, they should make it clear which field the information relates to and explain the reason why they think it should be withheld.

By submitting the outline application, the applicant must agree to the declaration. Please see 'Submitting an outline application' for more information (page 13).

Tab 2 – Project costs and financials

B1 Please complete the financial table with details of the project costs.

Please separate out capital and revenue costs.

In the first column please identify the item or type of cost.
Then state the grant / intervention rate that you wish to apply for.
The next section is broken down between financial years. Enter in the relevant column the **net** cost of the item, according to when this cost will be incurred.

Once these fields have been completed, the others will be filled out automatically.

If applicable, please record the irrecoverable VAT applicable to the project costs. If applicants are **not** VAT registered and are unable to reclaim VAT, and then enter the VAT figure into the irrecoverable VAT section. If the business is VAT-registered, then this section should show £0.00.

If there are any costs that are integral to the project, but the applicants does not intend to include these in their grant application, enter the details of the item and costs in the table, but enter a 0% grant intervention rate.

Once applicants have completed this table, don't forget to check that the totals have correctly been transferred into the table at question A24.

B2 Briefly explain the items and costs listed in table B1 'Project costs' and summarise what the project budget will be spent on. Explain the items that are included and how they are applicable / relevant for your project.

B3a Please explain what has been done, or what needs to be done, to source suppliers.

B3b Applicants may need to issue a tender for some or all of the works to be completed. Please explain the items of activity that will require a tender process, the proposed process and the timescales. Applicants may wish to incorporate some of these stages within the milestones section of the application.

B4 Whilst this is outline application stage, applicants should have some degree of certainty on overall budgets as substantial changes will not be expected at the full application stage.

B5 Please explain if the budget includes VAT that cannot be recovered from HMRC and explain why the VAT is non-recoverable.

B6 Match funding must be private and cannot be from other public sources. The applicant business may be providing the balance of funding. If some other organisation(s) (including banks) is / are providing the balance of funds, applicants need to state here who this organisation is. They should tell us whether the private match funding is confirmed and, if not, when it will be confirmed. If it is not confirmed, please explain the implications for the project if the match funding is refused, and any alternative options available.

B7 If the project does not cover more than one LEP area, type 'N/A' here and move to question B8. If it does, applicants will need to consider how you will divide the costs / benefits between each of the LEP areas. Explain how the costs will be shared, eg 50:50 split based on an explained methodology etc.

B8 What is the applicant's reason for seeking grant funding and what will this enable them to achieve? Please explain how the project with grant funding will deliver additional activity over and above what would otherwise be delivered, and or how the project activity will improve what might otherwise be delivered, eg by allowing activity to commence more quickly or increasing the quality/duration of activity.

Think about how the grant funding might help achieve bigger and better outputs, faster than would be possible without grant funding.

The Growth Programme cannot fund activity which would have taken place anyway. Applicants should be mindful of this when they seek funding.

B9 Describe here what would happen to the project in each of the 3 scenarios given and the impact this would have on the project. For example, would it result in the project not going ahead at all? Would the project still go ahead, but at a reduced scale or with a reduced area of benefit? Would the outputs be delayed or reduced, or not achieved? Provide reasoning for your answer.

B10 If it is an existing business that is applying for grant funding the financial information table should be populated using figures from the last three years' annual business accounts. At the top of each column please enter the year of the accounts that the figures relate to. Provide figures from the most recent year, and the 2 previous years.

If the business is less than 3 years old (and 3 years of accounts are not available) provide the information for the available years and enter 'Not trading' in the title of the other columns.

New businesses should enter 'N/A – new business' in one of the columns and leave the section blank.

Submitting an outline application

Once fully completed, outline applications should be submitted by email from the applicant email address entered in section A5.
OR
If applicants are using a consultant or agent to help with an application, or a business manager is completing the application, they may submit the outline application from their email address, but the applicant email address entered in A5 **must** be copied into the email. This is to demonstrate that the applicant consents to the submission of the outline application.

If the applicant email address is not copied into the email we cannot accept the application.

Deadlines

Outline applications must be received electronically by the deadline date and time specified in the call for application. **Any application that is received after the deadline date and time will be rejected immediately.** The date and time that the outline application is received will be checked using the details that are shown on the email received into the RPA email account.

What format to send the form in

Outline application must be submitted electronically as a Microsoft Excel attachment to an email. We will not be able to open application forms saved in formats that are not compatible with the version of Microsoft Excel used for the application forms. **If we can't open the application form, the application will be rejected.**

We cannot accept any other format of electronic application submission, including PDF documents or scanned documents. We cannot accept any other format, for example but not exclusively, hard copy printed applications or hand-written applications.

Using Open Office software

If using Open Office Software to complete and save the application form, please note that it will be necessary to ensure that the document is saved using the Microsoft Excel (.xls) format to ensure that it is compatible for RPA.

To do this, select ‘Save As’ when saving the application form. The ‘Save As’ box will open, allowing the location for the document to be saved to be selected.

Then select the format for the document in the ‘Save as type’ box. Select the format type – Microsoft Excel 97/2000/XP/2003 (.xls), if this has not been automatically selected, then click ‘Save’.

A dialog box may open asking the applicant to ‘Confirm File Format’. If this happens, confirm that the intention is to save the document using the Microsoft Excel file format.

Appendix 1 – Alphabetical list of Local Enterprise Partnerships

Buckinghamshire Thames Valley
Cheshire and Warrington
Coast to Capital
Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly
Coventry and Warwickshire
Cumbria
Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
Dorset
Enterprise M3
Gloucestershire
Greater Birmingham and Solihull
Greater Cambridge & Greater Peterborough
Greater Lincolnshire
Greater Manchester
Heart of the South West
Hertfordshire
Humber
Lancashire
Leeds City Region
Leicester and Leicestershire
Liverpool City Region
New Anglia
North East
Northamptonshire
Oxfordshire LEP
Sheffield City Region
Solent
South East
South East Midlands
Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire
Swindon and Wiltshire
Tees Valley
Thames Valley Berkshire
The Marches
West of England
Worcestershire
York and North Yorkshire