European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-Agri)

How to apply for EIP-Agri grants under the Countryside Productivity Scheme

Contents

What is the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-Agri)?

The European Innovation Partnership is a £5 million grant scheme. Applicants can apply for a grant of between £5,000 and £150,000 to fund the cost of running a project for up to 3 years. This funding is part of the [Countryside Productivity Scheme](#), which is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE).

The aim of EIP-Agri is to develop academic research into a solution for a recognised industry problem in a new and innovative way. It does not fund primary or additional pure or basic research (academic or abstract research which is not done with a specific commercial application in mind), but instead funds applied research (real-world trials of solutions already identified by research). While EIP-Agri cannot provide funding for standalone pure research, in assessing applications it is necessary to understand how the proposed project has arisen and what research has been undertaken prior to applying.

The European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability provides grant support to projects which show innovation in linking research with farming or forestry practices. It provides funding to operational groups to help projects that aim to improve productivity and sustainability.

Projects should look for new ways of solving recognised industry problems which reduce the productivity or sustainability of the agricultural or forestry sectors. These should come from, and be developed by, farmers or foresters.

The European Innovation Partnership is an EU wide initiative to encourage greater collaboration between research and industry in a number of sectors. Agriculture is one of the sectors under the initiative. To assist in bringing research and industry together the European Commission have established and operate a number of networks and websites for each of the sectors. The websites provide information to help develop innovative ideas through a collaborative approach and are proving a useful and essential tool.

The European Commission (Directorate General Agriculture and Rural Development) runs the EIP-Agri network with the help of the 'EIP-Agri Service Point' and its [website](#). The Service Point offers a wide range of tools and services which can help develop ideas and projects and applicants to the scheme will need to register on the website. It also helps to improve communication and sharing ideas through:

- conferences;
- focus groups;
- workshops;
- seminars;
- publications (like "agrinnovation" the annual European Commission published EIP-AGRI magazine); and
- the EIP-Agri website.

Who can apply

To apply for EIP-Agri funding the applicant must represent an operational group and be applying for, and on behalf of, the operational group.

An 'operational group' must be a group of, or any combination of:

- farmers;
- forest managers;
- researchers involved in agriculture or food;
- agricultural or agri-food businesses; and
- non-governmental organisations.

Operational groups can vary in size. As a minimum they must include at least 2 members ('actors') from different organisations. The members must play an active role in the operational group and be relevant for achieving the objectives of the proposed project. EIP-Agri is a competitive funding scheme and priority will be given to those applications showing substantial farmer or forestry manager involvement.

The operational group can be either new groups specifically formed for the project or ones that already exist. While it is not expected that Operational Groups will become legal entities (e.g. incorporated), it is expected they will establish terms of reference which all members will agree to. These should demonstrate they have established internal procedures to ensure transparency in their operation and decision-making processes, and show how they will manage and avoid conflicts of interest.

Terms of reference do not necessarily need to be established before the application is submitted, but they do need to be submitted to the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) before any formal grant offer can be made.

Who is the applicant

The applicant can be:

- the operational group itself (where legal entity has been established);
- an individual acting as the 'lead actor' for the group; or
- a business acting as the 'lead actor' for the group.

The applicant (the person who signs the application form and enters into the grant funding agreement with the RPA) is responsible for making sure the project operates in accordance with scheme rules and the terms and conditions of any grant offer. If the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) or RPA find that the project has not been completed in accordance with scheme rules or the terms and conditions of any grant award, the applicant is legally liable for the payment of any penalties or repayment of the grant.

Who can't be the applicant

The following can't be the applicant when applying for EIP-Agri grants under the Countryside Productivity Scheme:

- Government departments;
- Producer Organisations under the [Fresh Fruit & Vegetables Aid Scheme](#) if the grant would be towards any items also funded by that Producer Organisation;
- Entities funded wholly or partly by public money, such as Non-Departmental Public Bodies, levy boards or farms owned and run by local authorities, unless they can show that the match funding they receive has not been derived from the exchequer or other public sources, including European funds.

Applicants must share all the results and findings of their project including the process, methodology and narrative of the trials, with the agricultural and forestry industry through publication in relevant national farming and forestry press. Results and findings must be published on the EIP-Agri website. This is a condition of receiving EIP funding. Failure to disseminate all the results and findings may result in the grant being reclaimed. Where applicants feel they cannot provide this level of dissemination, their project may not be suitable for the EIP-Agri scheme.

How much funding is available

Although there is discretion for the scheme to fund up to 100% of costs of a project applicants should only apply for the minimum they need to achieve the project aims and objectives and must show how the balance of the project costs will be funded. The balance of project costs could be through own funds, bank loans or similar. If other public funds are to be used in the project, the application must evidence that no double funding of costs will occur.

Applicants should be aware that, where an aspect of the project could be funded under another part of the Rural Development Programme, the applicant must use (for this aspect of the project) the grant rate for that part of the programme. Details of grant rates for other parts of the programme can be found on the RDPE home page. If an applicant applies an incorrect grant rate, the RPA will adjust and use the correct rate. For example, if the project includes an item eligible under the Countryside Productivity Scheme for a grant of 40%, the EIP application must not request more than 40% grant on this item.

Paying for the rest of the project

Applicants need to consider how they will fund the balance of the eligible project costs and all ineligible costs. Where other funding is to be used, applications will need to provide evidence of funding agreements including the level of funding and the costs against which funding is allocated. Where personal funds are to be used, applicants will need to provide evidence to show they have the funds to do this.

What is eligible for funding

Projects can attempt to solve a problem by:

- using existing technology in a new and innovative way; or
- using and testing new innovative ideas and technology.

Under EIP-Agri, Operational Groups can apply for funding towards the trialing of solutions identified by primary research. Eligible costs (see following section) could include:

- personnel costs;
- operating or running costs;
- costs from promotional activity to share and publicise the outcome of the project; and
- direct costs.

1. Personnel costs

The use of the 'actor's' own time is not eligible for grant funding, but actual costs for staff members directly employed on the project <u>are</u> eligible (where they can be shown to offer value for money and are in line with wider industry published figures for salary costs). This can include:

- staff salaries;
- employers' National Insurance contributions; and
- statutory pension contributions.

Applicants will need to provide evidence that the staff costs offers value for money, and provide the required number of quotes (see section below on evidence to send with the application) to show this.

2. Operating and running costs

General operating and running costs of the operational group can be claimed, including:

- hire of a venue for a meeting;
- appropriate amounts and types of stationery; and
- telephone and internet access.

Travel and subsistence costs for actors to attend the operational group meetings are not eligible.

3. Promotional activity

Applicants must publicise and share the results and outputs of the project. Costs associated with promotional activities for this are eligible and can include:

- hire of venues;
- design of promotional material; and
- setting up a website to share the results.

4. Direct costs

Direct costs are those which directly relate to actually carrying out the physical trials following the primary research. Costs can include the hire of equipment for the period of the trial. If one of the operational group members plan to supply equipment they will need to demonstrate value for money and it must be cheaper than hiring from other sources.

Costs for hiring equipment for standard agricultural or forestry operations can only be considered for funding where they form part of a proposed solution that involves use of standard equipment or systems in an innovative way. Purchase of equipment is not eligible.

What isn't covered

Primary research is not an eligible activity for funding. The project must come after initial research has been completed, which has identified a potential solution.

Costs which can't be claimed

The following costs are not eligible:

- stand-alone or initial research;
- capital items;
- existing innovation projects;
- standard agricultural equipment and inputs like animals and crops;
- the cost of agricultural production rights and payment entitlements;
- the cost of getting any compulsory consents, like planning permission;
- anything that is a standard industry obligation, like requirements of the Basic Payment Scheme (see BPS cross compliance guidance);
- any costs from before the date of the grant funding agreement;
- financial charges, such as interest, fines and maintenance costs;
- reclaimable VAT;
- any items for which the applicant already has or intends to receive EU or national funding;
- projects which are required by law or to meet a legal requirement;
- the applicant's own labour;

- costs of relocating an existing business;
- costs connected with a leasing contract, such as a lessor's margin, interest refinancing; costs, overheads and insurance charges, licence fees, subscriptions and service charges;
- standard computer and mobile equipment including mobile phones; and
- compensation for loss of production.

Before applying

Work must not start on any part of a proposed project until the RPA has informed the applicant that work can start. This will be after the applicant has signed and returned the grant funding agreement to RPA. 'Starting work' includes:

- commissioning of work;
- hiring of equipment; or
- employing staff to work on the project.

Applicants are reminded that claims are only paid in arrears of costs being paid by the applicant and therefore they should make sure that they can afford to fund the proposed project in full, in the short term.

Register with Rural Payments

Applicants must register at www.gov.uk/guidance/register-for-rural-payments in order to receive a Single Business Identifier (SBI). This is required in order to be able to complete the application. Applicants must still register online even if they already have an SBI issued under the previous RPA customer registration (Creg) system.

Need support getting online? Call the Rural Payments helpline on 03000 200 301.

Register on EIP-Agri website

As a condition of receiving funding applicants must share all the results and findings of their project, including publishing the results and findings on the EIP-Agri website. The website can provide useful information on establishing operational groups and developing project ideas. Applicants are therefore asked to register on the EIP-Agri website prior to submitting their application. This can be done through the EIP-Agri service point website.

Wider benefits and links to other policies and funding streams

EIP-Agri promotes resource efficiency and competitive agricultural and forestry sectors through closer collaboration between research and the farming and forestry sectors. When considering applying for EIP-Agri funding applicants should consider the wider benefits their project can bring to the sector, not just in England but also across the EU, and how it may link with other key policies related to innovation in the agricultural and forestry sectors.

How to apply

Before applying, applicants should email the Rural Payments Agency about their idea: EIPagri@rpa.gsi.gov.uk.

This email should include:
- the applicant's name, email address, postal address and telephone number;
- the name, email address and role of others involved in the project who'll be part of the operational group;
- an outline of the project – including the goals of the plan, the problem it will solve, and how it can be expected to benefit productivity and sustainable resource management.

This outline should be no longer than 300 words.

An application form for the scheme will be then emailed to the applicant. The information in the Notification of Interest (NOI) will be used to allow us/the RPA to informally assess if the idea aligns with the scheme criteria (we may indicate if we think it does not) and to help provide support to prospective operational groups.

Applicants should complete the EIP-Agri grant application form and email it to RPA, along with electronic copies of supporting documentation. Applicants will also need to provide a signed and dated paper copy of their application form.

The application form has been designed to avoid the need to provide a separate detailed project plan. It requires you to outline the expected results of the project and how the operational group plans to disseminate the results and outcomes of the project. Applicants should use the additional information tab where there is insufficient space provided.

When to apply

EIP will open to applications on the 9th September 2015 and will close to applications on 8th September 2017.

The deadlines for submitting completed applications (including supporting information) and timings around when the RPA will assess applications are as follows:

Application received	RPA will assess these in
by 31st March 2016	Late spring 2016
By 12th December 2016	Winter 2016
By 2nd May 2017	Summer 2017
By 8th September 2017	Autumn 2017

The scheme's £5 million funding will be spread across all four assessments.

Applicants will be informed shortly after the RPA assessments of the decision.

Evidence to send with an application

Applicants need to send all of the following with their application form:

- a curriculum vitae (CV) for each member of the operational group so that we can assess the skills that the group as a whole will possess;
- supporting research;
- evidence to show there is a recognised industry problem;
- proof of tenancy (if the applicant is a tenant) and confirmation that the landlord has agreed to the project;
- an outline of the trial protocols, methodology and how the work will be managed (where the project includes trial work);
- financial accounts;
- relevant permissions, consents and licences;
- [quotes or tenders for each of the items of expenditure](#); and
- evidence of funds for the non-eligible aspects of the project.

Failure to provide any of this information will deem the project incomplete and the application will be returned to the applicant. Information on why this is needed is given below.

CVs

The RPA need CVs for all members of the operational group to show the different skills and experience each member brings, to ensure that the group has the right mix of skills.

Supporting research

The RPA need to understand how the proposed project has arisen and what research was carried out before the application was submitted. Applicants must send copies of any research the project is based on or has been carried out to date. These can be relevant extracts from large research documents, but the applicant should make sure details of the original published document the extract is from are given (bibliography and citation details of the publication).

Evidence to show there is a recognised industry problem

Applicants need to show the problem they are solving is a recognised problem in the industry and the extent to which it is a problem for the industry. To show this, applicants could provide:

- copies of published articles; or
- written backing for the project from recognised industry bodies including statistical evidence where appropriate to substantiate their support.

Proof of tenancy

If the proposed activity involves activities on tenanted land the applicant must provide written evidence of the tenancy agreement, including the duration of the agreement remaining if it's a fixed term arrangement.

For evidence of the tenancy agreement, applicants must send a copy (not original documentation) of the tenancy agreement sections that show:

- the holding address;
- tenant;
- landlord;
- signatures; and
- for fixed term agreements, the tenancy term.

The RPA may ask to see a copy of the full tenancy agreement.

The applicant must also obtain the relevant permissions, where required, for the proposed activity from the landlord and confirm this as part of the application.

Financial accounts

The applicant must send copies of the accounts for the business or organisation taking the role of lead actor in applying for the grant. Applicants must provide 2 years of accounts for grant requests under £35,000 and 3 years for requests above that.

Accounts must include all of the following:

- profit and loss statements;
- balance sheets;
- title and introduction pages; and
- any account notes pages.

If the applicant is a new business and doesn't have accounts covering the years required, they must send one of the following:

- draft accounts;
- the latest tax returns;
- management accounts; or
- an opening statement from their accountant that shows expected income and operating expenses.

Permissions, consents and licences

If a project needs specific permissions, consents or licenses for the proposals to go ahead, the applicant must send them with their application. This includes:

- environmental consents, such as an abstraction license from the Environment Agency;
- planning permission – applicants should talk to [their local authority](#) to find out if this is needed. If the applicant's local authority confirms that full planning permission for a building is not needed, applicants should provide written proof;
- permissions from third party owners of intellectual property rights if required for use in the project.

Evidence of funds for the non-eligible aspects of the project

The applicant must send documentation to show they can:

- cover the project costs in the short term, before grant can be claimed;
- provide long-term finance to cover the non-grant funded element of the costs; and
- cover VAT.

The evidence must show the amount available and the term of any loan or funding.

Quotes or tenders for each of the items of expenditure

Applicants also need to send quotes, references to catalogue listings or formal tenders that prove they'll get the best value when buying goods and services that they intend to claim for.

This table explains how many quotes, catalogue references and formal tenders are needed, depending on the value of each item.

Value of item or service	How to show value for money
£500 or less	2 quotes or references to 2 catalogue listings
£501 to £1,500	3 quotes or references to 3 catalogue listings
£1,501 to £50,000	3 quotes or 3 formal tenders
£50,001 or more	3 formal competitive tenders (These are viewed as quotes that suppliers put together within an identified timeframe and that follow a detailed and itemised specification provided by the applicant).

Any quotes or tenders that are sent must come from:

- different suppliers that trade as standalone businesses and are not linked through shared ownership; and
- a business that is independent from the applicant or members of the operational group or their businesses.

If applicants provide fewer than the number of quotes or tenders listed in the table above, they need to prove that there are no other suppliers available, either in the UK or worldwide, and that the quote or tender chosen is value for money and is fit for the purpose of the project.

About the quotes or tenders

The quotes or tenders must include:

- a detailed and itemised breakdown of costs;
- the supplier's address, landline telephone number, mobile number and a contact name;
- the VAT number (if the supplier is VAT registered and VAT is charged on the quote); and
- the supplier's company registration number if they are a limited company.

The quotes or tenders also must be:

- comparable to each other in terms of quality, size, quantity, units and specification;
- from the last 6 months and still valid; and
- made out to the same business address as on the application form – the applicant should make sure any online quotes do the same.

Using the cheapest quote

Applicants should use the cheapest quote for any equipment – that means getting the best value on the market for the equipment necessary for the project.

Assessors will check these quotes against market rates; applicants will need to provide a detailed explanation if they haven't used the cheapest quotes. If the applicant doesn't give a reason, or the reason isn't adequate, RPA will use the cheaper quote when they assess the project and any grant award will be based on this lower quote.

The following are not acceptable reasons for using a more expensive quote:
- the location of the supplier;
- the fact that the applicant has bought from a supplier before; or
- any offers the supplier makes about future service or maintenance of equipment.

References to catalogue listings

These should be print-outs or photocopies, and should include:

- the date of publication and when printed or copied;
- the item description and the price;
- the name of the company or catalogue; and
- the page number or webpage.

Dissemination of results and findings

It is a requirement of European Union regulations that operational groups disseminate the results of their project, in particular through the EIP network. Applicants are reminded that it is a condition of any grant award through EIP that all results and findings of the project must be made available for use by others, including publishing the results and findings on the EIP-Agri website and through publication in relevant national farming and forestry press. For the results to be worthwhile and to allow others to benefit from them, it is expected that the process, methodology and narrative of the trials will also be published. Applicants will need to be registered on the EIP website to publish the results of their project. Failure to publish the results and findings of the project will result in the final grant payment being withheld and may result in grant being reclaimed from applicants.

All operational groups receiving EIP funding will have to disseminate their results and outcomes, even for projects which do not achieve the expected results or outcomes. The information shared online and in the press must be sufficient to be of potential use to others in industry. How the results and outcomes must be reported is set out at Annex 1.

Applicants are asked to provide details within the application form of all promotional activities; this should include all proposed publications and anticipated publication dates as key milestones of the project. Given this is a key aspect of EIP funding applicants may wish to provide additional information and documentation to support their proposed dissemination of results and findings.

In addition the RPA will explain how the applicant must publicise the grant at the funding offer stage (this is a requirement of European Union regulations).

Intellectual Property Rights

Successful applicants in receipt of EIP funding will own the intellectual property rights created as a result of project activities undertaken using EIP funding ('Resulting IPR'). Further details will be given to successful applicants in the grant funding agreement terms and conditions.

In order to comply with the European Union requirement regarding dissemination and as a condition of receiving funding as set out above, grant recipients will be required to disseminate the results of their project on terms which permit wide use by others in industry. In addition grant recipients will be required to grant a non-exclusive, royalty-free licence to Defra over the Resulting IPR, and such pre-existing IPR that is necessary to make the published results of use to others, to ensure that full dissemination of the results can take place following project completion.

Applicants are strongly advised to ensure that they can comply with the terms of the grant funding agreement as regards intellectual property rights, before making an application under EIP. Where an applicant applies on behalf of more than one individual as part of an operational group, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all members of the operational group can comply with the terms of the grant funding agreement as regards intellectual property rights, and that appropriate internal arrangements are made within the operational group concerning ownership and exploitation of any Resulting IPR.

How to send an EIP-Agri application to the RPA

Read the guidance on GOV.UK called 'How to fill in the European Innovation Project application form' to see which format these must be sent in.

Save the application form using the format:

"Countryside Productivity EIP application - applicant name"

For example: "Countryside Productivity EIP application - JD Brown Ltd"

Email the completed application form and supporting documents to EIPagri@rpa.gsi.gov.uk using the file name of form as the subject of the email.

Within 10 days of receiving the emailed application form, RPA will provide the address for the signed hard copy of the application form to be sent to and any reference numbers that should be included on the forms.

All documents must be received within 7 working days of the address to send the hard copy documents being confirmed. If applicants don't provide all the necessary supporting information, their application will not be processed and will be returned.

Applicants should not post a hard copy application without first sending an electronic copy of the application form and supporting documentation. Due to the range of schemes and number of applications it may not be possible to match paper copies to electronic documentation. If applicants do send the hard copy first, this will not be accepted and it will be returned to the applicant.

Hard copy applications must be signed by the lead applicant or they will not be accepted.

RPA will confirm receipt of the hard copy application by email to the email address provided on the form within ten days of receipt.

After an application is submitted

Assessment

RPA will check that the application meets the eligibility criteria of the grant. Once an application's eligibility has been established, the application will be scored.

How applications are assessed

The RPA will assess it based on:

- whether it meets the eligibility criteria of the scheme where an application is not considered eligible it will be rejected (see who can apply and eligible costs sections above);
- how it fits with the requirements of the sector;
- the rationale for grant funding (why funding is needed);
- how the applicant demonstrates that the project is value for money. In other words, the benefits of the project relative to the amount of money applied for. When deciding whether a project is good value for money, RPA will look at whether a project needs public funding and what benefits will come from it;
- whether the project will negatively impact on other businesses. RPA will assess the extent to which this project may displace economic activity undertaken by other businesses. We will check facts, assertions and evidence relating to this that the applicant provides in support of the application;
- the viability and sustainability of the project; and
- deliverability - how likely it is that the applicant can deliver the project proposed.

The highest-scoring applications which meet the assessment criteria set out above and which demonstrate a need for funding will be successful.

Decisions

The first round of assessments of applications and grant awards will take place in late spring. The RPA will then confirm after each assessment date in writing to the applicant whether an application has been approved or not. If an application is successful a grant offer will be made by letter.

Respond to the grant funding agreeement

If a project is approved, RPA will send the applicant a grant funding agreement.

The grant funding agreement will explain when work can be started on the project, and any terms or conditions which must be met.

All recipients of EIP-Agri grant funding will be expected to meet with a member of RPA to go through the grant funding agreement, in particular the outputs and milestones, dissemination of results and the grant claim process in detail.

Check that terms can be met

The applicant must read the grant funding agreement and decide if they can meet all timings, terms and conditions in it. The grant funding agreement is a legally binding document.

Applicants should pay particular attention to the terms and conditions regarding dissemination of results and outcomes of their project. Wide dissemination and publication of results and outcomes of a project is a key aspect of the scheme and grant funding. Failure to comply with this within the timeframe required by the grant terms will result in the final grant payment being withheld and may result in grant being reclaimed from applicants.

It will be a condition of any grant award that applicants must publicise the fact that they have received a grant award on the EIP-Agri Service point website. Please refer to the section entitled 'publicising the grant' below.

The applicant must confirm they accept the terms and conditions of the grant offer to RPA by sending a signed copy of the grant funding agreement to the address in the letter.

The funding offer will expire if RPA does not receive the signed grant funding agreement from the applicant within 30 working days of the date on the letter.

The applicant should also keep a copy of the signed grant funding agreement as this forms part of the grant funding agreement.

If an application is not successful

Applicants will receive written notification of the reasons why an application was unsuccessful.

The applicant can ask the RPA to review their decision if they think that:

- the decision was based on an error of fact;
- the decision was wrong in law; or
- RPA made a procedural error.

This request must be made within 60 days of the applicant receiving the letter.

Read RPA's complaints and appeals procedure.

Claiming the grant

The RPA will send a claim form and instructions on what to do next, if the project is approved.

Applicants will be able to make quarterly claims for eligible agreed costs. These costs are claimed in arrears.

Claim dates will be based on the information provided in the application form and will be phased according to the schedule of planned activities making up the project and the milestones and outputs schedule in the application form. Claims are paid in arrears and on the basis work has been completed as agreed in the claim schedule of the grant funding agreement.

Applicants must provide evidence that the work has been undertaken and payment made on incurred eligible costs before submitting a claim. In preparing the claim schedule in the application form, applicants should remember to allow for payments to clear banking systems.

When returning a claim form, the applicant must send:

- invoices that match the costs and suppliers stated in the grant funding agreement;
- evidence that these invoices have been paid in full – bank statements which show payments leaving the account of the person or entity who signed the grant funding agreement;   Where online banking is used printouts of statements can be provided but the printout must include the bank logo, account number, sort code, transaction types, date printed;
- photographs of the various stages of the project and completed project or activity (further details of what is required will be provided with the grant funding agreement);
- a list of all the items including serial numbers (an asset register) for which a grant has been received;
- a progress report explaining what has been done so far and any delays; and
- evidence of the dissemination they have undertaken including copies of any publications including articles in the press and trade journals.

When submitting multiple claims the final claim must be at least 15% of the total grant award. This is so that the RPA can make sure the project is completed before paying the final grant.

RPA will pay claims for costs that are eligible for grant funding. If RPA find a claim exceeds the amount that is found to be eligible by more than 10%, a penalty will be applied to the eligible amount. This will be a reduction equal to the difference between the amount claimed and the amount found to be eligible.

Meet the terms of an offer

The applicant must meet the terms set out in the grant funding agreement the RPA sends.

This means that the applicant must:

- follow the timescale set out in the grant funding agreement;
- follow the funding offers terms and conditions for 5 years (the grant period) from the date of the final payment;
- ensure they meet the funding scheme's minimum grant request – at least £5,000; and
- ensure the results and findings are disseminated and published as set out in the grant funding agreement.

If the applicant fails to meet the terms of the grant funding agreement, the RPA may withdraw the grant, apply a penalty by deducting payment from the grant, or reclaim some or all of any grant already paid.

RPA inspections

Countryside Productivity funding comes from European Union and the UK Exchequer, so a variety of bodies are entitled to inspect projects and project documentation at any time. Notice will normally be at least 48 hours in advance although in some circumstances it may be less.

The bodies entitled to inspect projects include the RPA, the National Audit Office, the European Commission and the European Court of Auditors.

During an inspection, the inspecting officers will check that projects meet all terms, conditions and timings from the grant funding agreement. They will check invoices and statements for evidence of defrayal (payment). Facilitating inspections is a condition of any funding offer.

Publicising the grant

In addition to the EIP-Agri scheme requirement to disseminate the results and outputs of the project it is a requirement of the Rural Development Programme for England to publicise any grant award made under the programme (this is a requirement of EU regulations).

The grant funding agreement will explain how the beneficiary must publicise the grant.

The beneficiary may be expected 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 beneficiary does not do this, RPA may have to apply a penalty by deducting payment from the grant, or set it off against other grants or basic payment scheme payments payable to the beneficiary.

Changes during the grant period and afterwards

Applicants must use grant money to purchase items as set out in the application proposals.

If during the grant period the applicant considers that there is a need to seek an amendment to the conditions of the grant agreement, they must apply to RPA in writing. The applicant must tell RPA about any changes to the project, for example if they expect to:

- change the use of buildings, equipment or any other assets bought with the grant;
- dispose of or sell any of the assets; or
- close, sell or transfer the business that's associated with the grant.

This applies during the project and for 5 years after the payment of the final claim.

Agreement to an amendment is not automatic and if the applicant or a member of the operational group proceeds with a change that RPA does not agree to, there may be an obligation to repay the grant or RPA may withhold part or the entire remaining grant.

Contact RPA

Our contact details for general enquiries are:

Telephone: 0300 0200 301 (Rural Payments helpline – when prompted select the options for Rural Development and then Countryside Productivity)

Email: ruralpayments@defra.gsi.gov.uk.

Definitions

To help you understand some of the terms used in this guidance we've given some definitions of what these terms mean under the Countryside Productivity.

Farmer	A 'farmer' is a person, group of people, or business that does at least one of these on their holding: produces, rears or grows agricultural products – including harvesting, milking, breeding animals and keeping animals for farming purposes or keeps some land in a state suitable for grazing or cultivation by keeping it clear of any scrub that can't be grazed (sometimes known as 'dense scrub'). For Countryside Productivity, these are known as 'agricultural activities'.
Holding	All of the land a farmer manages and uses for agricultural activities in the UK. For most farmers, this is all of the land they should declare under their Single Business Identifier (SBI). A holding can have more than one County Parish Holding (CPH) number, as well as land in more than one location.
Actor	A member of the operational group who takes an active role in undertaking the project for the operational group. We expect all members of operational groups to be Actors. To be eligible for EIP funding at least one of the actors must be a farmer forester or contractor where the majority of their time is involved in agricultural or forestry work.
Match Funding	The balance of funding required to cover the cost of the project not covered by the grant offer. For example, 40% grant award on project costs means 60% match funding required to cover balance.
Stand-alone or initial research	Stand-alone research is research undertaken in isolation with no direct link to commercial benefit eg academic research as part of an educational qualification. Initial research is research undertaken prior to commercial trials involving the agricultural or forestry sector. This includes research undertaken in artificial (laboratory) environment

Annex 1 - Common format for the dissemination of the outcomes of EIP projects

Two formats will be used for the dissemination of the outcomes of EIP projects; a short summary "abstract" and a final report.

The short summary will contain the following aspects of the project:

- Short and easily understandable **title** (one key sentence on the project, max 150 characters)
- **What problem/opportunity** has the project intended to addressed (objective of the project)
- What would be the **main benefits/opportunities to the end-user** if the project is successful in its objectives?
- Main **results** (set out max 2-3 main results that have been achieved during the project)
- The **main outcome/recommendation:** provide details of the main outcome/practice/information/recommendation generated from this project

The maximum length of the short summary should be 1200 words

 The final report should include:

- Title of the project (max 150 characters)
- Editor of the text (person responsible for delivering the text)
- Project coordinator according to the cooperation agreement (name, address, email, telephone)
- Project partners (name, address, email, telephone)
- **"abstract":** short **summary**
- Keywords (to help with future search)
- Funding source (RD, H2020, other)
- Project period (beginning/end)
- Geographical location where the main project activities take place (to enable contacting within/between a climatic/regional entities)
- Final report including a substantial description of the results
- Total budget of the project
- Audiovisual material attractive for end users (such as YouTube)
- Website of the project (URL)
- Website(s) where results stay available <u>after</u> the project has ended (including EIP-Agri service point)

- Description of the context of the project (e.g. drivers in legislation/ markets that were at the origin of the project, etc.)

- Recommendations for possible future activities/ research