



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 to  
develop new and existing micro and small tourism  
businesses in the rural areas**

**European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development**

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| <b>Managing Authority</b>                                  | <b>Department for Environment,<br/>Food and Rural Affairs</b> |
| <b>Local Enterprise<br/>Partnership Area</b>               | <b>Buckinghamshire Thames<br/>Valley</b>                      |
| <b>Call Reference</b>                                      | <b>02RD15TO0002</b>   |
| <b>Deadline for the<br/>submission of<br/>applications</b> | <b>Friday 8 January 2016 at 1700<br/>hours</b>                |

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 improve and expand the tourism offer in rural areas of Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP. The objective of the call is to create new jobs and increase growth in the rural tourism sector.**

The Buckinghamshire Thames Valley (BTV) LEP [ESIF Strategy](#) recognises tourism as an important sector for growth in the economy of the LEP area. The majority of income from the sector comes from domestic day visitors. The number of day visitors to the area is significantly higher than the national average but the number of visitors staying overnight is lower. One of the objectives of the LEP is to increase the number of visitors staying overnight. Overnight visitors spend more in the local economy than day visitors and are important in growing the income of the sector.

The Destination Plan (DP) for Buckinghamshire says that the area contains a small number of bed and breakfast providers, self-catering properties, caravan and campsites. This call seeks applications to develop new self-catering accommodation, camp sites, tents, camping pods and timber lodges that encourage more visitors to stay overnight.

The county of Buckinghamshire is a popular destination for visitors to participate in outdoor pursuits such as walking and cycling. This call seeks to encourage applications providing accommodation that will lead to an increase in these visitors.

Visitors from overseas generate 10% of the income from the sector. One of Buckinghamshire LEP's objectives is to increase the number of overseas visitors to the area staying overnight. Evidence shows that these visitors are more likely to spend more in the local economy. The provision of quality accommodation will help attract more visitors from overseas to stay for longer.

The DP recognises that the development of visitor attractions building on the area's natural environment and many places of historical and cultural interest will also help to attract more overseas visitors. The national and international television and film industry uses many of the historic houses and gardens in the area as set locations. Buckinghamshire LEP wants to build on these rural assets to create new opportunities for growth. This call also seeks applications that develop:

- new tourism products and services
- new and existing visitor attractions

## 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.

Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP aims to support the creation of distinctive and high quality destinations based on what each individual location can offer. This call provides support for:

- micro and small-sized rural tourism businesses seeking to expand and create jobs

## **2.2 Support Available**

This call seeks applications from new or existing micro and small tourism businesses and farmers seeking to diversify into tourism activities in rural areas. Grants are available for investments in new visitor products and services, visitor attractions and accommodation.

The aim of this call is to attract more visitors, particularly from overseas, to stay in Buckinghamshire for longer and spend more in the local economy. Applicants must show how their project will attract more overnight stays and create new jobs. For every £25,000 of grant, applicants must be able to create at least 1 new full time equivalent job. Applications that will attract overnight visitors from overseas are a priority for this call.

Examples of support include:

- capital investment to provide new overnight accommodation
- developing new and existing visitor attractions
- developing innovative products and services for visitors

Applications to develop self-catering accommodation, camp sites, tents, camping pods and timber lodges must be supported by a business plan. This plan will need to show:

- need for the project
- measurable economic benefits
- links to other visitor attractions, tourism businesses or the natural environment

## 2.3 Size of grants available

Grants will be available for this call from £50,000 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 £125,000.

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 **£300,000**. Funding will be offered to a maximum of 6 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 the 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:

- create 12 new jobs
- additional number of overnight visitors
- additional numbers of day visitors

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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:growthapps@rpa.gsi.gov.uk). The RPA will email to confirm that they've received it.