



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 in co-
operation for the development and marketing of
tourism in rural areas**

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

Managing Authority	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Local Enterprise Partnership Area	Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire (D2N2) LEP
Call Reference	08RD15TO0002
Deadline for the submission of applications	Friday 8 January 2016 at 1700 hours

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 support co-operation in developing and marketing rural tourism.

The rural economy provides one third of D2N2's total jobs. Economic activity and skills levels are relatively high in D2N2's rural areas. The agricultural sector plays an important role in maintaining an attractive environment and contributing

to the visitor economy. However, rural areas face a number of challenges including:

- reducing farm incomes
- an over-reliance on the public sector for jobs
- lower than average wages
- lack of investment compared to urban areas

[D2N2 ESIF strategy](#) has identified tourism as a priority sector. The annual volume of visitors makes a significant contribution to the D2N2 rural economy.

Market towns and some villages act as rural hubs for visitors, providing distinctive places to shop and eat, gather information or stay overnight. They contain attractions for visitors and provide a gateway to the wider rural area. These hubs are an important part of the visitor offer.

The D2N2 Visitor Economy Plan identifies hubs such as Southwell, Retford, Ashbourne, Bakewell, Buxton, Castleton, Matlock and Matlock Bath as particularly in need of co-ordinated destination plans (DPs). This call will only support plans for rural areas, villages and smaller towns in the D2N2 area.

D2N2 also wishes to boost the tourism potential of local markets, pubs and microbreweries as part of the locally distinctive visitor offer, through more co-ordinated promotion and support.

Another D2N2 priority is improving links between destinations, attractions and accommodation. Some attractions located in rural areas draw many visitors who may also visit neighbouring villages and towns. D2N2 wishes to support clusters of attractions and local businesses in developing specific plans and initiatives to extend the length of visits and increase visitor spend. These plans can identify measures such as investment in premises, joint promotion or longer opening hours.

This call invites applications for co-operation in developing and marketing tourism in the rural D2N2 area. Applications must show how the proposed co-operation activity will lead to economic growth and create new jobs, especially year round, skilled and higher paid jobs.

Two Destination Organisations (DOs) support and promote the D2N2 area. These are Visit Peak District and Derbyshire (VPPD) and Experience Nottinghamshire (EN).

As well as making links to the [D2N2 Visitor Economy Sector Plan](#) applicants must also show how their project will achieve the objectives in the relevant DP:

- [Visit Peak District and Derbyshire](#)

- [Experience Nottinghamshire](#)

2. Call Overview

2.1 Purpose of the Call

This call seeks applications that support co-operation investments in the tourism sector in D2N2 rural areas.

The rural tourism sector offers a significant opportunity for growth. 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.

By providing EAFRD investment, D2N2 LEP aims to support the creation of local plans that will inform later investments in distinctive and high quality destinations based on what the individual destination can offer.

This call provides support for:

- rural businesses, charities, trusts, community groups and public bodies seeking to encourage co-operation in the tourism sector to ultimately develop a better local rural tourism offer

2.2 Support Available

This call seeks applications from rural businesses including social enterprises, charities, trusts community groups and public bodies. Grants are available to develop new DPs for rural areas.

The aim of this call is to support local cooperation and partnerships to create a new plan or a new element to an existing plan to grow the visitor economy in rural areas through:

- developing and marketing new tourism activity
- targeting new markets
- increasing the length of stay and associated visitor spend

The plan must be in line with the local priorities set out above and supported by research of the sector and local areas.

Once created, implementing the plan must lead to:

- new jobs and growth in rural tourism
- creation of higher quality and higher paid jobs
- increase in day and overnight visitors

- increased visitor spend in the rural D2N2 area

Examples of types of activities could include:

- developing a new DP for a rural area that demonstrates co-operation to address the priorities identified in the D2N2 Visitor Economy Sector Plan and the plans of VPDD and EN
- developing new tourism themes and markets and identifying opportunities for co-operation between businesses in a local rural area – including co-operation between local attractions, heritage and culture, accommodation, food and drink providers
- developing new marketing opportunities in distinctive areas as identified in the new plan that will enhance and raise the quality of the current visitor offer and increase visitor numbers

Applicants must show how the proposed activities within their plan will benefit micro and small businesses in the rural tourism sector. Applications that demonstrate the greatest economic benefits such as new jobs, increased visitor spend and more overnight stays will be a priority for this call. Applications that show how they will address the aims of the D2N2 Visitor Economy Sector Plan and the plans of VPDD and EN are also a priority for this call.

2.3 Size of grants available

Grants will be available for this call from £35,000 up to €200,000 (approximately £140,000). State aid rules will apply which may affect the amount of grant offered. Further details on state aid rules are available from gov.uk.

Commercial organisations may apply for up to 50% of the project's total eligible costs. In this case, the minimum total eligible project cost will be £70,000.

Co-ordinating and organising co-operation activity between non profit-making organisations may apply for grant support rates of 100% of eligible costs. In this case the minimum eligible project cost would be £35,000.

The applicant must pay for any eligible costs not covered by the grant with private funding, such as savings or a commercial bank loan. If private funding is not used, the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) can reclaim any money already paid and withhold future grant payments.

2.4 Total Funding Available

The total grant funding available for this call is **£350,000**. Funding will be offered to a maximum of 10 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:

- development of new DPs
- development of new DOs aligned with the main local DOs
- development of new tourism partnerships

Applicants will need to be able to demonstrate how they will deliver the outputs committed to within the proposal along with any methodology used. Further details on the evidence requirements for each output will be available at full application stage.

Applicants will also need to ensure robust project management systems are in place that will capture and record the outputs. A detailed description of the systems will need to be provided at full application stage. All projects will be required to collect evidence to show that outputs have been achieved and report progress with each claim.

4. How to apply

There are two stages to the application process. Applications will be assessed at both stages and only the strongest will be successful. The 2 stages are:

- Stage 1: an outline application
- Stage 2: a full application

Further details on how to apply for a grant and an outline application form are available from gov.uk. The applicant will only be invited to submit a full application if their outline application is successful.

Work must not start on any part of a proposed project before the applicant has received and signed a grant funding agreement from the RPA. This includes ordering or paying a deposit on materials or equipment.

5. Information to consider before making an application

5.1 Eligibility

There will be standard eligibility requirements for each type of grant offered. Applicants will need to refer to gov.uk for further information on each of the types of grants available.

5.2 Register with Rural Payments

Before applicants can submit an application for a grant from the Growth Programme, they will need to register on [Rural Payments](#). If the applicant is already registered on Rural Payments, they will not need to do this again.

5.3 Cross Cutting Themes

All applications received under this call must demonstrate how the Cross Cutting Themes have been addressed in the project design and development. The cross cutting themes for all projects are sustainable development and equality and diversity. Further details on these can be found in the Outline Application form.

5.4 Quotes

Applicants must ensure that they obtain best value for money when buying goods or services. Important information on the number and format of the quotes required to demonstrate best value are available from gov.uk. Applicants will be required to submit these if invited to develop a full application.

5.5 Publicising the Grant

When a project is successful in obtaining rural development funding through Growth Programme, the grant beneficiary will be required to publicise the grant. The RPA will provide beneficiaries with further information with the grant funding agreement but they may expect beneficiaries to:

- mention it in any press releases or when communicating with customers, for example in newsletters and on their website (if applicable); and
- display a poster, plaque, or billboard, including EU logos, depending on the amount of funding received and the type of investment

If the applicant does not do this, the RPA may apply a penalty by deducting payment from the grant.

6. Support

Guidance on how to apply for a Growth Programme grant is available at www.gov.uk/government/collections/growth-programme-grants-for-the-rural-economy. Applicants can call the Rural Payments helpline on 0300 0200 301 or Email GPEnquiries@rpa.gsi.gov.uk for further support if required.

7. Submitting applications

Send the completed outline application form to growthapps@rpa.gsi.gov.uk. The RPA will email to confirm that they've received it.