



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



The European Agricultural Fund for Rural  
Development: Europe investing in rural areas.

# Growth Programme

How to  
fill in an  
Expression of  
Interest (EOI)  
form

Rural Payments Agency  
Rural Development Programme for England (2014-2020)  
EAFRD Growth Programme  
**Expression of Interest Form**  
Please read the RDPE Programme guidance carefully before completing this form: search 'RDPE Growth' on GOV.UK

**Key things to remember:**  
Expressions of interest (EOI) must be submitted by email, as a Microsoft Excel attachment only. We cannot accept this form in any other format, such as PDF or hard copy.  
Email the completed form to [growthsops@ra.gov.uk](mailto:growthsops@ra.gov.uk)  
Closing deadline for this EOI is in the RDPE Growth handbook. You can submit your application any time before the deadline.  
Complete all the questions in the form - you can only skip a question if the instructions say so.

**Section 1. Details from the call for applications**

Applications reference number  
For applications (Select from the list)  
Partnership (LEP) Area where your project will be (Select from the list)

**Applicant details**

Main contact in the business or organisation applying for the grant. This is normally a director or partner.  
Name  
Surname

Deadline for expressions of interest: midnight 31 January 2018

Search 'RDPE Growth Programme' on GOV.UK

# Top tips for applicants



Before you start your application, here are some important reminders...

## **Jobs + growth + rural**

The main aim of the RDPE Growth Programme is to create jobs and growth in the rural economy. Tell us how your project will help do this.

## **Sell us your idea**

Explain really clearly what your project does and how it will benefit the economy. It's hard for us to justify giving you a grant if we don't understand your project.

## **Don't ask for the full amount if you don't need it**

Just because you can get (say) 40% of your costs covered, don't ask for that amount if you don't need it. As long as you stay below the maximum, you can tell us what grant rate you want. (It's better value for taxpayers' money.)

## **Show us what the funding will mean to the success of your project**

We're obliged to invest public money carefully. We're looking for viable, growing businesses. If you can show us that your project is good value for money, and that you're planning to use the grant money to improve your project, you're more likely to get the grant.

## **Do the market research**

You have to show that there is real demand for what you want to do, or you're unlikely to get a grant.

# RDPE Growth Programme: How to fill in an expression of interest (EOI) form

The expression of interest form (EOI) is the first stage in applying for an RDPE Growth Programme grant. This guidance explains how to fill in an EOI.

## Before you start

Before you fill in an EOI, read the relevant RDPE Growth Programme handbook. It explains:

- who can apply
- what the grant money can be used for
- how to apply
- how long the process will take

## When to send your form

You can apply any time before midnight on 31 January 2018. If we have not received your EOI by then, we will reject it. (RPA does have the right to change that date – search 'RDPE Growth Programme' on GOV.UK to see if it has changed.)

## How to send your form

You must email your form to:  
[growthapps@rpa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:growthapps@rpa.gsi.gov.uk)

It must be saved as a Microsoft Excel document, in the 1997-2003 .xls format.

Send it from the email address you give us in section 5 of the form. If an agent or consultant sends the form for you, they must copy you into the email (using the email address you give us in section 5).

### Improve your chances – explain things clearly.

It will help your application if you explain your project clearly. Tell us exactly what you're doing, why it's good for your business, how and where you're doing it and who will benefit from it.

### New Business?

If you are a new business, or have not yet set up a business, you might not yet be able to give us all the information we ask for. If that's the case, use the best information you have – for example, give us your personal contact details in the 'Business address' box.

## If you don't have Microsoft Excel

You can use free Open Office software to complete the EOI form – as long as you save it in the Microsoft Excel (.xls) format. To do this:

1. Select 'Save as' when saving the application form. The 'Save as' box will open.
2. Select the format for the document in the 'Save as type' box. Select the format type – Microsoft Excel 97/2000/XP/2003 (.xls)
3. Click 'Save'.
4. A dialog box may open asking you to 'Confirm file format'. If that happens, select 'Confirm'.

### Do you have a Single Business Identifier (SBI)?

You'll normally have an SBI if you get other payments from the RPA, like for the Basic Payments Scheme. You'll find your SBI on any letters you have had from RPA. If you do have an SBI, the answers to question 4 and 5 must match the details we have for your business in the Rural Payments service.

Please note that you must have a SBI and be registered with the Rural Payments service if you are invited to submit a full application.

# Filling in the form

You must fill out every section on the form, unless the instructions say you can either type 'N/A' or move to the next question.

## Section 1 – Details from the LEP directory in the handbook

You'll find all this information in the relevant RDPE Growth Programme handbook.

Look for the 'LEP directory' section at the back of the handbook. Every LEP area that is offering the grant has an entry in the directory. You'll find the call reference number, and LEP area name there. The type of grant is on the front page of the relevant handbook.

The LEP area where your project will be located might be different from your normal business address – that's fine.

## Section 2 – Applicant details

Please give us the details of the main contact for this application.

If you're a sole trader, give us your details. If you're filling out this form on behalf of a bigger business or organisation, we'd normally expect you to be a director or partner.

We have to ask your gender to meet EU rules. If you don't want to tell us, choose 'Prefer not to disclose' from the list.

## Section 3 – Business/organisation details

**Question 4:** Please tell us the full name of your business or organisation. For registered businesses, use the full registered name of the business (this is the name used in the annual financial accounts.)

**Question 5:** Please give the full address of the business or organisation. If the business has more than 1 address, give the postal address – we'll use this if we need to post anything to you. (This doesn't have to be in the same LEP area as your project.)

### Email address

We will use email as our main way of contacting you. Please provide an email address that you check regularly.

**Question 6:** Tell us your Single Business Identifier (SBI) number, if you have one. If not, leave this box blank and go question 7.

**Question 7:** Choose the best fit for your type of business from the dropdown list.

**Questions 8 and 9:** Read the 'Who can apply' section of the RDPE Growth Programme handbook to see how to work out what size your business is and how many 'full time equivalent' (FTE) employees you have.

**Question 10:** What does your business do? Select the best fit for your business activity from the list. (This might be different to the project that you're applying to get the grant for.)

**New business?** Select 'Yes' if your business has been trading for less than 2 years, or if you're not trading yet.

**Question 11:** Please provide these numbers if your business has them – if not, type 'N/A' in the boxes.

**Question 12:** Choose the age range for whoever filled in section 1. We have to ask this to meet EU rules – if you don't want to tell us, choose 'Prefer not to disclose'.

**Question 13:** Please provide the turnover and balance sheet total from your most recent accounts. If the business is less than 1 financial year old, and so has not filed any financial accounts yet, you can leave this blank.

**Question 14:** Read the 'Who can apply' section of the RDPE Growth Programme handbook to see the definition of 'linked businesses'. If the business is linked to other businesses, please select 'yes' and complete the table. If not, go to question 15.

**Question 15:** Is your business a farm, horticulture or forestry business? Choose 'Yes' or 'No' from the dropdown. If you answer 'No', go to question 16.

If you answered 'Yes', question 15 is divided into 3 sections that are specific to each sector:

- a) Agriculture
- b) Horticulture
- c) Forestry

Complete all the sections that apply to your business.

**Question 16:** Please tell us whether your business is part of a Fruit and Vegetable Producer Organisation. For more information about these, search 'producer organisation for growers' on GOV.UK.

**Question 17:** Please tell us if your business or the project you're applying for funding for has had any public funding since 2007.

This does not include Single Payment Scheme or Basic Payment Scheme payments.

This does include funding from organisations like your local authority, a Regional Development Agency or Business Link.

It also includes EU funding, such as from:

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

If your business has previously had public funding, please give the details in the table.

### De minimis

You will know if a previous grant was awarded under industrial de minimis because it will say so on your grant agreement, or in other paperwork relating to that funding.

## Section 3 – Agent details

Please choose 'Yes' or 'No' from the dropdown list for question 18.

If someone else (like an agent or business manager) is completing the form for you, give their full details here. You don't have to use an agent to apply.

## Section 4 – Project details

Answers to the questions in this section will help us to understand what your project involves. We use this to check whether your project is eligible for a grant.

**Question 22:** Please give the name of your project that will be included in correspondence and in any publicity. This should be concise and clear, and ideally no more than 50 characters.

**Question 23:** Provide a short description / summary of your project beginning with the words, 'This project will...'. You should aim to use no more than 50 words.

**Question 24:** Tell us where the project will be located.

For question 24c, you can find out if your project is in one of the following areas by reading these web pages:

- nitrate vulnerable zones - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nutrient-management-nitrate-vulnerable-zones>
- Site of Special Scientific Interest - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-areas-sites-of-special-scientific-interest>
- catchment sensitive farming areas - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/catchment-sensitive-farming-reduce-agricultural-water-pollution>

**Question 25:** Please give us an overview of how much you expect the project will cost. We expect an estimate here, and not a highly detailed breakdown. You can't add any more rows to the table.

Please fill in the table, which is divided into 2 sections:

- Grant funded project costs (top section) – costs you want to use the grant for
- Non-grant project costs (bottom section) – other costs relating to the project but which you are not applying for grant funding for

1. 'Type of cost' column – tell us what the cost is for. Group similar costs under one heading. For example, group together all costs relating to building works, including materials and labour.
2. 'Grant rate %' column – tell us what percentage of those costs you would like the grant to cover. All the grants have a maximum percentage of eligible costs that they can cover. You need to read the 'Grant funding' section of the relevant handbook to see what this is.
3. 'Eligible project expenditure' column – tell us the total amount of that cost
4. 'Date expenditure will be incurred' column – tell us when you expect to have to pay that cost – select one of the options from the dropdown.

### Grant requested column

The total 'Grant requested' column will automatically calculate. Check that these figures are correct, but please don't try to type anything in that column.

Your completed table should look something like this:

#### !5 Project costs

Indicate the types of costs included in the total project expenditure in the table below. All costs should be net of VAT unless you are including irrecoverable VAT in your eligible project costs.

	Type of cost (Example - building works)	Grant rate %	Eligible project expenditure	Date expenditure will be incurred (Select from list)	Grant requested
<b>Grant funded project costs</b>	New building for production line	40%	£287,000.00	October 2017 - March 2018	£114,800.00
	Vegetable weigher, sorter and infeed	40%	£162,333.00	April 2018 - September 2018	£64,933.20
	Vegetable Spray Sorter with infra-red technology	40%	£105,211.00	April 2018 - September 2018	£42,084.40
		0%			£0.00
		0%			£0.00
		0%			£0.00
		0%			£0.00
		0%			£0.00
<b>Non grant project costs</b>	Planning permission	0%	£15,000.00		£0.00
	Contingency costs		£6,000.00		

The next section of the form will automatically be calculated for you. Don't try to type anything into

these boxes. However, please check that the 'Total grant request' figure is below the maximum you can get for this grant.

This section will look like this:

<b>Total project costs</b>	<b>£575,544.00</b>
<b>Total grant funded project costs</b>	<b>£554,544.00</b>
<b>Total grant request</b>	<b>£221,817.60</b>
<b>Total intervention rate %</b>	<b>40.0%</b>

### Minimum grant

Remember, the minimum grant is normally £35,000 – it might be higher in some LEP areas.

**Question 26:** If you get a grant, will you also be claiming for VAT as part of the costs? If not, type 'N/A' in the box and go to question 27. If so, explain why.

This is normally if your business is not VAT registered. Please note that at full application stage you will be expected to provide a letter from a suitably qualified independent accountant to confirm that you are not VAT registered or are making exempt supplies.

VAT can be a complex area. This table may help you decide whether you can include VAT in your project costs or not. Use this to explain why you have included VAT if applicable:

Status	Outcome
You are registered for VAT and making regular returns of VAT to HMRC	You will NOT be able to include VAT in your project costs or grant request because it is recoverable in full on VAT returns
You are not registered for VAT because your business is below the threshold for supplies	You will be able to include VAT in your project costs and grant request provided this status can be verified by RPA at full application stage
You are not registered for VAT because you opted to join the Agricultural flat rate scheme instead	You will NOT be able to include VAT in your project costs or grant request because the flat rate scheme you have chosen to join is a simplification instead of registering for VAT. The terms of the scheme mean that you receive compensation for not being able to recover VAT paid by your business by retaining a Flat Rate Addition (FRA) added to sales invoices in respect of supplies made to VAT registered customers

You are registered for VAT but you have also opted to join a flat rate scheme	You will NOT be able to include VAT in your project costs or grant request because the flat rate scheme you have chosen to join is a simplification which compensates you for not being able to reclaim input VAT. In addition, you are able to reclaim input VAT on certain capital assets costing over £2,000 through your VAT returns
You are registered for VAT and making exempt supplies meaning that not all VAT paid can be recovered on returns of VAT to HMRC	You may be able to include SOME of the VAT in your project costs or grant request providing the extent to which your business cannot recover VAT can be verified by RPA at full application and claims stages

**Question 27:** The grant can only be used to cover some costs. Tell us where the rest of the money for the project (the ‘match funding’) will come from. Read the ‘Grant funding’ section of the handbook for more information.

**Question 28:** Please read the ‘Timelines’ section of the handbook before you fill in this section. It’s helpful if you can try to be as accurate as possible.

- Full application submission date. If you’re invited to submit a full application, when will it be ready? Be realistic – we expect it to take 2 or 3 months to prepare your full application, possibly longer if you need planning permission.
- Project start date – when do intend to start work on your project? This must be at least 2 months after you submit your full application.
- Project completion date – this is when you expect to have completed the project works and paid all invoices.

## Sell us your project

We’ll decide whether or not to invite you to submit a full application based on what you say in this section.

## Section 6 – The business case

**Question 29:** Tell us what the project will do for your business and what it will achieve. How will it improve your business?

**Question 30 a:** Read the national priorities for funding in the ‘Preparing an application’ section of the handbook. Explain which of these priorities your project will meet, and how it will do that.

**Question 30 b:** Read the entry for the relevant LEP in the ‘LEP directory’ section of the handbook. Each LEP has explained what its local priorities for this grant are. Explain which of these priorities your project will meet, and how it will do that.

## Section 7 – Justification

**Question 31:** Answers to the question in this section will help us to understand:

- the market demand for your project
- why it is needed
- who will benefit from it
- whether there will be an impact on any other businesses

Provide a clear case to explain why the project is needed and briefly outline the market opportunity/demand for project.

You also need to check whether there are any similar business nearby that might be affected (negatively or positively) by your project. Give details of these businesses, and explain how your project will affect them.

This should be concise and clear, and ideally no more than 500 words.

## Section 8 – Outputs

**Question 32:** ‘Outputs’ are what will result from your project – you must be able to measure them. Examples of outputs from a project include:

- creating jobs
- increasing turnover by a specific amount
- increasing productivity by a specific amount
- creating a new product
- selling to new markets
- attracting a specific number of extra tourists to an area

Please list some of the important outputs you forecast for your project. Explain how you have calculated them. The outputs should be appropriate to the size of your project, be realistic and achievable.

## Section 9 – Planning permission

**Question 33:** Tell us if your project needs planning permission, when you will apply for it and if you already have it.

You must choose ‘N/A’, ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ for each question. Use the comments boxes to give more information about your answers, if you need to.

## Section 10 – Confidential information

**Question 34:** We share this form with the LEP area ESIF sub-committee. If there is any information on this form that you do not want to share with them, tell us what it is and why.

We need the number of the question on the form and a reason why you want that information to be withheld from the LEP.

We will not share that information with the LEP. However, we might need to disclose it if we are required to do so under a Freedom of Information request.

## Declarations

Please read this section and make sure that you are in agreement with and can meet the requirements set out in it. By submitting and/or agreeing to the submission of the expression of interest form, you will be agreeing to the declaration.



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# WE CAN HELP YOUR IDEA GROW



Search for 'RDPE Growth' on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Defra rural services helpline



03000 200 301



[GPEnquiries@rpa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:GPEnquiries@rpa.gsi.gov.uk)