

# Rural Development Programme for England

Updated: June 2017

The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) is one of the government’s main programmes of grants and support for rural businesses, community groups and the environment, with a budget of over £1bn for new applications.

It is made up of five main schemes, which we expect to remain available until 2019 – 2020.

Defra has recently reopened the Growth Programme for applications. It has grants of up to 40% available to businesses that are creating jobs in rural areas through diversification, food processing and tourism. Countryside Stewardship is now open for mid and higher tier applications.

Our local teams have considerable experience of working with businesses to develop ideas and successfully make applications to the RDPE. So please call them – even if it is just an acorn of an idea...

This document will be updated as schemes open or change.

For more information, view [Defra’s rural grants and payments pages](#).



## COUNTRYSIDE PRODUCTIVITY SCHEME

Status	Purpose	Organising body
<p><i>Small capital grants:</i> <b>Currently closed</b>, but opening soon, so start planning.</p> <p><i>Large capital grants:</i> <b>Currently closed</b>, but opening soon, so start planning.</p> <p><i>European Innovation Partnership:</i> <b>Open</b> until September 2017</p>	<p>Grants to increase the productivity of businesses, mainly farms.</p> <p>We expect there to be another round of applications in 2017.</p> <p>Grants have previously been available for <b>animal productivity</b>, health and welfare, <b>remote crop sensing</b>, <b>forestry processing</b>, <b>slurry management</b>, recycling emissions, <b>crop robotics</b>, <b>atmospheric storage</b>, <b>water management including irrigation and reservoirs</b>.</p> <p>It offers grants for buying equipment or machinery, <b>up to 40% of eligible costs</b>, for both small and large grants:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Small grants:</b> £2,500 - £35,000</li> <li><b>Large grants:</b> £35,000 - £1m</li> </ol> <p>The application process can be lengthy, complicated and requires evidence of consents required, such as planning permission, and multiple quotes for buying machinery.</p> <p>The <b>European Innovation Partnership</b> for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-Agri) provides support to projects which show innovation in linking research with farming or forestry practices to improve productivity and sustainability. This grant remains open, with applications assessed on a rolling-timetable.</p> <p>Budget: £141m</p>	<p>Rural Payments Agency</p> <p>03000 200 301</p> <p><a href="mailto:ruralpayments@defra.gsi.gov.uk">ruralpayments@defra.gsi.gov.uk</a></p>



## GROWTH PROGRAMME

Status	Purpose	Organising body
<p><i>All priorities: <b>Open</b> for expressions of interest until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018. Recommended to apply ASAP.</i></p> <p>Workshops are being held across the UK for potential applicants.</p> <p>Projects should be finished and grant claims submitted by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.</p>	<p>Grants for projects which <u>create jobs</u> and <u>economic growth in rural areas</u>. The three priorities are about growing businesses and diversification in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>business development</b></li> <li><b>food processing</b> (meat, milk, fruit processing)</li> <li><b>small-scale tourism infrastructure</b> (new infrastructure, extensions to buildings)</li> </ol> <p>Eligible costs are buying new or improving buildings, equipment and machinery.</p> <p>Minimum grant £35,000, maximum £170,000 - £1m, covering up to 40% of eligible costs<sup>1</sup>.</p> <p>Applications should ideally show that they are creating one full-time job per £30,000 of grant.</p> <p>Most of the grants are available to farmers and other rural businesses.</p> <p>The application process has been simplified. It is a two stage process:</p> <p><b>Stage 1:</b> Expression of interest, which is now less lengthy and with a quicker response from the RPA (30 days).</p> <p><b>Stage 2:</b> Application in full (this is quite lengthy).</p> <p>This grant <b>can get confusing</b> as calls for applications for different types of project happen in different areas at different times and different amounts of grants are available.</p> <p>The RPA will publish <a href="#">calls for applications</a>. These calls invite applications for grants in specific LEP areas. This link takes you to a page on the Gov.uk website where you can select your region and grants that are open for applications (select fund state open).</p> <p>The government has confirmed that it will honour existing grants after the UK leaves the EU, subject to some conditions (value-for-money and fit with current policy).</p> <p>Budget: £177m; this includes the £120m announced in January 2017.</p>	<p>The 39 Local Enterprise Partnerships in England set local priorities</p> <p><a href="http://lepnetwork.org.uk/leps">lepnetwork.org.uk/leps</a></p> <p>The Rural Payments Agency assesses and administers the scheme</p> <p>03000 200 301</p> <p><a href="mailto:GPEnquiries@rpa.gsi.gov.uk">GPEnquiries@rpa.gsi.gov.uk</a></p>

## CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING

Status	Purpose	Organising body
<p><b>Currently open</b></p>	<p>Provides free <b>training and advice</b> to farmers in <a href="#">selected areas</a> in England to <b>reduce water pollution</b> from farming.</p> <p>The advice can also be linked to Countryside Stewardship grants, for management and capital works to reduce pollution.</p>	<p>Natural England</p> <p>0300 060 1111</p> <p><a href="mailto:catchmentsensitivefarming@naturalengland.org.uk">catchmentsensitivefarming@naturalengland.org.uk</a></p>

<sup>1</sup> Up to 50% in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.  
Strutt & Parker



## COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP

Status	Purpose	Organising body
<p><i>Mid-tier:</i> <b>Open</b> until 30 September. Information pack must be applied for by 31 July</p> <p><i>Higher tier:</i> <b>Open</b> until 30 September</p> <p><i>Capital grants (for hedgerows and boundaries):</i> <b>Closed</b> on 28 April</p> <p><i>Capital grants (for woodland management plans):</i> <b>Always open</b></p> <p><i>Woodland creation:</i> <b>Closed</b> on 1 March</p> <p><i>Woodland management:</i> <b>Closed</b> on 5 May</p> <p><i>Tree health:</i> <b>Always open</b></p> <p><i>Facilitation fund floods round:</i> <b>Closed</b> on 15 February</p> <p><i>Facilitation fund for wildlife:</i> <b>Currently closed</b> but expected to open in 2017, so start planning</p>	<p>England's main agri-environment scheme. There are three main elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mid Tier</b> – for supporting farm wildlife and wild pollinators, improving water quality and reducing water pollution (linked to CSF), and reducing flood risk.</li> <li>• <b>Higher Tier</b> – for priority habitats, woodland planting and management, and educational access.</li> <li>• <b>Capital grants</b> – for hedgerows and boundaries, woodland management plans, woodland creation and tree health.</li> </ul> <p>There is a good success rate (70%+) for applications that meet <a href="#">local priorities</a>, support wild pollinators, improve water quality or reduce flood risk.</p> <p>There is also a grant available, called the <b>facilitation fund</b>, for land managers to work together across a landscape or catchment. This pays for a 'facilitator' to work with your chosen group of farmers and land managers – developing a collaboration spirit.</p> <p>Budget: £925m, plus £2.2bn of existing commitments.</p>	<p>Natural England</p> <p>0300 060 3900</p> <p><a href="mailto:enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk">enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk</a></p>

## LEADER

Status	Purpose	Organising body
<p><b>Currently open</b></p>	<p>Provides grants to local businesses, communities, farmers, foresters and land managers for <b>locally valuable projects</b> that focus on the priorities of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supporting micro and small businesses and <b>farm diversification</b></li> <li>• boosting <b>rural tourism</b></li> <li>• increasing <b>farm productivity</b></li> <li>• increasing <b>forestry productivity</b></li> <li>• providing <b>rural services</b></li> <li>• providing <b>cultural and heritage activities</b></li> </ul> <p>LEADER is a French acronym (<i>Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale</i>).</p> <p>The local priorities are identified by Local Action Groups (LAGs), which are made up of the public and private sectors and communities.</p> <p>Budget: £138m (2015 – 2020)</p>	<p><a href="#">Your Local Action Group (LAG)</a></p>



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Edinburgh	0131 226 2500
Exeter	01392 215 631
Farnham	01252 821 102
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Guildford	01483 306 565
Harpenden	01582 764 343
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