

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT GRANT

Investments in fruit and vegetable packing & processing

The Strategic Investment Grant will operate through a series of “calls for applications” for specific activities. This will ensure a focus on the priorities detailed in the West Midlands regional Action Plans for the social and economic elements of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)¹. Usually, we will only accept applications which meet the specific requirements of a published call for applications.

This call for applications will be funded under Measure 123 of RDPE and all applications must comply with the general requirements of that measure². The specific requirements are set out below:

Who can apply?

Under the call for applications for investments in fruit and vegetable packing & processing, funding will be targeted at:

- new and existing Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) intending to process, produce and market primary agricultural products or develop new processes and technologies for primary agricultural products³;

We expect each project to directly benefit multiple primary producers and where possible we expect an element of collaboration.

What will the grant pay for?

Funds are available for eligible applicants for investments in:

- new build, conversions, equipment and machinery for food processing, packhouses, packaging and storage equipment including, cold stores and refrigeration.
- associated infrastructure; architects', engineers' and consultants' fees; feasibility studies; product development; branding and design costs;
- Software/licences specific to the plant and equipment; specific training in the operation of plant and equipment or other business requirements (where funding is not already available).

¹ See <http://www.advantagewm.co.uk/working-with-us/rural-development-programme-for-england.aspx>

² See page 5-25 of “Information on the Axes and Measures proposed for each Axis, and their description” at http://www.advantagewm.co.uk/Images/CH5_tcm9-10153.doc

³ For full definition of agricultural & forestry products which fall into the eligible Annex 1 category follow the link to the uktradeinfo ICN website <http://www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task=icn>

How much funding is available?

The grant rate for this call for applications is 40% of eligible costs and we expect to support large-scale investments in excess of £250,000 total project cost. We would not normally expect to fund projects costing less than £156,250 (i.e. a minimum grant of £62,500).

How do I apply?

If you think you are eligible:

- First visit the RDPE web page or contact an RDPE Manager at Advantage West Midlands to check on current open “calls for applications” and to confirm that your project is eligible against the detailed specification listed.
- If it looks as if you are eligible, send some details of your project to [Emma Smith](#) at Advantage West Midlands by the closing date, covering the following specific information,
 - What will your project achieve, what are the benefits? In particular what will be:
 - The total volume of investment (£)
 - Number new products and/or techniques
 - Increase in profitability you expect
 - Extent of any planned collaboration with other businesses.
 - Evidence of the need or demand for this project and its products.
 - How your project avoids duplicating existing activity
 - Who would deliver this project and the background or track record of the applicant or organisation in business, project management and managing grant funding.
 - The approximate costs of the project.
 - Where the other funding for the project is coming from and if it is secured.
 - The items you require grant funding for.
- If your project meets the requirements and the available funding we will invite you to work-up a full application. If you have not already done so, we will also put you in touch with Business Link West Midlands who will help you assess any need for training or business advice. Funding is conditional on this.
- Once received, the Agency's IDG will consider it and If successful, we will issue you with a funding contract and you can begin work on your project.
- You will need to secure full planning permission and/or listed building and other relevant consents (where this is a legal requirement) before we can approve your application.



Key Contacts

If you want to discuss your ideas informally you can contact:-

- **RDPE Managers**
 - Advantage West Midlands Tel: 0121 380 3500
 - Web: - www.advantagewm.co.uk/working-with-us/rural-development-programme-for-england.aspx
- **Your Local Rural Hub**
 - Staffordshire – Frances Beatty ; Office 01889 508784
 - Warwickshire - Carrie Robbins ; Office 02476 858242
 - Herefordshire - Cathy Meredith ; Office 01432 870033
 - Worcestershire - Pauline Yardley ; Office 01905 622 940
 - Shropshire - Victoria Jones ; Office 01939 262106
- **Business Link West Midlands** Tel. 0845 113 1234