

News story: £120 million available to support growth in rural areas

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New RDPE Growth Programme funding available for projects which create jobs and growth in the rural economy

In a major boost to jobs and growth in rural areas, businesses are being invited to submit expressions of interest for support under the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). The RDPE Growth Programme supports projects that invest in building businesses, creating new jobs and growing the economy in rural areas.

£120 million is available through three new national calls for projects. The calls have been developed in collaboration with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and will be open to support food processing, business development and tourism infrastructure projects for an initial period of 12 months.

RPA Rural Development Director Alison Webster said:

This is excellent news for small and micro-businesses, particularly the food and drink and tourism sectors, which play a major role in the economy of rural areas.

We are looking to support high quality, high impact investments and we encourage small rural businesses to grasp this opportunity to think big.

A series of workshops for applicants are being arranged across England that will help familiarise businesses with the calls and provide the opportunity to talk to our Rural Development team and Local Enterprise Partnerships.

After listening to feedback, improvements have been made to make applying for Growth Programme funding easier:

- Calls will be on a single page on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) which holds all the information applicants need.
- The page includes handbooks for each type of call, which include information on what activity is eligible and how to apply.
- Each handbook also contains a LEP Directory, which lists each LEP area that is participating in the calls. It also gives a brief summary of the

local priorities that applicants will need to deliver against.