



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Solway, Border & Eden LEADER Programme

Call for Projects under Priority 2 – Support for micro and small businesses (non-agricultural) and farm diversification

Deadline for Expressions of Interest:
12 noon on Tuesday 14 January 2020

Contact:

- 01900 706004
- sbeleader@cumbria.gov.uk
- www.sbeleader.org.uk



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



Contents

Chapter 1:

About the Solway, Border & Eden LEADER Programme

Chapter 2:

About the Call

Chapter 3:

How to apply

Chapter 4:

Timescales

Annex 1:

Expression of Interest submission checklist

Please note: The office will be closed from Friday 20 December 2019 and reopens on Monday 6 January 2020.

You can still submit your completed EOI Form to:

sbeleader@cumbria.gov.uk

We will acknowledge receipt of your EOI when the office reopens on Monday 6 January 2020.

Chapter 1:

About the Solway, Border & Eden LEADER Programme

Background

The LEADER Programme is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) and is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

LEADER is a French acronym which roughly translates as ‘Liaison among Actors in Rural Economic Development’. LEADER is a community based, ‘bottom-up’ development programme for small rural businesses, communities, and farming and forestry businesses.

In England it is being implemented by Local Action Groups (LAGs) - of which Solway, Border & Eden (SBE) is one - and is targeted on specific rural areas with particular needs or priorities as identified through a Local Development Strategy.

A Local Action Group is made up of local public, private and civil society representatives, who work together to fund projects that help to improve their local rural community and economy.

Local Context

This Call invites applications for investments which develop small and micro scale non-agricultural businesses and farm diversifications located in the Solway, Border & Eden LAG area. This is an additional call for projects to utilise funds returned to the programme. Projects will need to be completed by 30 September 2020.

A key aim of the Solway, Border & Eden LEADER Programme is to support significant and sustainable rural economic growth in the local area in a way that respects the local distinctiveness of the area, fully engages local people and builds stronger, more resilient rural communities.

The rural areas of Solway, Border and Eden (SBE) have comparatively high levels of employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing against the national average. They also have higher than average levels of employment in manufacturing. There are, however, low levels of employment in other important sectors such as information and communications.

The majority of businesses in the area are small with 84.4% having less than 10 employees and higher than average numbers of partnerships and sole traders. There is a diversity of business sectors within SBE and this is a key aspect of its resilience.

It is important for the SBE LEADER programme to invest in a variety of small and micro enterprises with the potential to grow. In particular, to invest in businesses to create job opportunities, develop more efficient processes and production techniques, and higher quality or better tailored products to add value and exploit new product opportunities.

Strategic Fit

Expression of Interests (EOIs) are sought from projects that contribute to the delivery of ‘Objective 1: To encourage significant and sustainable economic growth and increased employment, with the full engagement of local people.’ of the Solway, Border & Eden Local Development Strategy. The Local Development Strategy can be found here: www.sbeleader.org.uk/leader-2014-2020

Chapter 2:

About the Call

What the grants are for

To help rural businesses grow and create more jobs.

Grant funding in this call can help pay for:

- Capital purchases e.g. equipment and machinery;

More information about what can and can't be funded can be found in the Applicant Handbook which can be found here:

www.sbeleader.org.uk/funding-priorities

Who can apply

These grants are for:

- people who want to start a business in the LAG area
- farming or horticultural businesses that want to diversify into non-farming or non-horticultural activities
- micro and small businesses including social enterprises, in the LAG area.

Business Size

Business Size	Number of FTE employees		Annual turnover or balance sheet total
Small	Fewer than 50	And	€10m (about £8.5million) or less
Micro	Fewer than 10	And	€2m (about £1.7million) or less

Local Action Group Area

All activities are confined to the Solway, Border & Eden Local Action Group geographical area.

A list of eligible wards can be found here:
www.sbeleader.org.uk/our-area

If you are unsure, please check with the SBE LAG Team.

Total funding available

The total grant funding available for this Call is currently in the region of circa £125,000. This may increase if additional funds become available.

All applications are competitive.

Outputs to be delivered

- Job creation: at least 1 full time equivalent (FTE) job for every £30,000 of grant funding. 1 full time equivalent = 30 paid hours per week per year on average.
- Number of businesses assisted
- Wage bill increase

How much money you can apply for

The minimum grant you can apply for is £2,500. The maximum you can apply for is £20,000.

If you are looking for a grant over £20,000 please contact the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Growth Programme. More information can be found here:

<http://tiny.cc/RDPEGP>

Grants to commercial projects intended to make a surplus are awarded under industrial de minimis state aid rules and to a maximum of 40% of the project's eligible costs. The other 60% funding must be from private sources.

Industrial de minimis state aid regulations mean that a maximum of €200,000 (currently around £170,000) of public funds is available to an undertaking in any rolling period of 3 financial years. If you have had other public funding this may count towards the industrial de minimis aid amount and reduce the amount of money you can apply for from LEADER. Any industrial de minimis state aid received by linked businesses will count towards the industrial de minimis amount.

Basic Payment Scheme and Countryside Stewardship payments do NOT count towards the industrial de minimis limit.

Timescales

All projects **must be** complete by 30 September 2020, this means items are delivered, paid for and operational by 30 September 2020.

You should consider any lead times for delivery of equipment when completing your EOI.

Planning Permission

If your project requires Planning Permission, you **must** provide evidence of approval when you submit your Full Application.

We cannot process a Full Application without evidence of planning approval.

You won't automatically get a grant.

All applications are assessed to see how well they fit the priorities for funding and which projects provide best value for taxpayers' money.

The number of grants awarded depends on the total amount of grant available.

Chapter 3:

How to apply

Application Process

There are two stages to the application process. These are:

- Stage 1: an Expression of Interest (EOI)
- Stage 2: a Full Application (FA)

Further details on how to apply for a grant are given in the LEADER Applicant Handbook which you can download from the Solway, Border & Eden website: www.sbeleader.org.uk.

We strongly recommend that all respondents in the first instance contact the Solway, Border & Eden Team on sbeleader@cumbria.gov.uk or 01900 706004. We can advise you as to whether we think your project idea fits with the Programme's priorities and whether you are in an eligible area and are an eligible applicant.

We can also give you advice about completing your EOI. However, it is your responsibility as potential Applicant to decide whether or not you are ready to submit an EOI form and all work to this end is undertaken entirely at your own risk.

An applicant will only be invited to submit a Full Application if their EOI is successful.

How to complete the EOI form

The EOI Form and Guidance Note can be downloaded here:

<http://www.sbeleader.org.uk/how-to-apply.html>

If you require further assistance please contact the Team on 01900 706004.

How to submit your EOI

Email your completed form to: sbeleader@cumbria.gov.uk

We can only accept forms that are:

- sent by email
- Microsoft Excel documents saved in the 1997-2003 XLS format

We cannot accept any other format. PDF documents, scanned documents, hard copy printed applications or hand-written applications will not be accepted.

Email your EOI from the email address you specify in Section 3 of the EOI form. If an agent sends the form on your behalf, that address must be copied into the email.

Chapter 4:

Timescales

Expression of Interest (EOI)

You must submit your EOI by **12 noon on Tuesday 14 January 2020**. EOIs received after this time will not be accepted.

After you submit the form, you will get an email to say we have received it. We will then assess your EOI and let you know whether or not you will be invited to submit a full application.

We aim to give you a decision on your EOI within 30 working days.

Full Application (FA)

If you are invited to submit a full application, we will send you the relevant form and advice about how to fill this in.

You must submit your FA by **12 noon on Wednesday 25 March 2020**. FAs received after this time will not be accepted.

We aim to give you a decision on your FA within 60 working days. This is likely to be early June 2020 and if approved grant funding agreements will need to be accepted before the end of June 2020.

Project Delivery

Do not start work, incur costs or place an order before your grant agreement has been signed. This will potentially make your whole project ineligible.

The final date by which all projects must be finished, paid for and complete grant claims submitted, is 30 September 2020.

Annex 1:

Expression of Interest submission checklist

Check that your project is located in an eligible area Use the 'Postcode Checker' on the 'Our Area' page of the Solway, Border & Eden website: www.sbeleader.org.uk	
Check that your project fits with the Call details on pages 4 and 5	
Check that your business is either classed as micro or small as per the definition on page 4	
Check that your project costs are eligible: Use the Applicant Handbook on the 'Funding Priorities' page of the Solway, Border & Eden website: www.sbeleader.org.uk	
Check that your project fits with the timescales detailed at page 7	