

# Rural Development Programme for England

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## Welcome

Welcome to the second edition of the RDPE newsletter for the South East and London. In spite of the recession SEEDA and the Leader groups have, and are continuing to receive, a good stream of applications for grant funding under RDPE. This newsletter provides an update on how RDPE is progressing in the South East and London

*Dr Jacquie Middleton, SEEDA, RDPE Strategic Programme Manager*

## Successful RDPE projects

**Since the last newsletter in December, SEEDA have awarded over £4m of grant funding to 12 projects.** Some examples of these collaborative projects include:

**Chichester Grain** – This is a cooperative grain storage project which currently has 32 members. The RDPE funding of 40% of their eligible costs will allow them to increase and improve their storage processing and drying capacity of the co-operative by an extra 4,000 tonnes.

**Corhampton Lane** - A collaborative seed processing and storage facility with 120 members, received a 30% grant to double their seed storage and processing capacity.

**DJ Moor** - A fruit juice company which manufactures organic fruit juices received a 40% grant to build a certified organic fruit and juice storage hub.

Three other horticultural growers, **Charlton & Sons, Victoria Farm, and Barons Grange Farm** received 33% and 40% grants to improve storage, grading and packing lines.

**Foxbury Farm** in Oxfordshire, received a 38% grant to develop their farm shop. Further details on this project are in the article below.



The Rural Development Programme for England is funded by Defra and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)



## *Projects in the pipeline*

Expressions of interest (EOI) for RDPE funding continue to be submitted and since January SEEDA has received over 115 EOIs requesting in excess of £4m of grant of which over half have already been advised to proceed to full application.

If you have a project which you think may be eligible for RDPE funding, you can get further information on how to apply to SEEDA or to a Leader group from the SEEDA website at [www.seeda.co.uk/rdpe](http://www.seeda.co.uk/rdpe).



## *IMPORTANT News!*

As a response to the credit crunch the EU have introduced some changes to RDPE rules which could have significant impacts on future applications to RDPE.

The state aid de-minimis limit on the measures we use to support farm diversification projects, rural tourism projects and Micro-enterprises have been increased from €200,000 to €500,000. This change is in effect until the end of 2010. This means that over a rolling three year period applicants can receive up to €500,000 Euros on grant awarded under the de-minimis state aid rules. Please contact the RDPE team at SEEDA if there are any queries over what this means for your project.

In addition to the above change, for the Farm Diversification measure and Support for Micro-enterprises measure (M311 and M312) the cap on the maximum grant rate (which had been set at 50%) has now been removed.

The basic principle remains unchanged that the actual grant rate in any individual case will continue to be determined by SEEDA as part of the standard project appraisal process. In determining the level and amount of grant, the appraisal process takes account a range of factors including:

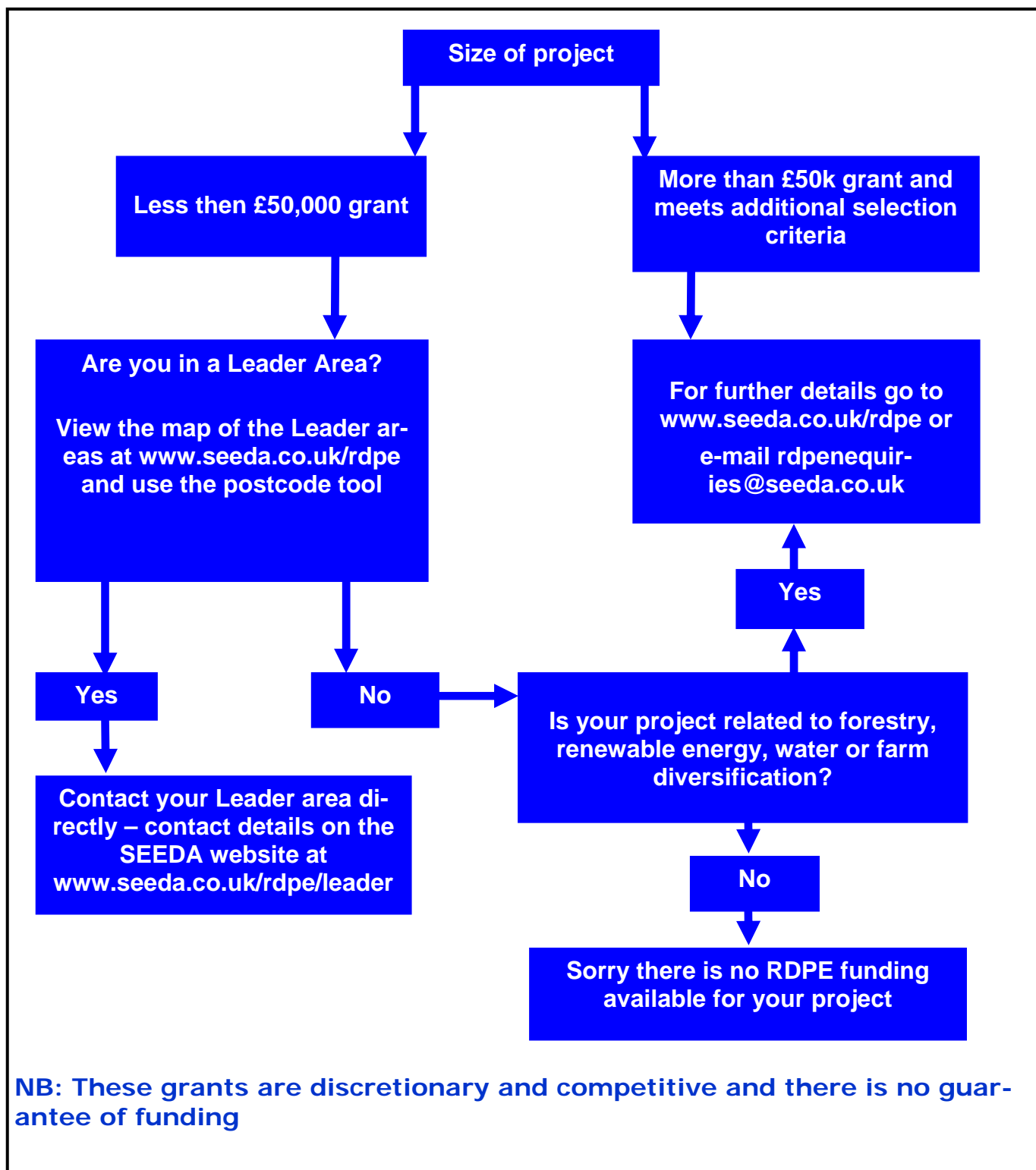
- **the quality of the business case,**
- **the likely commercial return on the investment,**
- **level of risk within the project,**
- **the level of risk to be borne by the applicant and the public sector,**
- **the wider level of benefits the project delivers for the region, and**
- **the applicant's ability to secure commercial funding.**

As a guide we anticipate that in most cases the grant rate awarded will be up to a maximum of 60%, which will allow SEEDA to fund a larger number of significant projects.

**Go to**  
**[www.seeda.co.uk/rdpe](http://www.seeda.co.uk/rdpe)**  
**to find out how you**  
**could benefit from the**  
**changes**

## *How to apply for RDPE funding*

In the South East region there are two routes for securing RDPE funds, directly from SEEDA or through a Leader group. The process map below shows you how to decide which route applies to your project.



## *Latest on Leader in the South East*

The 14 leader groups in the South East are all fully up to speed now and are receiving and processing applications for RDPE projects.

Between them the groups have some £30m to spend on RDPE grants until the end of 2013. The Leader groups in the south east have now approved over 55 separate projects involving grants worth over £1m.

As you will have seen from the process map on page 3, if you are in a Leader group and you have a project requiring less than £50,000 in grant then contact your local Leader group directly. The full list of contact details for all the Leader groups are on our website. There is also a postcode look up tool on the web site to help you if you are unsure which Leader group you are in.

[www.seeda.co.uk/rdpe/Leader](http://www.seeda.co.uk/rdpe/Leader)



## *Discounts for training*

Discounts are available for training through two pan regional training projects awarded funds under RDPE.



Visit the  
LandSkills web-  
site:

[www.lantra.co.uk/landskillssouth-east](http://www.lantra.co.uk/landskillssouth-east)

**LandSkills South East** is an extensive vocational training programme targeted primarily at people engaged in agriculture, horticulture and forestry. Training will be delivered through a consortium of training providers in the region including Agricultural Colleges, Local Training Groups, Independent Trainers and Consultants and will be heavily subsidized. The programme is being coordinated and managed by the rbat/LANTRA consortium between Lantra, the sector skills council for environment and land based businesses and the Rural Business Advice and Training (rbat) network.

For more information please visit the LandSkills South East website or contact Shelley Newton who has been appointed as the regional coordinator.

The contact details are: [landskills@lantra.co.uk](mailto:landskills@lantra.co.uk) Tel: 01444 871436



Visit the Live-  
stock Health  
South East web-  
site:

[www.livestockhealthsoutheast.org.uk](http://www.livestockhealthsoutheast.org.uk)

**Livestock Health South East** is an innovative approach to improve animal health and welfare across the South East of England. Livestock farmers will be able to access the most up-to-date information to help them maintain and improve the health of their stock, ensuring the sustainability of farming in the region. Farmers can choose to attend meetings and discussion groups, complete on-line training and receive one-to-one veterinary advice, all tailored to meet their needs. The Livestock Health South East programme is being managed by the Westpoint Veterinary Group and involves a number of other training providers including the NFU, EBLEX, BPEX, Dairy Co, Kingshay, NADIS and ADAS.

For more information please visit the website or contact the regional coordinator Lindsay Heasman.

The contact details are: [info@livestockhealthsoutheast.org.uk](mailto:info@livestockhealthsoutheast.org.uk)

Tel: 07549 843380

## *Diversify your farm business*

Farm diversification is a key measure under the RDPE programme and as such there is funding in excess of **£15 million** available to farmers in the South East to enable them to develop projects that will provide them with an alternative source of income to farming and will support the underlying farm business. Some of this funding is available through the Leader groups.

While a definitive list of diversification activities cannot be provided activities that might be supported could include retailing, manufacturing or service industries, recreation, equestrian, tourism, creative industries, and renewable energy projects where the heat/energy will be sold or used for non-farm use. Whatever your project idea SEEDA wishes to encourage farm diversification projects which bring identifiable and measurable benefits beyond those of just the applicant business.

To assist applicants we have produced a 'Farm Diversification – Wider Benefits Guidance Note' which can be downloaded from the RDPE Farm Diversification web pages on the SEEDA website [www.seeda.co.uk/rdpe](http://www.seeda.co.uk/rdpe)

### **Case Study**

A prime example of a project which has thought of the wider benefits beyond the farm gate is the recently approved Foxbury Farm Shop in Oxfordshire, which was awarded a **38% grant towards the expansion costs** of their farm retail enterprise. The current farm shop retails all the meat direct from the farm as well as food and drink from **66 other local and regional producers**. The high standard of the business is reflected in the numerous awards it has won including FARMA Best National On-Farm Butcher Awards 2007 and finalist in the Farmers Weekly Local Food Farmer of the Year Category 2007.



In addition to the farm shop Foxbury also acts as a local food distribution and delivery hub. It currently supplies food to 8 local village shops, 6 local schools and 7 foodservice businesses including Blenheim Palace. This service benefits local producers by enabling them to access markets that might otherwise not be viable for them to do so directly. It also benefits the local community by enabling them to have wider access to local produce.

The new farm shop, which will utilise a redundant barn, will boast a new fish counter, bakery display and wine area, as well as an expanded butchery and retail area. All of which will enable them to meet increasing customer demand for greater variety & quantities of products and increase opportunities to work with other rural businesses expanding the product range and distribution to local businesses. It will **create 4 full-time and 7 part-time new local job opportunities**.

The project will incorporate a biomass powered underfloor heating and hot water system for the farm shop and ancillary areas. Plans also make provision for connection to the farm borehole and rainwater harvesting from the shop roof to reduce the requirement for mains water use. In addition, it will introduce Council sponsored recycling facilities which will not only help to improve recycling rates but also raise environmental awareness of customers and attract new customers to the site.

The whole business is committed to raising public awareness about local food which is reflected in the labeling, knowledgeable staff and the regular on-farm events, which are also used as opportunities to raise money for charity (yet another wider benefit)



Visit their web-site:

[www.naturalengland.org/regions/south\\_east/](http://www.naturalengland.org/regions/south_east/)

## *News from Natural England*

Axis 2 of RDPE is delivered by Natural England through Environmental Stewardship (ES) schemes, either through Entry Level (ELS) or Higher Level (HLS) schemes. Over the next 2 years (up to March 2011) funding will be aimed at increasing the coverage of all agri-environment agreements to 70% of all agricultural area and ensuring a high transfer level of existing Classic scheme agri-environment agreements into ES, when they expire.

Environmental Stewardship schemes help support the delivery of key government targets, such as the percentage of SSSIs in favourable conditions, 70% of Biodiversity Action Plan habitats under positive management, and to halt the decline in farmland bird populations, as well as offering protection for historic environment features and natural resources and improving public access to the countryside.

In the South East region in 2009-10 Natural England have the following funding available

£6.38million for new HLS agreements (approx 336 agreements)

£3.1million for special projects & amendments to existing schemes

£1million for Historic Building restorations (under new & existing agri-environment schemes

In order to help achieve these targets and commit funds that ensure good value for money, Natural England has established a comprehensive advice, promotion and events programme called the **Land Management Advice Service (LMAS)**. Full details of LMAS advice, events and clinic dates are obtainable from the Natural England website (see below), or by contacting your local Natural England office.

For further details on environmental stewardship schemes and information on how to access the Axis 2 RDPE funds through Natural England please contact your local NE advisor or specialist contact or go to the Natural England website [http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/information\\_for/farmers\\_and\\_land\\_managers/default.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/information_for/farmers_and_land_managers/default.aspx)

Some key contacts details are provided below:

Land Management Programme Manager: **Jim Seymour:** 07721-759-286

Land Management Advice Service (LMAS): Project Manager: **Charles Orrell:**  
07721-303 611

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) project co-ordinator: **Andrew Fielder:**  
07789-650 662

Historic Environment specialist: **Jo Barnes:** 07826-510665

For **HLS enquiries** please contact your local Natural England office,

Wye 01233 813667

Guildford 01483 452 050

Lewes 01273 476595

Reading 0118 958 1222

Oxford 01993 886540

Lyndhurst 023 8028 6410

For **ELS enquiries** please contact the Natural England regional Incentive Scheme Services (ISS) office in Reading: **Tel: 0300 060 1112**



## *Is renewable energy an option?*

There is tremendous scope for the development of renewable energy on farm and RDPE can provide assistance towards the capital cost. Many forms of renewable energy need to have land or a readily available fuel source to operate. Farmers are well placed to take advantage of renewable energy because they often have the necessary fuel source or location. RDPE can provide support towards the capital cost of installing a range of renewable energy systems for on-farm use these include:

- Anaerobic digesters,
- Hydro-electric projects
- Small scale wind turbines
- Wood fuelled boilers providing heat for on farm use.
- Equipment for harvesting and processing of wood for fuel.
- Setting-up collection and distribution networks for woodfuel, to support sales to domestic and industrial users.
- Biofuel production for on farm use

For further information email [rdpeenquiries@seeda.co.uk](mailto:rdpeenquiries@seeda.co.uk) .

**All information on the RDPE, including contact details and Regional Appraisal Panel dates can be found on the SEEDA website:**

**[www.seeda.co.uk/rdpe](http://www.seeda.co.uk/rdpe)**