

Farm Diversification – Wider Benefits Guidance Note

- SEEDA/RDPE wishes to encourage farm diversification projects which bring identifiable and measurable benefits beyond those of just the applicant business.
- The following are suggestions for how a project might achieve multiple and wider benefits.
- In your application you will need to provide evidence of consultation with appropriate agencies/organisations, the advice that was given and what actions will be taken.
- Please note the RDPE programme is competitive and not all eligible projects will be awarded funding.

The chart below is to be used as a guide only and is not exhaustive – there could be a number of other end uses and wider benefits and they could be combined in a number of ways. Innovative ideas are encouraged!

End use Wider benefit	Office	Farm Shop	Equine	Tourism	Café	Children's Nursery	Workshops	Food Processing
Accreditation Standards	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Local Food connections	X	X		X	X	X		X
Start/join a Network		X	X	X				X
Local service/facility	X	X			X	X		
Training		X	X	X	X	X		X
Education		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sustainability Measures	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Disabled/Minority Groups	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Collaboration	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

1. Please note this guidance aims to provide general information on diversification topics and does not attempt to provide comprehensive information on any of the topics, particularly the legislation issues.
2. You must take professional advice before proceeding with any diversification enterprise, and the tax implications need special attention (e.g. inheritance tax, VAT and business rates).
3. A number of sources of information are shown in this guidance note but their inclusion does not imply SEEDA/RDPE endorsement, and no criticism is implied for those not featured.

Accreditation Standards

- An accredited business can make your business more competitive and help you to attract customers.
- A few examples are provided below but to find out what accreditation standards could apply to your business you should seek advice in the first instance from your local business link advisor who will be able to signpost you to the appropriate agency/organisation.
- Business Link offers a free business advice and support service available either on line or through a local adviser. If you are planning to start a new business, or maintain and grow an existing one they can provide advice and support on a range of issues, not just accreditation. Rather than providing all the advice and help themselves, they can put you in touch with a range of expertise from across the private, public and voluntary support sectors.

For further information:

To find your nearest Business Link office:

Phone: 0845 600 9 006

E-mail: info@businesslinksoutheast.co.uk

Web: www.businesslink.gov.uk

Tourism Accreditation

- There are a variety of accreditation standards for tourism businesses and you should seek advice from Tourism South East (TSE) on which accreditation standards are appropriate for your business.
- It is worth noting that local authorities, TSE, and other regional tourism projects will only promote inspected businesses through their websites and networks.
- Please see Appendix 1 for a summary of the current tourism accreditation schemes in the South East.

For further information:

Rachel Simpson

Rural Programme Manager

Tourism South East

Phone: 01892 612353

E-mail: rsimpson@tourismse.com

Website: www.industry.visitsoutheastengland.com

Equestrian Accreditation

- The British Horse Society (BHS) started a system of approving riding schools in 1961. BHS Approved riding schools and BHS Approved livery yards comply with the latest health and safety guidelines.
- BHS Approved establishments are insured against public liability, and the welfare of horses and ponies is their main aim.

For further information:

The British Horse Society

Phone: 0844 848 1666

E-mail: enquiry@bhs.org.uk

Website: www.bhs.org.uk

BHS Approvals

Phone: 01926 707795

E-mail: approvals@bhs.org.uk

Local Food Connections

- Are there opportunities for your business to increase the sale or marketing of local food?
- The South East Food Group (SEFG) represents and supports local food groups and producers in the South East of England with marketing, trade development, business support & training. The SEFG is funded by SEEDA with the aim to help food and drink producers across the region grow their businesses.

For further information:

Henriette Reinders
Managing Director
South East Food Group
E-mail: info@southeastenglandfoodanddrink.co.uk
Website: www.sefgp.co.uk

- For information in your area and to ensure that you are connected into local networks you should also contact your local food group.

For further information:

Area	Name	Website	E-mail	Tel
Hampshire	Hampshire Fare (Tim Brock)	www.hampshirefare.co.uk	tim.brock@hants.gov.uk	01962 845999
Surrey	Surrey Food Links (Wendy Neal-Smith)	www.surreyfoodlinks.co.uk	wendy.neal-smith@surreyfoodlinks.co.uk	020 8541 9013
Kent	Produced in Kent	www.producedinkent.co.uk	info@producedinkent.co.uk	01732 853170
Sussex	A Taste of Sussex (Hilary Knight)	www.atasteofsussex.co.uk	hilary.knight@sussexenterprise.co.uk	01444 259259
Thames Valley	Berks, Bucks, Milton Keynes & Oxon Food Group (Tamara Schioppa)	www.local-food.net	localfood@brookes.ac.uk	01865 484116
Isle of Wight	No details	No details	No details	01983 761380

- National Farmers' Retail & Markets Association (FARMA)
FARMA is a co-operative of farmers, producers selling on a local scale and farmers markets organisers.

For further information:

FARMA
Phone: 0845 45 88 420
Website: www.farma.org.uk

Networks

- What networks exist that are relevant to your business?
- Are there mutually beneficial ways in which you could work with other rural businesses i.e. joint promotion, discounted offers?
- Could you start a local network in your area?

Local service/facilities

- Could you provide facilities or a service for your local community?
- Will your facility be unused at certain times of the day? For example could a meeting room in an office development be used in the evenings by a local community group?
- Contacting your local parish council and community groups will help you to identify if there are any opportunities.

Training

- Do you & your staff have the appropriate skills to run the business?
- Would the business &/or others benefit from training?
- Do they meet industry standards?
- Train to Gain works through independent Skills Brokers, appointed by the Learning & Skills Council to provide free, impartial advice.
- At no cost to you, the Skills Broker will help with the design and costing of learning and skills packages which meet your identified skills needs and fit with your work schedules.

For further information:

Phone: 0845 751 228

E-mail: info@traintogainse.co.uk

Website: www.traintogain.gov.uk/In_your_Region/South_East/

- The LandSkills South East Programme is part of the RDPE. LandSkills South East is managed by Lantra on behalf of SEEDA and is jointly funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and DEFRA.
- LandSkills South East brings a new focus on skills and knowledge transfer for farming, forestry and production horticulture businesses in the South East. The industries where businesses are eligible to benefit from LandSkills South East are:
 - Agricultural livestock
 - Arable and non food crops
 - Production horticulture
 - Forestry
 - Rural tourism

For further information:

Shelley Newton

Programme Manager

Phone: 01444 871436

E-mail: LandSkillsSE@lantra.co.uk

Website: www.lantra.co.uk/businesses/england/south-east/landskillssoutheast/

Education

- What opportunities are there for you to educate the public or other businesses?
- Could your business be used as an example of good practice?
- Are there opportunities for your business to work with local schools/colleges?

Disabled/minority groups

- Beyond the requirements of current legislation could your business provide opportunities for disabled, minority or excluded groups either through employment opportunities, activities or services?
- How will you make your business as inclusive as it can be?

Collaboration

- Farmers can benefit from working collaboratively with other farmers and rural businesses in many areas, for example:
 - Food processing
 - Food retailing
 - Tourism enterprises
 - Green waste composting and waste recycling
 - Sport and leisure facilities
- **Collaboration can enable farmers to:**
 - Enter markets that are too big for them to exploit fully on their own. For example, a local authority might wish to contract a large tonnage of green waste composting and farmers could come together to deliver a service spread across a number of farms.
 - Improve their customer appeal and have greater credibility by providing a more professional and sustainable offer. For example, farm accommodation providers could join together to deliver accommodation for business travellers across an area of the region, giving them a consistent product but with choice of locations.
 - Reduce the costs of delivering a service by achieving economies of scale
 - Share risks in the investment and in limiting their liability through the business structure
 - Buy more impact in the market place e.g. by undertaking more substantial marketing activities
 - Improve their negotiating position when selling to larger customers
 - Be more efficient in delivering services and products
 - Employ the best quality managers and staff
- Collaboration in farming itself is still at a relatively low level and as a result many businesses are missing opportunities. English Farming and Food Partnerships Ltd (EFFP) are working with businesses in the South East to improve the levels of collaboration and to encourage best working practices; they provide practical advice on a wide range of issues.

For further information:

Duncan Rawson

EFFP

Phone: 01273 475573

Website: www.effp.com

Appendix 1

Tourism Accreditation Standards

- **Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS)**

Green tourism describes best environmental practice within the tourism sector. It covers issues such as business efficiency, environmental management, waste, transport, as well as topics like social responsibility and biodiversity.

By agreeing to the GTBS code of conduct and through independent assessment of their activities members of the Green Business Tourism Business Scheme are making a commitment towards reducing the impact of their business on the environment.

The scheme has been designed to accommodate the different types and settings of tourism businesses and the emphasis is on being rewarded for action. There are three levels to aim for - Bronze, Silver and Gold.

The level businesses achieve will be based on a combined assessment of:

- The number of actions that have been implemented
- The extent to which those actions have been effectively implemented
- The significance of those actions in contributing towards sustainability

To ensure that each business has a balanced approach, there are a minimum number of actions that will need to have completed in each of the areas

For further information:

E-mail: pjeffries@tourismse.com

Website: <http://www.green-business.co.uk/>

- **National Quality Assessment Standard (NQAS)**

VisitBritain offers a national quality assessment standard for a comprehensive range of accommodation, including luxury hotels, B&Bs, holiday cottages, holiday parks, hostels and university campuses. The Quality in Tourism standards have been created as a result of harmonising standards from the National Tourist Boards for England, Scotland and Wales, but also with the cooperation of the AA and formerly the RAC.

Quality Assessment seeks to inform consumers before they book accommodation, to recognise quality and to differentiate levels of facilities and services, which as potential guests they can expect.

Most of the schemes recognise increasingly levels of quality using 1 – 5 stars. Some schemes further recognise excellence with the use of Silver and Gold awards.

For further information:

Phone: 0845 300 6996

E-mail: qualityintourism@gslglobal.com

Website: www.qualityintourism.com

- **Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme (VAQAS)**

Visitor attractions can now undergo quality assessment through the VAQAS scheme, run by VisitBritain.

Participating attractions are visited annually by trained, impartial assessors, who look at all aspects of the visit, from customer service to catering, and all aspects of the 'visitor experience', including interpretation and activities for visitors.

Assessments take into account the type and style of the attraction, so an assessment of a farm attraction will be quite different from that of a science museum. Styles of presentation and interpretation will differ between the farm and science museum, and visitor expectations will reflect that. Quality is therefore assessed in context, relative to the sector of the industry in which the attraction sits.

In all areas, specific attention is given to cleanliness and customer service. Staff are the vital ingredient in making an attraction a success.

All well managed attractions should be able to achieve the award of VisitBritain's accreditation of 'Quality Assured Visitor Attraction'. Any that do not on the first occasion are helped to achieve it with follow-up visits and further advice. The accreditation and use of VisitBritain's Tudor Rose offers a very powerful marketing tool and an independent endorsement from the national tourist board for England.

For further information:

Phone: 01473 825639

Website: www.vaqas.org.uk

- **National Accessible Scheme**

Developed following extensive review with accommodation providers, guests and many organisational bodies representing people with disabilities, together with the other National Tourist Boards, the scheme provides a set of Accessible Standards against which establishments are assessed for their accessibility and awarded a rating. Standards for serviced, self-catering accommodation and holiday parks cover three types of impairment: mobility, hearing and visual.

There are four categories for mobility plus an additional accolade 'access exceptional', and two each for visual and hearing impairment with level 1 being the minimum entry requirement.

The standards have been designed to allow people with access requirements and varying disabilities to make an informed choice about where they can go on holiday in the UK.

For further information:

Website: [www.tourismtrade.org.uk/quality/assessmentstandards/NationalAccessibleScheme/default.](http://www.tourismtrade.org.uk/quality/assessmentstandards/NationalAccessibleScheme/default.asp)

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Appendix 2

SUSTAINABILITY CHECKLIST

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – WHAT IS IT – WHAT CAN I DO

A useful definition of sustainable development is:

The goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations

The UK Strategy for Sustainable Development – Securing the Future – sets out 5 guiding principles that will be used to achieve sustainable development, i.e.

1. Living within environmental limits
2. Ensuring a strong and just society
3. Achieving a Sustainable Economy
4. Promoting Good Governance
5. Using Sound Science Responsibly

Taking into account the above five principles, along with the particular issues facing the South East Region, the ***Regional Sustainability Framework for the South East*** sets out the following vision for the South East:

A socially and economically strong, healthy and just South East that respects the limits of the global environment. Achieving this will require the active involvement of all individuals to deliver a society where everyone, including the most deprived, benefits from and contributes to a better quality of life. At the same time the impact of current high levels of resource use will be reduced and the quality of the environment will be maintained and enhanced.

The following checklist is designed to assist you in assessing the sustainability of your proposals in the context of the Regional Sustainability Framework. Clearly, every project is different, and the checklist is not meant to be exhaustive, so it is inevitable there may be additional issues not within the checklist you may wish to comment on, and parts of the checklist which are not relevant to you. The checklist is merely a prompt to assist you in thinking about the wider aspects of your proposal.

The checklist is a self assessment process designed to be completed easily by any applicant. It will provide a guide to how sustainable their development is, and hopefully raise awareness of how it can be improved.

ENERGY AND HEAT

Most of the energy we use comes from burning fossil fuels whether on site in heating systems, or indirectly by using electricity generated at distant power stations. Either way burning fossil fuels creates carbon dioxide and other gases, which are the main contributors to global warming. Most of us could use less energy through a combination of behavioural changes, the use of efficient equipment, and changing to using renewable sources of energy and heat. The objective should be to minimise the use of energy and heat as much as possible, and to source what energy and heat is needed from renewable or low carbon sources.

Using the following points as a guide only, please describe your overall plan for minimising energy consumption within your project, and where possible quantify the savings you believe will result.

1. Additional insulation to raise the standard over and above current Building Regulation requirements.
2. Overall plan for minimised energy consumption
3. Energy efficient appliances
4. Low energy lighting and control systems. Use of renewable or low carbon sources of energy or heat on site. For example, photovoltaics, geothermal heat pump, solar hot water heating, biomass boiler; wind turbines etc.
5. Purchasing electricity on a green tariff from a company generating renewable energy

WATER

Water is the vital component for life and important for health, refreshment, cleansing and sanitation. It should not be wasted or polluted. Drinking water in particular should not be squandered as it uses considerable chemical and energy inputs to make it fit for human consumption – yet we literally flush it away down the toilet every day.

Using the following points as a guide only, please describe your overall plan for minimising water consumption and potential pollution risks (arising from cleaning and waste water disposal) within your project, and where possible quantify the savings you believe will result.

1. Water efficient devices for showers, taps and toilets etc.
2. High efficiency 'A' ratings for washing machines, dishwashers etc.
3. Incorporation of facilities for rainwater collection and re-use to reduce dependence on treated mains water.
4. Facilities for grey water recycling – e.g. filtering and re-using waste water for toilet flushing.
5. Natural based cleaners and methods – eg chlorine and phosphate-free cleaners
6. Dealing with full sewerage treatment on site (black water) by using, for e.g. reed bed treatment.

WASTE

Waste is a massive issue for all of us. We generate huge volumes of waste, much of which goes to landfill. Much of this waste could be avoided in the first place by purchasing products with less packaging and using less packaging in production and marketing. Waste may also contain valuable materials, many of which are easily recoverable.

Using the following points as a guide only, please describe your overall plan for

minimising waste. The aim of the waste hierarchy is to extract the maximum benefits from products, and to generate the minimum amount of waste. You should give preference to the activities which reflect the importance of the waste hierarchy in the following order: eliminating or reducing waste, followed by reuse, recycling and responsible disposal.

1. Reducing waste in marketing
2. Using returnable and reusable packaging
3. Rechargeable batteries and eco-gadgets
4. Electronic equipment reuse, recycle and disposal
5. Recycling of printer and toner cartridges
6. Facilities to sort and store waste at source
7. Provision of recycling facilities that can be used by the wider community

MATERIALS

Many of the materials we use in construction and during our everyday activities may have been manufactured in processes which have needed considerable energy inputs and hazardous processes in their production. Much can be done in our choice of materials to reduce this environmental burden of manufacture.

Using the following points as a guide only, please describe your overall plan for demonstrating the sustainable use of materials.

1. Are recycled building materials being specified for a significant part of this project.
2. Does the project involve the reuse of building structures or materials directly from the site.
3. Are most materials specified in the construction either recyclable, biodegradable and non-polluting (e.g. not using cfc's in their manufacture)
4. Is all timber in the construction from a sustainable source and ethical source, e.g. (certified by Forestry Stewardship Council).
5. Where possible and appropriate are materials being obtained from a local source (e.g. 30 miles, thereby reducing the impact of excessive transport).
6. Is local/regional labour being used.

CONSERVATION OF BUILDINGS

The conservation of existing buildings can provide many advantages, not least in the saving in materials and their associated energy costs. In addition, there may also be local landscape advantages to keeping certain buildings in rural areas, especially where there are benefits to the wider community. As with new building projects, an integrated building design can often result in initial and long term energy savings.

Using the following points as a guide only, please describe how conservation of an existing building will be undertaken. NB. Details concerning materials, waste water etc will be addressed elsewhere on the form, there is no need to duplicate that information again in this section.

1. Does the project bring back into use an existing building that is derelict or has been vacant for over a year.
2. Will the work improve the energy efficiency of the existing building.
3. Will the project preserve a building of value to the local community

TRANSPORT

Travel plays major part in all our lives, in both our work and leisure activities. Most forms of transport are responsible for creating a significant source of greenhouse gases and other pollutants and measures need to be taken to reduce its impact. Travel information to customers can influence them to make their journeys with lesser impact. Sustainable travel options introduce customers to new experiences and positive lifestyle choices. In addition, staff can be encouraged to adopt greener travel habits by offering incentives and providing changing facilities etc.

Using the following points as a guide only, please describe how your project can influence the travel options for customers/staff.

1. Does the development maximise accessibility to public transport.
2. Are public transport options made readily available to visitors.
3. Does the development minimise car ownership through reduced car parking provision.
4. Is a car pool operational.
5. Facilities for cyclists and walkers.
6. Eco-friendly vehicles
7. Carbon management scheme.

MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

Management and marketing are key elements of many businesses. To be more sustainable it is vital to put in place robust management systems to enable the required actions to be implemented. Cost savings resulting from improved efficiency will be identified and revenues increased by attracting green-conscious customers.

Using the following points as a guide only, please describe how the management and marketing of your project will demonstrate sustainability.

1. Good management systems
2. Staff training and awareness
3. Sharing best practice
4. Using specialist advice
5. Monitoring resource use
6. Green marketing
7. Seeking green feedback from customers

SOCIAL AND COMMUNICATION

The social involvement and communication aspects of a project covers a wide range of issues related to how a business interacts and communicates with its customers, the local community and the wider society.

Using the following points as a guide only, please describe how you will address these wider issues.

1. Having a visitor charter to encourage customers to be green.
2. providing a natural and healthy work/leisure space
3. working with the local community on social and environmental projects

PURCHASING

Purchasing is a powerful tool in influencing change, and is often led by the customer. Just as your customers demand sustainable business practices from you, equally you can require a similar commitment from your suppliers: the ultimate plan is to green the whole supply chain. The key to sustainable purchasing is to assess each option individually and go for the least damaging.

Using the following points as a guide only, please describe how your purchasing decisions will help your business become more sustainable.

1. Supplier screening
2. Use of products made from recycled materials
3. Local food and drink
4. Local crafts and traditional techniques
5. Sustainable sourced timber
6. Eco-building and decorating products
7. Green energy tariff

BIODIVERSITY AND GREEN SPACES

It is important to consider the biodiversity issues associated with your project, and the positive/negative impacts it may have.

Using the following points as a guide only, please describe how you have assessed the biodiversity issues.

1. Assessment of the existing site, buildings and surroundings for trees and wildlife habitats.
2. Provisions for the preservation and enhancement of any identified trees or other habitats within or around the site.
3. creation of new habitats for wildlife within the buildings or strengthening habitats around the margins of the site.
4. Creation or improvement of green space for healthy activities – walking etc.