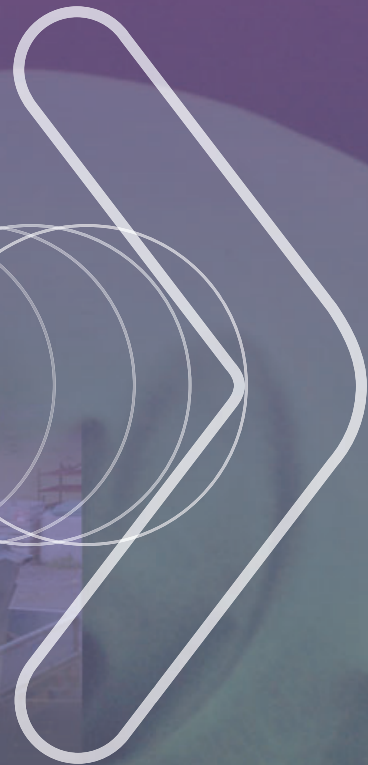


Fens Adventurers

Rural Development Programme

**A GUIDE TO GRANTS
AVAILABLE FOR
STARTING
OR DEVELOPING
A MICRO-ENTERPRISE**

"Address economic underperformance & contribute to the sustainable development of the Fens by supporting micro-enterprise start-up and the enhancement of existing enterprises that benefit the area as a whole"



*Investing in the
Cambridgeshire
& West Norfolk Fens
2009 -13*



1: June 2009

What is the Fens Adventurers Rural Development Programme?

The Fens Adventurers Rural Development Programme (FARDP) is a £4 million grants programme which is funded by the European Union, the UK Government and local authorities. The aim of the programme is to invest in the start-up or enhancement of local rural businesses based in parts of the Cambridgeshire and West Norfolk Fens.

Micro-enterprises are the foundation of the Fens' economy!

FARDP investment will be prioritised into four key priorities; sustainable food and farming, rural business development, sustainable rural tourism and enterprising communities. The objectives of the programme are to improve the economic performance of rural businesses within these four priorities and to **generate employment opportunities**. In order to meet these objectives the programmes governing body, the Local Area Group (LAG), decided that targeting investment at micro-enterprises would be key. The definition of a micro-enterprise is 'a business employing fewer than 10 people and with an annual turnover or balance sheet of less

than €2 million'. Around 85% of the businesses that cover the Fens employ fewer than 10 people, with a significant number being sole traders. This flier outlines opportunities that are available for new or existing micro-enterprises within the FARDP priorities.

Sustainable Food & Farming

Through this priority the programme wants to increase the competitiveness and sustainability of the land-based sector. The majority of funding within this priority will be channelled directly to farmers wanting to diversify or add value to their produce. There are however, also opportunities to support the start-up or enhancement of micro agribusinesses, such as small scale food processing operations/outlets,

manufacturing and engineering operations specialising in farm equipment and food marketing enterprises.

Rural Business Development

Through this priority the programme wants to address economic underperformance and contribute to the sustainable development of the Fens by supporting micro-enterprise start-up and the enhancement of existing rural enterprises in the following sectors; manufacturing, engineering, high value sectors (such as high tech and creative industries), environmental technologies and services (such as traditional trades required to maintain and enhance the landscape), and finally businesses developing products or services that will contribute to reducing the impact of climate change such as renewable energy products.





Sustainable Rural Tourism

Investment in this priority will be focussed on building upon the environmental assets of the Fens to develop the area as a high quality visitor destination. Opportunities will be available for micro/social enterprises within the tourism sector such as those providing quality accommodation for visitors, leisure pursuits such as boat hire and fishing, and those

managing cultural and heritage based attractions.

Enterprising Communities

This priority will be used to support the development of basic services for rural communities where there are identified gaps in provision. This could include supporting micro/social enterprises engaged in delivering rural services such as, child care or elderly care services, community run shops and advisory services.

What's available and how will it be administered?

In general, FARDP will look to invest between £10,000 to £100,000 per enterprise and depending on the activity and relevance to programme objectives the funding will contribute between 20% - 60% towards the overall project cost. Support could come in the form of direct investment for capital and revenue costs or targeted training programmes to address identified skills shortages within the enterprise. There is also money available to pay for enterprises already supported with a FARDP grant to travel to other regions of the UK or Europe to link with similar businesses and share knowledge and best practice.

FARDP is a "bottom up" investment programme where decisions on who will receive investment will be made by a partnership of local entrepreneurs and professionals representing interests in farming, rural business and tourism, as well as other specialities relevant to the area.





For your business idea to be eligible it must:

- Fit with the definition of a micro-enterprise at the time of application (fewer than 10 employees and less than €2million annual turnover or balance sheet).
- Align with one of the four priorities and subsequent sectors identified above.
- Be located within the FARDP area or the majority of its intended beneficiaries must reside within this area (see map). For a more detailed map visit www.cambsacre.org.uk/fensadventurers
- Have a sound match funding package in place, be it your own funds or borrowings.
- Demonstrate that the proposal will have wider economic and community benefits (e.g. by improving local supply chains, creating new jobs or securing existing jobs, improving skills or competitiveness).
- Demonstrate that the proposal will address a gap in the market. The Fens Adventurers LAG wants to ensure that investment in your enterprise does not distort the market and create difficulties for a similar enterprise within your locality.



I'm interested, what next?

If you have a relevant business proposal please contact the FARDP team who will help you develop your proposition and guide you through the application process.

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Alternatively for more information on the programme, including details of where to get a copy of the programme prospectus, please visit www.cambsacre.org.uk/fensadventurers

Have you spoken with Business Link East?

All businesses looking for support should also contact **Business Link**, a free business advice and support service. You can contact them by phone (0845 600 9006), online www.businesslink.gov.uk or face-to-face by visiting your local branch.



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