

# Last chance to express interest for rural business growth grants

Over £50 million of government funding for rural businesses is still up for grabs with a little over a week left to apply.

The government is encouraging rural businesses, start-ups and enterprises to apply for a share of its Growth Programme, which provides grants from £20,000 up to £750,000 to boost productivity, create local jobs and increase tourism.

So far the scheme has seen around £110 million awarded to 625 projects across England, creating almost 4,000 new jobs in rural communities since 2015.

In Cumbria, fresh food supplier Caterite Food and Wineservice secured funding to significantly expand their vegetable and salad processing facility, creating 10 new local jobs. Elsewhere, a Devon local landscaping business has used the funding to move into a new purpose-built facility that promotes environmentally friendly operations, such as recycling, re-using materials and growing an extensive nursery stock.

To apply for this funding, interested parties need to send an Expression of Interest (EOI) form to the Rural Payments Agency outlining how they meet the criteria for the scheme by midnight on 16 February. Successful applicants will then be invited to submit a full application.

Rural Payments Agency Chief Executive Paul Caldwell said:

Our rural enterprises are at the heart of the economy and this fund is helping grow these businesses, create jobs and improve economic opportunities in rural communities.

With the deadline fast approaching, I would urge all rural businesses to look into what this scheme could do for them now – whether you're a start-up, a well-established operation or a farm looking to diversify.

To find out more, visit the [RDPE Growth Programme handbook](#) on GOV.UK which contains information on which projects are deemed eligible for a grant and how to apply.