

Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)

South West Agricultural Resource Management (SWARM) Innovation Fund Guidance Note No. 006 Version 3



European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas



South West RDA

1 Background

- 1.1** In the South West region RDPE funding is available to support the creation of genuinely sustainable farming, forestry and food sectors, whilst also bringing wider benefits for the economy, the environment and rural communities. This funding is available from RDPE Measure 121 – Modernisation of Agricultural Holdings.
- 1.2** This note gives guidance on the types of activity that may be supported to help meet the aims of the SW Regional Implementation Plan's Resource Management theme. There may be instances, depending on the type of project looking for grant funding where other RDPE measures or other programmes may be more appropriate. The dividing line between these sources of support will not always be hard and fast. To assist in this, all initial enquiries should be directed to the Business Link Rural Enterprise Gateway (www.regsw.org.uk – 0845 6009966) whose you will be directed to the most appropriate source of support.

2 Priorities for funding

- 2.1** Support is targeted at on-farm investments involving the innovative application of technology or processes which will generate economic and environmental benefits (e.g. energy or water saving investments, nutrient management facilities, or novel forms of renewable energy) and which would be replicable on other farms in the region.
- 2.2** The focus of this element of the Programme is on the agricultural sector. Therefore resource efficiency in the forestry sector is not included. However, some proposals may well have strong links with the forestry sector, for example, innovative use of biomass for cooling as well as heat and power; new approaches for tree planting and management to reduce soil erosion and diffuse pollution. Other support is available from RDPE for forestry businesses, (Contact the Business Link Rural Enterprise Gateway for further information).

3 Types of projects

3.1 Projects which demonstrate innovation by;

- Using or developing technology or methods that are new to or under utilised in the industry
- Using or developing technology or methods which are 'extremely rare' in the region (and warrant wider adoption).
- Adaption, refinement or improvement of an existing technology or practice to increase the businesses efficiency in dealing with resources.

3.2 Projects will need to demonstrate the following attributes to have the greatest chance of funding;

- Use of new technology or innovative practices, suitable for wider adoption
- Evidence of collaboration where realistic, between farmers and training/research bodies
- Effective methods for sharing knowledge and experience and demonstration of new technologies linking in but also going beyond current mainstream advice.
- Technical soundness

4 Eligible Applicants

4.1 Farmers and other land owners (and groups of farmers and other landowners) are the eligible applicants under this measure.

5 Links with other parts of the RDPE

5.1 This initiative links with the South West Resource Management initiatives which offer practical help and funding so that farmers can manage their resources in the best way possible and so improve their profitability and help the environment.

The two initiatives (Resource Efficiency for Farmers and Soils for Profit) are delivered by Business Link, and Natural England / the Environment Agency respectively.

5.2 Farmers who have received an advisory visit under one or both of the above initiatives are eligible to submit an application to the Small Capital Grant Scheme (max £10,000 of grant funding available). Alternatively, it may be appropriate to submit an application to the Innovation Fund should the recommendations meet with the requirements of this fund. Farmers are eligible to apply to both funding streams.

6 Grant Rate

- 6.1** The grant rate awarded will be the minimum needed to enable the project to go ahead.
- 6.2** The maximum available from the Innovation Fund for on-farm investments is 40% (50% in Less Favoured areas).
- 6.3** Projects which address the following issues; [climate change](#), [biodiversity](#), [renewable energy](#), [water management](#) and [the restructuring of the dairy sector](#)) can have an additional 10% increase e.g. 50% (60% in Less Favoured areas).

7 Submitting an Application

- 7.1** Potential applicants should register with the Business Link Rural Enterprise Gateway (www.regsw.org.uk – 0845 6009966) to access the support that is available.

8 Further Information

For further information contact your local Business Link Rural team on 0845 600 9966 or visit the Rural Development Gateway which provides an overview of the Programme and signposts viewers to relevant sources of more detailed information at www.sw-ruralgateway.info