



FAST TRACK APPLICATION FORM

APPLICATION GUIDANCE

The Fast Track Application Form is straightforward to complete, but these Application Guidance notes should help you if you have any queries. If you'd like to talk anything through please do contact us, we're always happy to help.

Your Fast Track Application Form will be available on the Sowing SEEDS website to all Local Action Group (LAG) members before the Local Action Group meeting at which you will present your project. It will also be sent for independent appraisal and the appraisal report will also be available for LAG members to view before the meeting. So it is important to be as clear as possible, and avoid making assumptions about how much people will know!

Section A – Applicant Details

Qu 1. The name by which the project will be known.

Qu 2. Please give the name of the main contact who will run/oversee the project, and be responsible for signing claim forms etc – if your application is successful!

Qu3. Please give all contact details where possible. If an agent's address is used for correspondence, the address should begin 'c/o (agent's address)'.

Qu 4. Please identify what type of organisation is applying, and giving a Charity number and Company number if applicable. You do not have to be a registered company to apply.

Sign Off

It is essential that your completed EOI form is signed off by an appropriate member of your group/organisation/ business.

Section B – Project Details

Qu. 5 Each project needs to demonstrate that they can deliver under one or more of the Sowing SEEDS Strategic Objectives. Please see which of the programme's objectives your project fits. Your project will not be assessed against the number of objectives that you tick so be realistic when completing this section.

Qu. 6 It's relatively easy to tick boxes in Question 5! However, you need to explain how you think your project meets the strategic objectives you have identified. Before you attempt to answer this question, please make sure you have read the Delivery Plan Objectives and Outcomes (OM 16). You must clearly identify how your project fits into one or more of the over-arching **Strategic Objectives** and justify how you then meet the **Specific Criteria** and **Outcomes** within each Objective. If you have not got a copy of OM16 please ask a member of the Sowing SEEDS team.



Qu 7. Sowing SEEDS funding must deliver a benefit within the Sowing SEEDS area. Projects which are located outside the area, or are based in the area but deliver a benefit to a wider geographical area may still be eligible for grant support if the project brings tangible benefits those within the Sowing SEEDS area, with funding likely to be considered on a proportional basis.

Qu 8. When will the project realistically start, taking into account factors such as the Sowing SEEDS project assessment and approval timescales, other fundraising, securing permissions, etc

Qu 9. When the project will realistically be completed? Please note the programme ends in December 2013, and cannot fund beyond that date; final claims will need to be submitted a few months before then to ensure payment, audit, etc before the programme closes.

Qu 10. It is really important to explain clearly here what the project will do, so anyone reading the application has a clear idea at the start of what the project will actually do, even if some elements may be repeated in subsequent questions. Innovation, collaboration, income generation and community support are all integral to each application to Sowing SEEDS, so please ensure you highlight how your project delivers against these alongside the strategic objectives of the programme.

Qu 11. You will need to describe what the grant money will be used for, e.g. equipment for training, start-up salary costs. A subsequent (Section C - Qu 1) asks for actual costs as part of a budget, so there is no need to give costs in this question.

Qu 12. Please describe what you hope to achieve through your project. Your project should be '**making a difference**', and this section gives you the opportunity to explain what that 'difference' is. It is always better to qualify this difference if you can, by describing the **outputs** (the services and facilities you deliver) for example it can be numbers - 20 businesses involved in a collaborative marketing project, with the short term goal (benefit) of increasing their turnover by XX% and safeguarding XX jobs through direct marketing, whilst the **outcomes** (the demonstrable impact and changes that happen as a result of your work) will be that the businesses are more sustainable. You will also need to explain how this will be achieved, for example a joint training programme and collaborative direct marketing campaign.

Qu 13. It is important to identify who will be benefit from the project – these may be direct and indirect beneficiaries. It can be by area, community, groups, business sectors, etc. It is also useful to identify age ranges, e.g. if a project particularly benefits young people. Approximate numbers are useful if this can realistically be provided. If a project benefits people outside the Sowing SEEDS area as well as people inside please give some guide to the proportion; projects which deliver a benefit to a wider area may still be eligible for grant, with funding likely to be considered on a proportional basis.

Qu 14. Where a project is anticipated to continue after the funding period, it must be clear how the project will be sustained and funded into the future, this could be for example from income generated through your project's activities. The more a project can develop its own income stream so that it is self sufficient, the better, but if on the other hand the project will need to rely on other funding from other sources to continue, this will not be regarded as sustainable. Although some projects will be testing new ideas, and the programme is able to take some risk, being clear about



how the project can be sustained once Sowing SEEDS funding ceases is very important. If your project will only continue for the period of funding you must explain how the benefits your project creates will be sustained into the future, for example a course set up to encourage land based business entrepreneurship in under 30's may finish with the funding but have a long term benefit of, say 15 of young people establishing their own businesses.

Qu 15. All projects will involve risk, and the Sowing SEEDS Local Action programme, which supports innovation, is able to take risk, rather than avoid risk. However, the risks need to have been identified and you will need to consider the **economic, environmental, legal, technical, financial and management risks**, and show how these risks can be managed. For big projects, a Risk Assessment would be part of a Business Plan, but if yours is a smaller project, please identify the main risks and how you will minimise and manage these risks. If you have not done a Risk Assessment before, contact the programme manager who can help with a simple format to work through.

There are several ways of managing risk. For example, you can:

- Reduce risk: by demonstrating that the probability of something happening is small
- Show that the impact of the event would not damage the enterprise seriously
- Explain how you would respond to adverse circumstances - make contingency plans
- Transferring risk to others – e.g. Taking insurance to cover fire or theft. Remember this doesn't minimise the likelihood of project failure, but does mitigate potential financial losses

Qu 16. Links with projects: A greater long term impact can be achieved if projects work together wherever possible, so it is important to promote co-operation, and it is useful to understand how your project links with other projects and initiatives, either in the local area or in the same field of work. It is also important avoid duplicating the work of existing or planned similar projects.

Links with strategies: If your project fits with any strategies, this will help reinforce how it fits with overall rural development in the area. Relevant strategies could include the Local Authority Economic Development and other strategies, AONB Management Plan, Market town area Community Plans, the Local Community Plan for the County, and any strategies specific to your sector. Other plans such as Parish/Town Plans are also worth including.

Qu 17. Community involvement and support is a crucial element of the Sowing SEEDS programme, so it is important to show what level of community support and involvement your project has, and the extent to which it has been initiated from the community and how they will be involved in delivering it. The community can be a community of area, e.g. the local community, or a community of interests, e.g. a group of businesses.

You will also need to be able to show that there is a need and demand for what you will be providing, e.g. if running training courses, how can you show and evidence that there is a need and a demand for the training courses.

Qu 18. If you have partners in your project, it is important to outline their roles, what they bring to the project (e.g. a group of businesses, skills) and level of involvement (e.g. equal partner, contractor).

Qu 19. It is really important that your project has the capacity, experience, governance structures and systems to manage and monitor the project effectively, as you will be entering into a contract



with Sowing SEEDS Local Action to spend public money. Some projects will have managed similar projects and if this is the case please include this experience. For some projects, this will be a development or a new area of work, so it is important to show that you have the capacity, structures & systems even if the project does not have the experience yet. This section will also need to include information about who will be responsible for progress reports, submitting claims and the overall management of the project.

N.B. Please note that monitoring and reporting requirements for RDPE funding can be quite substantial and it is important that your organisation has the expertise and capacity to effectively deal with such work. Further details are set out in the Project Holders Guide (OM32), which sets out the requirements for all aspects of managing RDPE funds. Should you need to gain a more detailed understanding, prior to making an application, please ask the programme manager for a copy if you do not have one.

Qu 20. Examples of relevant permissions include planning permission, Environmental Health, Environmental Impact Assessments, lease agreements, landlords consent, access agreements, etc, as applicable. It can often take time to secure relevant permissions, which will also affect timescales, so please let us know when you would expect the relevant decisions to be agreed. It unlikely that your project will receive full approval until these permissions are in place.

Qu 21 & 22. Previous Grants – Please provide details of any grants that your organisation has received since 2000, including amounts.

Section C – Financial Details

Table 1. The costs here are the actual amounts that you expect to pay during the project. They should be the costs for the whole project, not just the elements you are requesting funding for. The costs need to be reasonably accurate, but there is time between the First Stage Application and a Full Application to refine the costs further. Please insert additional rows if needed.

- You will not be able to include costs already incurred, as the programme cannot fund retrospectively.
- You will need to include VAT if you cannot reclaim VAT, but exclude VAT if you are able to reclaim VAT.
- Contributions in kind are also allowed (see full explanation below), for example for volunteer time or equipment donated to the project, but if the project is funded you will need to be able to keep detailed records and be able to justify the in-kind contributions.

Capital costs. This could be money spent on improvements to buildings and land, including major repairs or new construction. It can also include fixed assets or equipment with an expected life of more than one year (e.g. machinery).

Revenue costs. This is money that is needed to support the running costs incurred by the project, such as salaries, rent, rates and stationary.

‘In kind’ contributions. ‘In kind’ contributions are non-monetary contributions such as professional time, volunteer labour, gifts of materials, use of facilities and equipments. In some instances ‘in kind’ contributions will be acceptable as match funding. All ‘in kind’ match funding will have to demonstrate good value for money, a cost will need to be identified e.g. a going hourly rate or



identified cost of equipment of comparable age and condition. Evidence will need to be provided of 'in kind' contribution e.g. timesheet. If you require further clarification please speak to the programme manager.

Please note that additional in-kind funding contributions will always be welcomed by the LAG and will increase the likelihood of securing funding. Local Action greatly values in-kind contributions, particularly where this demonstrates commitment from the community to turn their ideas into reality **however it is difficult to assess and substantiate in kind contributions and you should not underestimate how much actual cash is required for your project.**

Table 2. How much grant are you seeking from the Sowing SEEDS programme, and what percentage is it of the total project cost.

Table 3. Please list where the balance of funding (match funding), as grant or in kind, is coming from, and the status of the funding - has been made or is awaited and what is the anticipated date of the decision.

Please note that the **Total Grant Funding Requested** (Table 2) and the **Total Other Income** (Table 3) must add up to the **Total Cost** (Table 1). If there is a gap in funding, then you need to identify how you will fill this gap.

Match funding. The level of RDPE funding will be dependent on the type of activity and the status of your organisation. The Programme team should be able to provide you with advice and guidance on the level of funding that will be available to you. If you are a business the maximum amount of RDPE funding you will be eligible to receive will be up to 60% of the total project costs. If you are a social enterprise, a charity or a not-for-profit organisation, you will be able to apply for up to 80% of funds. Your project should ensure that match funding is sought before approaching your LAG for funding.

It is important that you provide information on where your match funding is coming from, e.g. a bank loan, personal savings, local authority or a charitable body. It is also important to provide information on the status of the match funding (i.e. - whether it has been approved or only applied for). If the funds are in place, please attach evidence (e.g. a copy of the offer letter) to your application.

SECTION D – Milestones

Please set out a timetable for your project, including milestones (key events such as first joint promotional initiative, timing of training courses, etc) and when you anticipate achieving outputs, which you will have identified in Qu 12. This timetable will be an important tool for monitoring progress of the project when up and running. Indicators will depend on the type of project you are proposing, in addition to those above, here are some other examples:

- Building work completed
- Job vacancies advertised
- Employees recruited
- Advertising campaign launched
- New product launched
- Equipment installed



If you have any queries, please contact Sarah Dyke-Bracher, Sowing SEEDS programme manager:

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Visit the Sowing SEEDS website for more information www.sowing-seeds.org.uk

