

Rural Development Programme for England Business Support Forestry Micro-enterprise Grant Prospectus

What is the Forestry Micro-enterprise Grant?

The Forestry Micro-enterprise Grant is aimed at forestry and woodland related businesses, or businesses wanting to invest in woodfuel technology. Grants of between £2,500 and £25,000 are available towards buying new equipment, building handling or storage facilities or installing woodfuel systems. It is funded by the Rural Development Programme for England and is administered jointly by the Forestry Commission and the East Midlands Development Agency.

How much grant can be awarded?

The minimum spend is £5000 of which you will be eligible for between 40-50% grant, depending on your project. The maximum project size under this scheme is £50,000. However, larger projects may be funded under the main RDPE scheme run by emda www.emda.org.uk/rdpe

Who can apply?

Any business classed as a micro-enterprise involved in forestry or woodland management activity or any rural business wanting to install a woodfuel system may apply. Start up businesses may also apply. (A micro-enterprise must have less than 10 full-time employees and turn over less than EUR 2m per annum.)

What can be funded?

Harvesting

Support is available for most harvesting and primary processing equipment: e.g. Harvesting heads, harvesters. Chain-saws and personal protective equipment cannot be funded

Handling and transport

Machinery involved in handling or transporting timber, firewood, or woodchip: e.g. forwarders, tractor mounted grabs, tongs or other forwarding equipment, trailers.

Processing

Any machinery involved in processing timber or firewood: e.g. Chippers, mobile and static saw-benches and other milling equipment, fire-wood processors.

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Storage/processing facilities

Any building, storage or other facility for the handling or storage of timber, firewood or woodchip may be eligible: e.g. sheds, barns, buildings, yards, used for the storage, processing or handling of any wood product.

Woodfuel installation

Any rural business can apply for up to 50% of the cost of a woodfuel boiler installation.

How do I apply?

The forms and other information are on our website www.forestry.gov.uk/eastmidlands or available from Anne Garner at the address below.

The steps for applying are as follows:

1. Get in touch. Phone or email and discuss your ideas with us before you do anything. We will be able to let you know if your project is eligible, offer technical advice on machinery and business planning before you apply. (Projects cannot be funded retrospectively ie if you have already made the purchase you cannot apply for a grant)
2. To help you know how to prepare a business plan and fill in the form, we suggest you come to one of our seminars – contact us for details.
3. Fill in the application form and send it to us at the address below. On the form you will need to describe what you want to do and include a business-plan (a template is available online).
4. We will assess your application and let you know what happens next. *You must not make any related purchases before we have signed an agreement with you.*

What conditions apply?

- You must be a 'micro-enterprise' that is a business which: employs fewer than 10 persons, and has either: an annual turnover of less than EUR 2 million OR has an annual balance sheet total which does not exceed EUR 2 million.
- You will need to provide evidence that you have made the agreed expenditure: receipt, bank statement; photograph and we may decide to visit you. This is to prevent fraud.
- **Whilst the majority of grants are paid quickly after a claim has been made, it may take up to three months to receive the payment – this is to allow the full audit and inspection of some applications. You need to be prepared to carry the full project cost for this length of time.**

Further information and application forms are available on the Forestry Commission website <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/eastmidlands>

Or contact
Anne Garner
Forestry Commission
Willingham Road
Market Rasen
Lincolnshire, LN8 3RQ

Tel: 01673 843461

anne.garner@forestry.gov.uk or meg@forestry.gsi.gov.uk