LEADER Programme: How to fill in an expression of interest (EOI) form

The expression of interest form (EOI) is the first stage in applying for an LEADER Programme grant. This guidance explains how to fill in an EOI.

Before you start

Top tips for applicants
Before you start your application, here are some important reminders...

Jobs + growth + rural
The main aim of the LEADER Programme is to create jobs and growth in the rural economy. Tell us how your project will help do this.

Sell us your idea
Explain really clearly what your project does and how it will benefit the economy. It's hard for us to justify giving you a grant if we don't understand your project.

Don't ask for the full amount if you don't need it
Just because you can get (say) 40% of your costs covered, don't ask for that amount if you don't need it. As long as you stay below the maximum, you can tell us what grant rate you want. (It's better value for taxpayers' money.)

Show us what the funding will mean to the success of your project
We're obliged to invest public money carefully. We're looking for viable, growing businesses. If you can show us that your project is good value for money, and that you're planning to use the grant money to improve your project, you're more likely to get the grant.

Do the market research
You have to show that there is real demand for what you want to do, or you're unlikely to get a grant.

Before you fill in an EOI, read the relevant Local Action Group handbook. It explains:
- who can apply
- what the grant money can be used for
- how to apply

- how long the process will take

Improve your chances – explain things clearly. It will help your application if you explain your project clearly. Tell us exactly what you're doing, why it's good for your business, how and where you're doing it and who will benefit from it.

When and how to send your form

Expressions Of Interest must be submitted to eastleicestershireleader@leics.gov.uk by 5pm on 30th April 2019

Send it from the email address you give us in section 3 of the form. If an agent or consultant sends the form for you, they must copy you into the email (using the email address you give us in section 3 of the form).

It must be sent as a Microsoft Excel document, in the 1997-2003 .xls format.

If you don't have Microsoft Excel
You can use free Open Office software to complete the EOI form – as long as you save it in the Microsoft Excel (.xls) format. To do this:
1. Select 'Save as' when saving the application form. The 'Save as' box will open.
2. Select the format for the document in the 'Save as type' box. Select the format type – Microsoft Excel 97/2000/XP/2003 (.xls)
3. Click 'Save'.
4. A dialog box may open asking you to 'Confirm file format'. If that happens, select 'Confirm'.

Filling in the form

Complete every section. You must fill out every section on the form, unless the instructions say you can either write 'N/A' or move to the next question.

Section 1 – LEADER Programme details

Select the Local Action Group that you are applying to from the drop down list.

Select the priority you think that your project comes under from the drop down list. Descriptions of each of the 6 national priorities can be found in your Local Action Group Handbook. If you are unsure of the most relevant priority choose the one you think your project best fits in. The programme team will change it if they believe your project fits in another priority area.

Section 2 – Applicant details

Please give us the details of the main contact for this application.

If you're a sole trader, give us your details. If you're filling out this form on behalf of a bigger business or organisation, we'd normally expect you to be a director or partner.

We have to ask your gender to meet EU rules. If you don't want to tell us, choose 'Prefer not to disclose' from the list.

Section 3 – Business/organisation details

Question 4: Please tell us the full name of your business or organisation. For registered businesses, use the full registered name of the business (this is the name used in the annual financial accounts.)

Question 5: Please give the full address of the business or organisation. If the business has more than 1 address, give the postal address – we'll use this if we need to post anything to you. (This doesn't have to be in the LAG area.)

Email address – we will use email as our main way of contacting you. Please provide an email address that you check regularly.

Question 6: Tell us your Single Business Identifier (SBI) number, if you have one. If not, leave this box blank and go question 7.

You'll normally have an SBI if you get other payments from the RPA, like the Basic Payments Scheme. You'll find your SBI on any letters you have had from RPA. If you do have an SBI, the answers to question 4 and 5 must match the details we have for your business in the Rural Payments service.

Please note that you must have a SBI and be registered with the Rural Payments service if you are invited to submit a full application.

Question 7: Choose the best fit for your type of business from the dropdown list.

Questions 8 and 9: Read the 'Who can apply' section in the Local Action Group handbook to see how to work out what size your business is and how many 'full time equivalent' (FTE) employees you have.

Question 10: What does your business do? Select the best fit for your business activity from the list. (This might be different to the project that you're applying to get the grant for.)

New business? Select 'Yes' if your business has been trading for less than 2 years, or if you're not trading yet.

Question 11: Please provide these numbers if your business has them – if not, write 'N/A' in the boxes.

Question 12: Choose the age range for whoever filled in section 1. We have to ask this to meet EU rules – if you don't want to tell us, choose 'Prefer not to disclose'.

Question 13: Please provide the turnover and balance sheet total from your most recent accounts. If the business is less than 1 financial year old, and so has not filed any financial accounts yet, you can leave this blank.

Question 14: Read the 'Who can apply' section of the Local Action Group handbook to see the definition of 'linked businesses'. If the business is linked to other businesses, please select 'yes' and complete the table. If not, go to question 15.

Question 15: Please choose 'Yes' or 'No' from the dropdown list. If you are related to or have linked business interests with any of the LAG members, tell us about them here.

Question 16: Is your business a farm, horticulture or forestry business? Choose 'Yes' or 'No' from the dropdown. If you answer 'No', go to question 17.

If you answered 'Yes', question 16 is divided into 3 sections that are specific to each sector:
   a) Agriculture
   b) Horticulture
   c) Forestry

Complete all the sections that apply to your business.

Question 17: Please tell us if your business or the project you're applying for funding for has had any public funding since 2007.

This does not include Single Payment Scheme or Basic Payment Scheme payments.

This does include funding from organisations like your local authority, a Regional Development Agency or Business Link.

It also includes EU funding, such as from:

- European Social Fund (ESF)
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)
- European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF)
- Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE)
- England Rural Development Programme (ERDP)
- Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF)
- Forestry Commission
- LEADER

If your business has previously had public funding, please give the details in the table.

De minimis. You will know if a previous grant was awarded under industrial de minimis because it will say so on your grant agreement, or in other paperwork relating to that funding.

Section 4 – Agent details

Please choose 'Yes' or 'No' from the dropdown list for question 18.

If someone else (like an agent or business manager) is completing the form for you, give their full details here. You don't have to use an agent to apply.

Section 5 – Project details

Answers to the questions in this section will help us to understand what your project involves. We use this to check whether your project is eligible for a grant.

Question 22: Please give the name of your project that will be included in correspondence and in any publicity. This should be concise and clear, and ideally no more than 50 characters.

Question 23: Provide a short description / summary of your project beginning with the words, 'This project will…'. You should aim to use no more than 50 words.

It is often easier to complete this once you have filled in the rest of the form. Think of it as a summary of the key elements of your project. Why have you decided to take this step? How will the items you wish to purchase help your organisation develop and grow?

Question 24: Tell us the postcode where the project will be located. If your project is not located at a specific postcode then tell us where it will be.

For question 24c, you can find out if your project is in one of the following areas by reading these web pages:
- nitrate vulnerable zones - https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nutrient-management-nitrate-vulnerable-zones
- Site of Special Scientific Interest - https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-areas-sites-of-special-scientific-interest
- catchment sensitive farming areas - https://www.gov.uk/guidance/catchment-sensitive-farming-reduce-agricultural-water-pollution

If your project covers multiple LAG areas, tell us in section d.

Question 25: Please give us an overview of how much you expect the project will cost. We expect an estimate here, and not a highly detailed breakdown. You can't add any more rows to the table.

Please fill in the table, which is divided into 2 sections:
- Grant funded project costs (top section) – costs you want to use the grant for
- Non-grant project costs (bottom section) – other costs relating to the project but which you are not applying for grant funding for

1. 'Type of cost' column – tell us what the cost is for. Group similar costs under one heading. For example, group together all costs relating to building works, including materials and labour.

2. 'Grant rate %' column – tell us what percentage of those costs you would like the grant to cover. All the grants have a maximum percentage of eligible costs that they can cover. You need to read the section in the Local Action Group handbook for the priority you are applying for to see what this is. In most cases it the maximum intervention rate is 40% for projects that are intended to generate a surplus.

3. 'Eligible project expenditure' column – tell us the total amount of that cost.

4. 'Date expenditure will be incurred' column – tell us when you expect to have to pay that cost – select one of the options from the dropdown.

Grant requested column The total 'Grant requested' column will automatically calculate. Check that these figures are correct, but please don't try to type anything in that column.

Your completed table should look something like this:

25 Project costs					
Indicate the types of costs included in the total project expenditure in the table below. All costs should be net of VAT, unless you are irrecoverable VAT in your eligible project costs.					
	Type of cost (Example - building works)	Grant rate %	Eligible project expenditure	Date expenditure will be incurred (Select from list)	Grant requested
					£0.00
Grant funded project costs	Building works	40%	£18,500.00	FY17/18 Q2 Jul-Sep	£7,400.00
	Cheese making equipment	40%	£9,600.00	FY17/18 Q3 Oct-Dec	£3,840.00
	Cold store	40%	£3,700.00	FY17/18 Q3 Oct-Dec	£1,480.00
					£0.00
					£0.00
					£0.00
					£0.00
					£0.00
Non grant project costs	Planning permission		£2,000.00		
	Contingency		£1,850.00		£0.00

The next section of the form will automatically be calculated for you. Don't try to type anything into these boxes. However, please check that the 'Total grant request' figure is below the maximum you can get for this grant.

This section will look like this:

Total project costs	£35,650.00
Total grant funded project costs	£31,800.00
Total grant request	£12,720.00
Total intervention rate %	40.0%

Minimum grant. Remember, the minimum grant is normally £7,500.

Question 26: If you get a grant, will you also be claiming for VAT as part of the costs? If not, type 'N/A' in the box and go to question 27. If so, explain why.

This is normally if your organisation is not VAT registered. Please note that at full application stage you will be expected to provide a letter from a suitably qualified independent accountant to confirm that you are not VAT registered or are making exempt supplies.

VAT can be a complex area. This table may help you decide whether you can include VAT in your project costs or not. Use this to explain why you have included VAT if applicable:

Status	Outcome
You are registered for VAT and making regular returns of VAT to HMRC	You will NOT be able to include VAT in your project costs or grant request because it is recoverable in full on VAT returns
You are not registered for VAT because your business is below the threshold for supplies	You will be able to include VAT in your project costs and grant request provided this status can be verified by RPA
You are not registered for VAT because you opted to join the Agricultural flat rate scheme instead	You will NOT be able to include VAT in your project costs or grant request because the flat rate scheme you have chosen to join is a simplification instead of registering for VAT. The terms of the scheme mean that you receive compensation for not being able to recover VAT paid by your business by retaining a Flat Rate Addition (FRA) added to sales invoices in respect of supplies made to VAT registered customers
You are registered for VAT but you have also opted to join a flat rate scheme	You will NOT be able to include VAT in your project costs or grant request because the flat rate scheme you have chosen to join is a simplification which compensates you for not being able to reclaim input VAT. In addition, you are able to reclaim input VAT on certain capital assets costing over £2,000 through your VAT returns
You are registered for VAT and making exempt supplies meaning that not all VAT paid can be recovered on returns of VAT to HMRC	You may be able to include SOME of the VAT in your project costs or grant request providing the extent to which your business cannot recover VAT can be verified by RPA

Question 27: The grant can only be used to cover some costs. Tell us where the rest of the money for the project (the 'match funding') will come from.

Question 28 Tell us when you hope to start and complete the project. It's helpful if you can try to be as accurate as possible. Do consider:

- Project start date – when do intend to start work on your project? This must be at least 2 months after you submit your full application.
- Project completion date – this is when you expect to have completed the project works, paid all invoices and submitted your final claim for grant.

Section 6 – The business case

Sell us your project We'll decide whether or not to invite you to submit a full application based on what you say in this section.

Question 29: Tell us what the project will do for your business and what it will achieve, ideally in no more than 100 words.

How will it improve your business? Consider the aim of LEADER funding, which is to grow the rural economy. How will your project do this? Will it create jobs? Will in increase productivity?

Question 30: Answers to this question will help us to understand:
- the market demand for your project
- why it is needed
- who will benefit from it
- whether there will be an impact on any other businesses

Provide a clear case to explain why the project is needed and briefly outline the market opportunity/demand for project.

You also need to check whether there are any similar business nearby that might be affected (negatively or positively) by your project. Give details of these businesses, and explain how your project will affect them.

This should be concise and clear, and ideally no more than 100 words.

Question 31: Read the Handbook for your Local Action Group, which will tell you what the national priorities and local priorities of your area are. Read the detail on the priority you are applying under. Explain which of these priorities your project will meet, and how it will do that.

Section 7 – Outputs

Question 32: 'Outputs' are what will result from your project – you must be able to measure them. Examples of outputs from a project include:
- creating jobs
- changing your wage bill by a specific amount
- creating a new product
- attracting a specific number of extra tourists to an area

Please list some of the important outputs you forecast for your project. Select the relevant outputs from the dropdown lists. Explain how you have calculated them. The outputs should be appropriate to the size of your project, be realistic and achievable.

Section 8 – Planning permission

Question 33: Tell is if your project needs planning permission, when you will apply for it and if you already have it.

You must choose 'N/A', 'Yes' or 'No' for each question. Use the comments boxes to give more information about your answers, if you need to.

Information and evaluation

Please complete questions 34 and 35 to let us know whether you are willing to be contacted in the future, and to let us know how you found out about LEADER funding. These questions will help us to improve the services and schemes we provide.

Declarations

Please read this section and make sure that you are in agreement with and can meet the requirements set out in it. By submitting and/or agreeing to the submission of the expression of interest form, you will be agreeing to the declaration.