

Woodland Renaissance Partnership

Guidance for forestry businesses seeking funding through the RDPE

The Partnership wants to help develop proposals for woodland and capital investment that are most likely to lead to both sustainable businesses and a more sustainable forestry sector. Technical Advisors will look to support proposals that have the potential to:

- be viable from a forestry perspective i.e. be based on reasonable assumptions: costs, prices, volumes, quantities, assessment of supply and demand a realistic analysis of competitors
- have a regional impact i.e. provide benefits beyond the immediate business being supported either through development of the supply chain or through the potential for replication elsewhere in the region
- be collaborative in order to achieve economies of scale such as group woodland management, co-operatives for machinery.

To this end the Partnership has produced the following guidance to indicate the type of proposal it is likely to help develop further and for which there is a greater chance of funding being secured from SWRDA.

Full applications will be appraised and approved by SWRDA, who may take into account the views of the Partnership. Whilst forestry businesses are entitled to submit a funding application straight to SWRDA, proposals outside the framework of this guidance may be given a lower priority.

Specifically:

- Proposals seeking an RDPE grant should not normally be less than a total investment of £10,000 (ie the grant plus private matched funding should normally exceed £10,000).
- The area of woodland to be invested in will be able to support a viable forestry business. Experience suggests this is likely to be a woodland area greater than 15ha, however, smaller areas would be considered if a viable

business case can be made. Applications from groups of owners will be encouraged in order to achieve a viable area.

- Applicants must demonstrate that proposals involving woodlands conform to the guidelines laid down in the UK Forestry Standard and that relevant felling licenses will be obtained. Forest certification would be an advantage but not essential.
- Proposals for capital equipment must demonstrate that the timber or wood product to be processed is from woods that meet the UK Forestry Standard. Chain of Custody certification would be an advantage but not essential.
- Proposals for wood fuel processors (firewood and woodchip) must include evidence of demand e.g. installed boilers and an analysis of competitors appropriate to the scale of the wood fuel enterprise.
- Proposals for wood chippers to chip non-forestry arisings (e.g. arboricultural or recycled timber) will be signposted elsewhere.
- Group applications for capital investments will be encouraged especially where similar proposals are received from within a short radius of each other. Without compromising confidentiality, the technical advisors will be able to put applicants in touch with other similar proposals in order to develop a viable business proposal.

This guidance has been produced by the Partnership and agreed by the SWRDA.

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