

strategic investment grant

A guide to the strategic investment grant in the West Midlands
June to December 2009



George Snell, Chairman, Certainly Wood Ltd, Herefordshire

what is the Strategic Investment Grant (SIG)?

The Strategic Investment Grant (SIG) can fund large scale and collaborative projects to improve the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector, and improve the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy. The SIG is one of the grant schemes available under the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) and is available to land based businesses in the West Midlands region.

The regional RDPE Programme is managed by Advantage West Midlands, the Regional Development Agency for the West Midlands Region.

Cover Image: George Snell is Chairman of [Certainly Wood Ltd](#), one company to have benefited from a [Strategic Investment Grant](#). Certainly Wood Ltd was awarded a SIG grant of £380,000 to provide storage and processing facilities enabling the business to double its capacity of kiln drying, and meet the significant demand for kiln dried wood.

Who can apply?

Each SIG focuses on a different activity and therefore influences who can apply. Further information on this is provided in this brochure and on the separate activity specifications which can be found on our website.

How much can I apply for?

The amount of funding which can be granted varies for the different areas of activity (measures) supported under the SIG. Financial assistance can range from 40% to 80% of eligible costs. Specific details can be found under each activity specification.

There is no upper limit on the amount of funding that can be offered however, the budget available to Advantage West Midlands will be considered when making this decision. Grants of less than £62,500 would not be available under SIG. Funding lower than this amount may be available from the Rural Enterprise Grant (REG).

What will the SIG grant fund?

Funds are available for eligible applicants for investments in Environmental Technologies, Food and Drink and Tourism related activities.

Eligible activities are focused on the following specific areas:-

Fruit and Vegetable Packing and Processing

- To improve the processing and marketing of fruit and vegetable products.
- Aimed at new and existing Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) wishing to process, produce and market primary agricultural products or develop new processes and technologies in this area.

The company are also looking to develop biomass production from within the farming business to provide fuel for the kiln. This will increase the sustainability of the entire operation, and improve overall efficiencies within the yard.

Supply Chain Facilities in the Livestock Sector (dairy, beef, sheep, pigs, poultry meat and eggs)

- To improve the processing and marketing of livestock products.
- Aimed at new and existing Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) wishing to process, produce and market primary agricultural products or develop new processes and technologies in this area.

Centralised Storage and Processing Facilities for Combinable Crops

- To help the combinable crops sector to become more competitive.
- Aimed at new and existing Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) wishing to process, produce and market primary agricultural products or develop new processes and technologies in this area.

Farm Diversification

- To support farm businesses seeking increased income from enterprises other than traditional agricultural enterprises.
- To generate benefits to the wider rural economy through on farm investments.
- Aimed at those gaining an income from agricultural activities such as owner occupier, landlord or tenant, close family members who work on the holding and farmer controlled businesses.

Support the Processing of Organic Farm Wastes

- To provide financial assistance towards the capital costs of plant, fixed equipment and infrastructure necessary for the processing of organic farm wastes.
- Aimed at farmers and enterprises engaged in agricultural activities and located in the West Midlands region.

Resource Efficiency on Agricultural and Horticultural Units

- To improve the economic performance of agricultural and horticultural businesses through investments in technologies intended to improve the utilisation of power, heat, manures and water.
- Aimed at farmers, horticulture and agricultural land owners including groups of farmers and land owners.

Improve the Economic Value of Forests and the Processing and Marketing of Primary Forestry Products

- To improve the economic value of forests and support the production, processing and marketing of primary forestry products through investment in improved efficiency, renewable energy, new technologies and new market opportunities.
- Aimed at private forests (including local authorities) and groups of forest owners seeking to improve the economic value of forests.

Investments in Basic Services for Rural Populations

- To stem or reserve the declining and poor access to services in rural areas of the West Midlands.
- Aimed at charitable organisations, social enterprises and Local Authorities acting on behalf of the community sector to enable the improvement of access to services.

How do I apply?

If you think you are eligible:

- Visit and review the RDPE SIG bidding rounds web page to check on current open “calls for applications” and to confirm that your project is eligible against the detailed specification listed.
- If it looks as if you are eligible, you are first encouraged to call your local Rural Hub and the RDPE Managers in the European Programme Management team at Advantage West Midlands for an informal discussion to cover the following points:

1. What will your project achieve, what are the benefits? In particular what will be:
 - The total volume of investment (£)
 - Number of new products and/or techniques
 - Increase in profitability you expect
2. Extent of any planned collaboration with other businesses.
3. Evidence of the need or demand for this project and its products.
4. How your project avoids duplicating existing activity.
5. Who would deliver this project and the background or track record of the applicant or organisation in business, project management and managing grant funding.
6. The approximate costs of the project.
7. Where the other funding for the project is coming from and if it is secured.
8. The items you require grant funding for.
9. As part of the application process, and if you have not already done so, we will put you in touch with Business Link West Midlands who will help you assess any need for training or business advice.
10. Once received, your full application will be subject to an appraisal process, and once complete the Agency's Investment Decision Group (IDG) will consider it and if successful, we will issue you with a funding contract and you can begin work on your project.

Where can I find out more?

For more information select from the contact details below:

Name	Sector	Contact details
Richard Hillier European Programmes Team Leader		richardhillier@advantagewm.co.uk 0121 503 3386
Jamie Inglis RDPE Manager	Livestock; Environmental Technologies	jamienglis@advantagewm.co.uk 0121 503 3226 07824 542559
Bob Gregson RDPE Manager	Food and Drink	bobgregson@advantagewm.co.uk 0121 380 3623 07887 508490
Jo Jury RDPE Manager	Tourism	jojury@advantagewm.co.uk 0121 503 3220 07894 621066

For more information about the West Midlands RDPE Programme please go to our website www.advantagewm.co.uk and select the RDPE Programme section.

Rural Networks:

For more information about rural support in your county contact your Local Rural Hub:

Name	Hub	Contact details
Pauline Yardley Project Manager		Pauline.yardley@wrh.org.uk 01905 622272 07833 651601
Cathy Meredith Co-ordinator	Herefordshire Rural Hub	meredithc@hct.ac.uk 01432 870033 07970 181628
Victoria Jones Co-ordinator	Shropshire Rural Hub	shropsruralhub@wnsc.ac.uk 01939 262106 07967 438516
Frances Beatty Co-ordinator	Staffordshire Rural Hub	info@staffordshireruralhub.org 01785 255305 07877 896466
Carrie Robbins Co-ordinator	Warwickshire Rural Hub	info@ruralhub.org.uk 02476 858242
Val Breakwell Co-ordinator	Worcestershire Rural Hub	valerie.breakwell@wrh.org.uk 01905 622272 07833 051602

Business Advice:

For rural business advice and training opportunities contact:

Business Link West Midlands

Please contact:
0845 113 1234
www.businesslinkwm.co.uk



3 Priestley Wharf • Holt Street • Aston Science Park • Birmingham B7 4BN
Tel: +44(0)121 380 3500 • Fax: +44(0)121 380 3501 • www.advantagewm.co.uk