



Press Release information – Leader 4 Torridge & North Devon

Coverage required:

Local newspapers

Regional newspapers

Local television news

Local radio stations

National press

Other (specify)

Release date: 15 December 2011

Subject: Launch of the Green Business Exemplars Grant Competition

Details for press release:

Small businesses with a green idea can take advantage of a new competition for grants of up to £10,000. The grant is part of the Leader 4 Torridge and North Devon programme funded by Defra and the European Union. The Green Business Exemplars competition was launched by Stewart Wallis, chief executive of the new economics foundation (nef), Rob Zarywacz, business writer for the North Devon Journal and Bruce Douglas from Defra. "To support the low carbon and environmental sustainability priorities of the programme, we are looking to fund at least five projects that can demonstrate excellence and good practice in 'greening' a business, product or service," said Leader 4 Chairman Viv Gale. "Projects receiving grant support could include the development of new sustainable products and services or those linked to the environment; reducing carbon impact through more efficient use of resources; improved waste, energy or water management systems; support for biodiversity or addressing climate change."

In launching the competition, Stewart Wallis said, "In a changing world of debt ridden economies and rising commodity prices, we need to build thriving local communities. This new fund can demonstrate to North Devon new ways to green the economy, protect jobs and protect biodiversity."

Rob Zarywacz emphasised the innovation and ideas among North Devon businesses, “We have many businesses starting up, lots of green businesses and people investing thousands of hours to develop their businesses – these people will get us out of recession if we support them with the positive opportunities from this grant scheme.”

Bruce Douglas from Defra, one of the main funding bodies of the Leader programme said, “developing the economy in support of the high quality environment is a core priority in the Rural Development programmes. Leader 4 had great success with their earlier business grant scheme and this is a positive addition to their programme.”

“An important part of the Leader programme across the UK and Europe is sharing good practice and encouraging innovation,” said project officer Jenny Carey-Wood. “The green exemplars will be written up as case studies to be published on-line and in hard copy to share information with other businesses and rural areas in Europe.”

The competition is based on submitting an Expression of Interest by 16 January 2012 on a form downloaded from the Leader 4 website – www.leader4.org . Businesses need to check the criteria online to see if they are eligible to enter the competition and if they become a finalist, they will have to provide 50% funding towards their project. Shortlisted entries will be visited by a competition panel member and the finalists chosen by the panel will be invited to submit a full Leader 4 application for the grant. Any queries not answered online can be emailed to GBE@northdevonplus.co.uk

Ends

Leader 4 contact: Jenny Carey-Wood 07825 743656

Leader 4 Torridge and North Devon
North Devon+
Caddsdwn Business Support Centre
Clovelly Road
Bideford
EX39 3DX

Phone: 01237 426423

Fax: 01237 426428

E-mail: leader4@northdevonplus.co.uk

Website: www.leader4.org

Notes to editors:

About Leader4 Torridge and North Devon:

Leader 4 is a rural development programme with £3.1 million grant to provide project funding and development support to improve the economy, environment and quality of life in rural areas. Support will be available for innovative, sustainable and high quality projects that meet the aim and objectives. The programme area includes all of rural Torridge and North Devon districts **except** for the six central wards that make up Barnstaple Town (Pilton, Yeo Valley, Forches & Whiddon Valley, Newport & Central Town).

The programme was launched in December 2008 and will operate until the end of 2013.

This is the Local Action part of the Rural Development Programme for England, based on Leader principles. It is funded by European grant from the Common Agricultural Policy and by Defra.

The programme is community led. This means it is led by a partnership of local people from the business, community, voluntary and public sectors in the Torridge and North Devon area, known as the Local Action Group. They are the decision making group.

The Local Action Group is supported by an Accountable Body which has the experience and competence to administer European and public money. This is North Devon+, who will host and employ the programme staff, as well as providing legal, administrative and financial support and advice.

THE PROGRAMME AIM

"An enlivened and enriched rural environment in transition to a low carbon economy, driven by entrepreneurial growth and a 'can-do' culture"

Objectives and Activities

1. To raise and support growth aspirations of rural micro businesses

- 1.1 To stimulate growth in micro businesses
- 1.2 To improve ICT Infrastructure and usage for rural businesses
- 1.3 To develop community owned or managed workspaces
- 1.4 To increase workforce skills levels

2. To improve access to services and employment in deprived rural communities

- 2.1 To improve community owned facilities for local service delivery
- 2.2 To pilot innovative approaches to rural service delivery
- 2.3 To reduce barriers to training and employment for deprived communities

3. To develop the assets and resources of the high quality environment as an economic driver

- 3.1 To develop sustainable physical activities and access to the coast and countryside
- 3.2 To develop sustainable heritage/cultural activities and products
- 3.3 To develop skills, assets and resources to create employment in remote rural areas

4. To improve the environmental performance of communities and businesses to create a low carbon economy

- 4.1 To increase sustainability of communities and businesses

5. To build capacity, leadership and cooperation for sustainable community led regeneration

5.1 To increase joint working and cooperation among businesses and communities

5.2 To provide skills and knowledge to engage in regeneration projects

WHAT CAN THE PROGRAMME FUND?

The Leader 4 Torridge and North Devon Programme will fund new and innovative projects which contribute to the programme objectives and meet the needs of the area.

All projects will require some additional funding from public or private sources to match the grant. The amount of grant given to any project will vary from 10% to 70% depending on the type of activity. Applicants can be from the community, voluntary, business or public sector.

The programme will prioritise projects and activities which meet sustainable development and low carbon criteria. All applications will be subject to an independent environmental appraisal.

Background information on the Rural Development Programme for England

RDPE

The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) runs from 2007 to 2013. It is the 2nd pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy and aims to support the creation of genuinely sustainable farming, forestry and food sectors, whilst also bringing wider benefits for the economy, the environment and rural communities. It provides the major financial vehicle for protecting and enhancing the environment and securing a range of public benefits for society.

The RDPE has three priorities for rural development:-

Improving competitiveness of the agriculture and forestry sector

Improving the environment and the countryside

Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity

The RDPE priority for improving the environment and the countryside is being delivered nationally by the Forestry Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme and Natural England's Environmental Stewardship Scheme

Defra will deliver priorities 1 and 3 with a budget of £156.8 million over the seven years. Defra is also responsible for ensuring that five per cent of the RDPE funding is spent on enabling community involvement in rural development. The delivery partners in the South West aim to ensure that investment in each of the three priorities will help support investment in the others.



Part financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in Rural Areas