

“To address economic underperformance and contribute to the sustainable development of the Fens by supporting micro-enterprise start-up and growth in high-value sectors and sectors that benefit the area as a whole”

The definition of a micro-enterprise is ‘a business employing fewer than 10 people and with a turnover or balance sheet of less than €2 million (£1.8 million)’. Around 85% of the businesses that cover the Fens employ fewer than 10 people, with a significant number being self employed. The Fens Adventurers LAG therefore sees supporting micro-enterprises with investment in start up, development and training for employees as crucial to addressing economic underperformance and providing sustainable growth for the economy of the Fens.

The LAG will channel investment to micro-enterprises through three measures.

Measure 312 - Support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises

This will be the main measure the LAG will use to channel investment into micro-enterprises. Grants will be available to entrepreneurs wanting to start a new rural micro-enterprise or existing owners who are looking at expanding their business. The LAG will invest in enterprises that have wider economic benefits and fit with the aims and objectives of FARDP. In short the LAG will support enterprises that will look to create new jobs or sustain existing jobs in the following sectors; land based sector, manufacturing, engineering, high value sectors (high tech or creative industries) and tourism. The LAG will also support social enterprises working to provide basic services for the rural economy, such as child care or elderly care service providers or community run shops.

Measure 331 - Training and information for economic actors

Through this measure the LAG will look to support micro-enterprises that want to develop non-statutory skills within their workforce through non qualification based training. This could include training courses for tourism businesses on how to market their accommodation and meet the expectations of the modern consumer.

Measure 421 - Implementing co-operation projects

Through this measure the LAG wants to support micro-enterprises that have already received investment through FARDP to link with similar enterprises within the UK or EU to share knowledge and learn best practice. Support will generally be towards the facilitation of this joint working, so will cover travel and other associated costs. Examples of initiatives supported through this measure could be engineering/manufacturing operations that want to adopt innovative methods for production that are already being used within by a similar operation within the EU.

For a general overview of the opportunities available for micro-enterprises from FARDP, please download the Rural Business Development flier from the section resources and downloads.