

Report to	Policy & Programme Committee
Date	26 May 2016
By	Sustainable Economy Officer
Title of Report	Coast to Capital (C2C) European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) Tourism Cooperation Grant Application

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to

- 1) Note the success of the outline application**
- 2) Delegate authority to the Director of Countryside Policy & Management, in consultation with the Chair of the Policy and Programme Committee, to approve and submit the full application.**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Committee received a report on this funding call on 13 October 2015 and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and the Committee Chair to approve and submit the outline application to the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). The SDNPA application was one of four that were successful at the outline stage and we have now been asked to submit a full application by 15 July 2016.
- 1.2 The Coast to Capital (C2C) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) call for grant applications to 'support investments in local cooperation and partnerships to improve the attractiveness of the tourism sector' was issued on 27 July 2015 with a closing date of 30 October 2015 for outline applications. The call covers the rural areas of C2C. The total grant funding available is £479,045, grant size is from £35k up to £80k.
- 1.3 Seven outline applications were submitted. The four invited to full application are SDNPA, Horsham Market Towns, Manhood Peninsula and East Surrey. The only spatial overlap is with the Horsham DC project.

2. Background

- 2.1 The SDNPA's project ('Up the Downs') aims to promote sustainable tourism in that part of SDNP that lies within the C2C LEP area. It will create and coordinate a Sustainable Tourism and Travel partnership for the South Downs - of transport operators, accommodation providers, hospitality businesses, rural communities, opt-in Local Authorities and SDNPA.
- 2.2 The partnership will produce a Destination Management Plan (DMP) to promote the South Downs National Park built around the Shared Identity and based on the approach of developing a number of visitor hubs and gateways. This will be underpinned by visitors accessing the National Park sustainably, using public transport.
- 2.3 The Destination Management Plan (DMP) will be accompanied by three 'products' which will demonstrate ways in which the DMP can be implemented. These are:
 - A pop-up information point;
 - Tourism/transport provider training; and
 - Example itineraries.

- 2.4 The project would develop a supply chain through cooperative activity between transport operators, information providers and hospitality businesses. A small marketing budget is included.
- 2.5 The target markets are both local conurbations (Brighton, Portsmouth and Southampton) and the wider South East region, especially London.

3. Approval and submission process

- 3.1 The full application, as a signed hard copy, must be with the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) by 15 July 2016.
- 3.2 It is proposed that the Director of Countryside Policy & Management, as sponsoring Director for this project be delegated authority, in consultation with the Chair of the Policy and Programme Committee, to approve and submit the application.
- 3.3 It is expected that successful applicants will be notified in September 2016 and a funding agreement should be forthcoming by October 2016.
- 3.4 The project team is now planning delivery based on a December 2016 project start date with completion by March 2018.

4. Resources

- 4.1 The outline application requested grant funding of £79,819 at a 100% intervention rate. This included the cost of a Project Officer who will lead on coordinating the development of the partnership, the production of the Destination Management Plan, coordinating a marketing campaign and initiating the three demonstration ‘products’. Other costs to be met by the grant relate to these activities. Subsequently the project team bid to the Strategic Fund for £12,000 to cover the capital element – the ‘pop-up’ information point.
- 4.2 The RPA have required the market testing of staffing element of the project by a tender for delivery by consultants. This tender process is currently underway. In parallel the project officer post is being graded so that the project team can decide on the optimum approach to delivery.
- 4.3 The project will be managed by the Sustainable Tourism Lead (post currently vacant) with additional inputs from the Head of Communications, Interpretation Officer, Research & Evidence Officer, Access & Recreation Strategy Lead, Countryside & Policy Manager (West) and area teams. The Sustainable Economy Officer is coordinating the application process and will provide advice on additional/continuation funding if the application is successful.
- 4.4 It is anticipated that partners would continue to commit some officer time to the Sustainable Tourism and Travel Partnership after March 2018 and that SDNPA’s Sustainable Tourism Officer would support the Partnership after the fixed term Project Officer post (or consultancy support) ends. It is expected that the Partnership will pursue a range of funding opportunities to deliver its Destination Management Plan.

5. P&P Committee Considerations

- 5.1 P&P Committee previously considered this grant application at the outline stage at the 13 October 2015 meeting. This meeting agreed to delegate approval of the outline application to the Director of Planning and the Chair of the Policy and Programme Committee.
- 5.2 The request for match funding was approved by the 25 April 2016 Senior Management Team.

6. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No
Does the proposal raise any	Yes, see (4) above.

Implication	Yes*/No
Resource implications?	
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	VfM is tested as part of the application process. The majority of the project costs will be met by grant aid if the application is successful.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	The implications of the act were taken into account in drafting the tender. The tender for consultancy services uses SDNPA's standard procedures and the In-Tend system.
Has due regard been taken of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	The project promotes access by disadvantaged groups and will potentially involve providers such as the Aldingbourne Trust.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy?	The application is being developed in line with the sustainability principles set out in the Sustainability Strategy. Of particular relevance to this outline application are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Living within environmental limits – considering the impact on the environment; 2) Ensuring a strong healthy and just society – considering social cohesion and wellbeing; and 3) Achieving a sustainable economy – considering impacts on or contribution to a sustainable economy.

7. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

- 7.1 There is a risk of further delay in the application process. The RPA estimates that the current journey time from the call being issued to generating funding letters for successful applicants, is of the order of 15 months. However very few EAFRD calls have been issued to date and this could slow further once new calls appear in May. The project is predicated on a having sufficient time before the visitor season to form the partnership and produce priority actions. If the start date slips beyond January 2017 this may require a postponement, withdrawal or redesign.
- 7.2 A Project Initiation Document (PID), Risk Register and Gantt Chart have been produced. The Risk Register is attached as **Appendix I**.

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Appendices I. Risk Register

SDNPA Consultees Chief Executive; Director of Strategy & Partnerships; Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services, Governance and Support Services Manager Business Service Manager

External Consultees The project team have started engaging potential project partners.

Background Documents Working with LEPs and LEADER – Presentation to Policy and Programme Committee, 21 July 2015
https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/PP_2015July21-Agenda-Item-15-Presentation.pdf

Tourism Bid to the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) - Policy and Programme Committee, 13 October 2015
https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/PP_2015October-13-Agenda-Item-9.pdf

Project Risk Register

Line	Ref No	Description of Risk	Description of Impact	Mitigation	Contingency	Likelihood	Impact	Owner	Severity
A	1	Transport operators, communities and SMEs fail to engage with the proposed partnership.	Partnership lacks credibility and scope and fails to generate appropriate or impactful projects	Early engagement with potential partners by SDNPA staff	Narrow the geographical scope of the project	Possible (3)	Moderate (3)	Project Manager	
B	2	Confusion/conflict with overlapping/adjoining Tourism Cooperation projects	Partners withdraw entirely or select one project over another	Close coordination with any overlapping projects and a clear message from the outset	Narrow the geographical scope of the project	Possible (3)	Minor (2)	Project Manager	
C	3	Difficulty in recruiting Project Officer post or appointing appropriate consultants	Unable to deliver the project to schedule	Promote opportunity widely and early	Agree project change with funders to slip timescale	Unlikely (2)	Minor (2)	Project Manager	
D	4	Lack of funding/resources to implement priority projects proposed by the partnership	Few concrete outcomes generated by the partnership and it becomes a 'talking shop'	Sustainable Economy Lead to identify opportunities, inform the partnership and assist with applications where possible	Lobby funders to support the partnership's proposals	Possible (3)	Moderate (3)	Project Board	
E	5	Delay in application process leading to (further) slippage in project timescale	Costs escalate, potential partners lose interest, organisational focus changes	Sustainable Economy Lead to maintain close contact with RPA and C2C LEP	Reconsider application	Possible (3)	Major (4)	SMT	

Mitigation: preventative action plan aimed at cause to reduce the likelihood of the problem occurring

Contingency: protective action plan aimed at effects, to reduce the impact if problem does occur

Owner, person accountable

