



# Securing Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Funding

‘Weald Granary was at a crucial point in its development so wanted the best chance of success with our RDPE bid. EFFP have been very professional in assembling the application and we had a good working relationship from the start. The results is our members will benefit from the major upgrade of facilities in time for the next harvest.’

**David Knight**

Finance Director, Weald Granary

## Summary

EFFP assisted Weald Granary in securing the necessary RDPE grant to enable a significant capital investment within the business. This investment enabled Weald Granary to achieve Vendor Assurance and new marketing opportunities for its farmer members.

## The business challenge

Weald Granary is an established farmer owned grain storage, processing and marketing business situated in Kent with 170 members and a capacity of 58,000 tonnes.

In order to maximise the value of its members’ grain Weald Granary needed to achieve a step change in its offer to customers, who are predominantly millers, maltsters and exporters. One of the essential improvements needed was to achieve vendor assured status with its customers.

This required an investment of £1.9m into a new state of the art facility including a laboratory block, testing equipment, office accommodation and 6000 tonne bin in addition to major changes to vehicle weighing, handling and loading. This investment would only be possible if a grant could be secured. Funds were potentially available under the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) which provides support for projects that involve collaboration and improvement in marketing.

## How we helped

EFFP, with an excellent track record of successful applications, was selected by Weald Granary to ensure that the grant application was structured appropriately, progressed efficiently and ultimately gained approval from South East England Development Agency (SEEDA).

Using its knowledge of the scheme, coupled with detailed discussions with the directors, EFFP was able to submit an Expression of Interest, which is the first stage of the application.

Careful consideration was given to the application as it was required to meet a number of stringent measures to qualify for grant aid. As well as achieving economic benefits for its members and the region, the impact of the plan on the environment and ultimately climate change also had to be taken into account. To meet this latter requirement EFFP helped Weald Granary assess and financially evaluate a plan to convert waste screenings from a grain cleaning process into pellets, to be utilised as a heat source on site.



### How we helped (continued)

The full application and business plan then took some months to complete as much detailed information was collated and accurate capital costs obtained. Dialogue with and feedback from SEEDA's RDPE team were obtained where possible as this was a substantial investment for both Weald Granary and RDPE, and it was necessary to ensure that the requirements of both parties were met.

It was critical to produce a strong business case which demonstrated that a substantial capital investment would achieve benefits in improved market opportunities and hence real value for farmer members. The plan included budgets and cash flow analysis detailing how debt would be repaid in a structured programme. One of the challenges a farmer owned business such as Weald Granary face is that in principle it returns maximum value to its members and does not aim to generate and retain high profits. This can prove difficult when convincing funders, who do not necessarily understand the co-operative model, that the business is strong enough to service the anticipated levels of debt.

### The outcome

The application was completely successful with the full grant approved. As a result the new facilities will position Weald Granary as a vendor assured grain processing business and the primary collaborative storage facility in the South East.

### Securing support

The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) provides grant support for businesses which are seeking to add value to agricultural and horticultural products and utilise co-operation and collaboration to improve efficiency. To secure such support a detailed business plan and application has to be submitted outlining the viability and benefits of the project. EFFP can advise and undertake this work for potential applicants as this example illustrates.

### About EFFP

EFFP is a specialist agri-food business consultancy, working across the whole supply chain. We combine our farming knowledge with food industry expertise to address structural, commercial and trading relationship issues from an objective and independent viewpoint.

As a national organisation, with a dedicated team of highly experienced sector and regional specialists, we not only assist individual businesses but also promote new thinking and transformational change across the complete chain. We reinvest all our profits back into the industry to help make that change happen.

### We offer

- strategic insights into what is happening both globally and nationally, and crucially the implications for UK businesses;
- a range of business development services to help deliver growth, organisational and structural improvements and continuing professional development;
- expert advice and practical solutions to strengthen and integrate the supply chain back to farm level.

### Speak to us

To discuss how EFFP can support your business please contact us.

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