

**We have the chance to bid to Government for some funds to support the local rural economy and communities in the South Downs and Low Weald area. We are seeking your views and ideas on what type of actions should be supported.**

**Please read and complete the following. It should not take too much of your time. We would like to have your views by the end of November 2007, or sooner if possible.**

## **ABOUT THE LEADER BID**

Partners in the South Downs and Low Weald area have the opportunity to make a bid for money to support a range of activity to develop their rural economy over 2008-2013. The money would come from the European Union through something called the LEADER programme. The area in question includes those parts of the South Downs in West Sussex, stretching into East Sussex as far as Lewes; and the low weald area stretching from the West Sussex border close to Midhurst to Horsham in the East.

We have formed a 'Local Action Group' (LAG) to take this forward, which includes representatives from public sector organisations like the local councils and Natural England, local colleges, the voluntary and community sector, local businesses and business networks, all with an interest in supporting the rural economy.

**You can view a full list of members of the LAG, and a map of the area to be covered by the bid at our website [www.sussexandwealdleader.co.uk](http://www.sussexandwealdleader.co.uk). The site should be live from 9/11/07.**

Wood From The Trees Ltd has been commissioned to help these partners put together the bid.

The Local Action Group has to submit proposals to the South-East Regional Development Agency (SEEDA) by January 2008, and – if we are successful – the funds will be available from spring 2008.

We want your help in suggesting what type of activity we should include in this bid, which if successful could bring some £450,000 each year to the area over the next 6 years.

We can bid for money to support actions in some, or all, of four key areas:

1. Forestry and woodlands
2. Farming and food production
3. Other small businesses
4. Local services and communities

And we are also looking for ideas about how actions under these four areas can be made 'green' or 'sustainable'.

## **WHAT TO DO NEXT**

The rest of this document seeks your views under the four key areas.

Please select the areas you wish to comment on. You do not need to comment under all the sections, although please do if they are relevant to your organisation or personal interest. Feel free to write as much as you like – we are interested in your views and ideas.

When you have completed this response form, please attach it to an e-mail and send to [hilaryosullivan@wfft.co.uk](mailto:hilaryosullivan@wfft.co.uk), or you can post a copy to:

Hilary O'Sullivan  
Wood From The Trees Ltd  
Burton Rough Cottage  
Burton Rough  
Petworth  
West Sussex GU28 0JS

**If you have any questions about the project, need help completing the form or would like to give your views by phone, please contact Hilary O'Sullivan at WFFT on 01798 342618 or [hilaryosullivan@wfft.co.uk](mailto:hilaryosullivan@wfft.co.uk)**

**If you prefer, from 9/11/07 you will be able to find and complete this document on-line at [www.sussexandwealdleader.co.uk](http://www.sussexandwealdleader.co.uk).**

**THANK YOU, WE REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR HELP.**



## About you

Your name (*optional*):

Organisation (*optional*):

Please describe your role/interest (e.g. Farmer, woodland owner, community group representative)

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## 1. Forests and Woodlands

We can bid for money to help improve the economic value of our woods and forests, and make more use of this valuable resource whilst preserving our wooded environment.

For example we could seek funds to:

- Introduce new methods of woodland management
- Use our woodlands to harvest more wood
- Develop and market wood-based products, including renewable energy
- Make use of woodlands for leisure and tourism
- Provide training for foresters, businesses and wood owners, and help them purchase equipment to enable the above

**You may have other ideas that are not listed above, please tell us about them.**

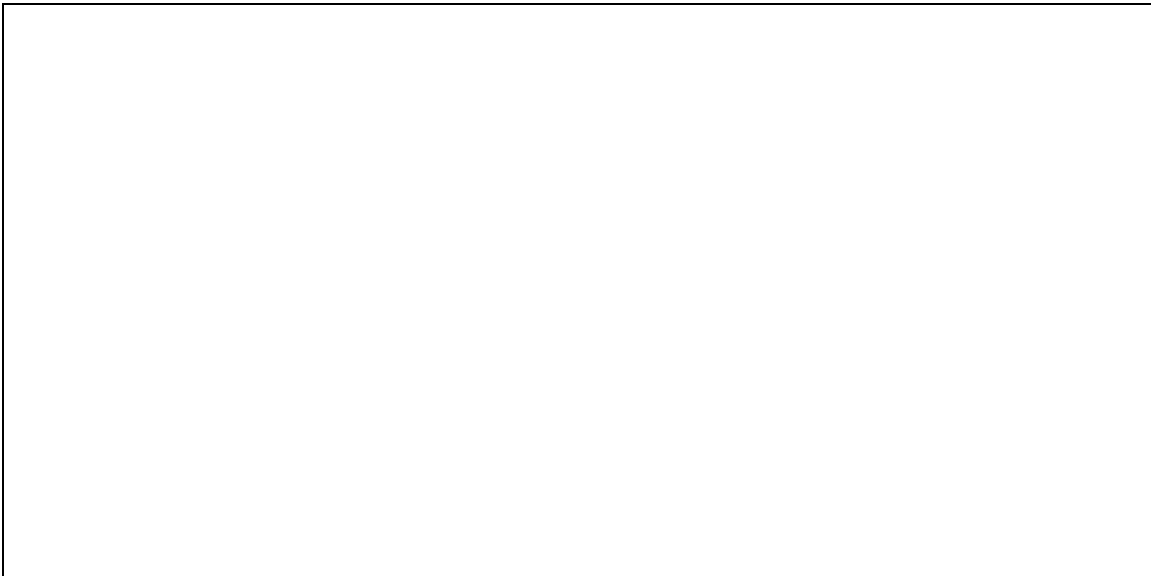
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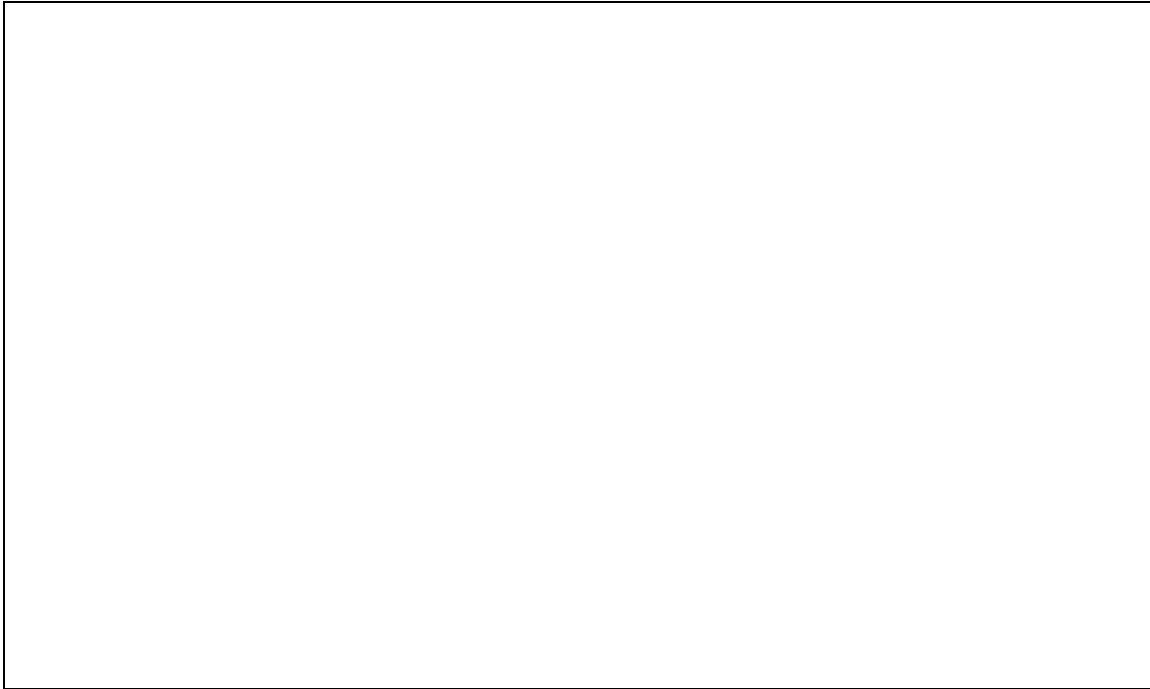
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3. What should the priorities be for any money we bid for from LEADER? Why have you chosen these priorities? (*for example think about areas which you think are not addressed at present or which are under-funded*)



4. Are you involved in, or do you have any ideas for projects that might be supported by the LEADER programme? (*selection of specific projects would happen after we secure funds and be through a fair and competitive process, but we do want to see what type of ideas are out there looking for funding support to help us shape the programme*)



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## **Farming and Food Production**

We can bid for money to help farmers and growers make their operations more efficient and economic and to modernise their farming and business methods. We can also bid for money to support the development of food production businesses.

For example we could seek funds to:

- Help farmers, growers and food producers introduce new working practices and methods, including sustainable farming practices
- Help farmers, growers and food producers develop new products and new markets for them
- Improve the use of local food and farming produce in the local area, for example through restaurants, hotels, schools.
- Help farmers and growers boost their incomes by diversifying into non-farming activity, for example tourism, hospitality, retail, and traditional trades like hedge laying
- Provide training for farmers, growers and food producers to help them do the above
- Purchase equipment to enable the above

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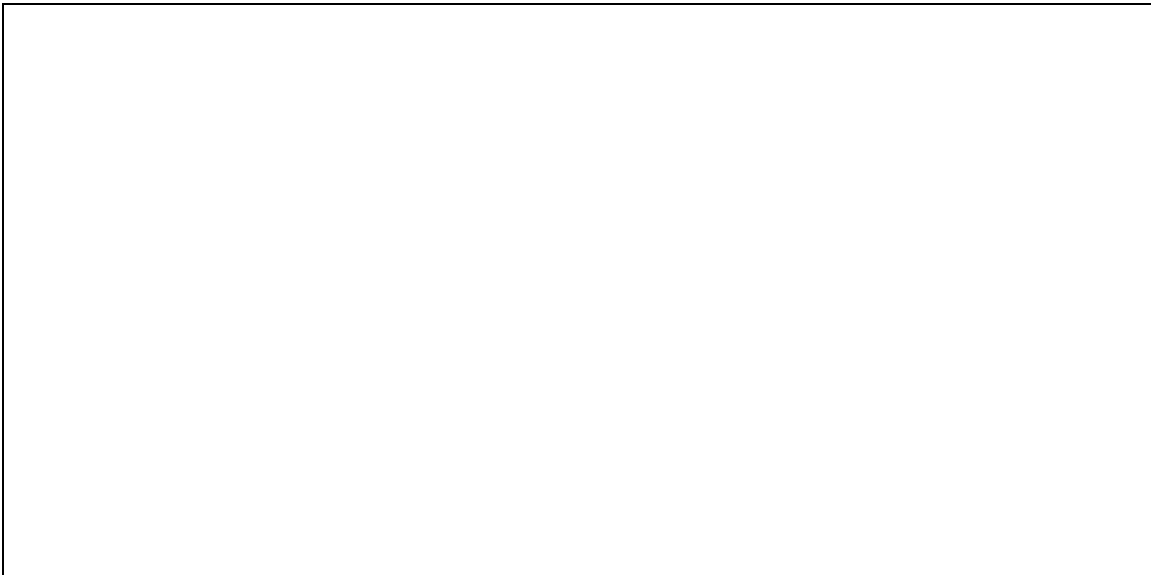
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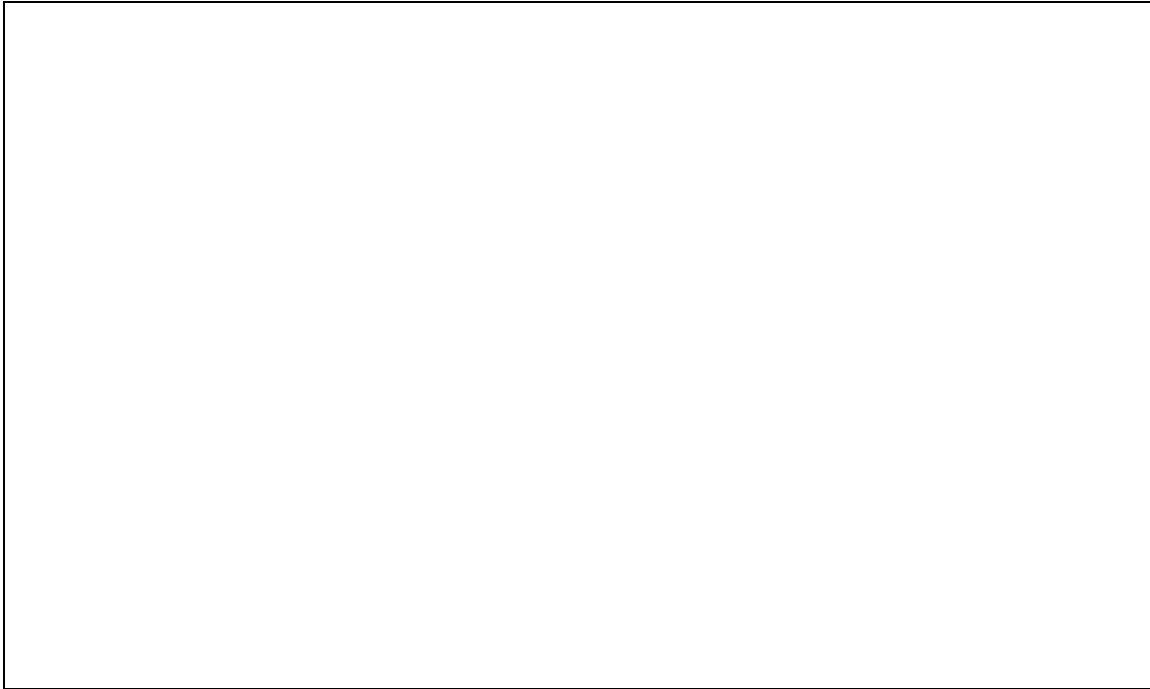
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## Supporting Small Businesses

Many of our local businesses are not involved in farming, growing or food production. We can bid for money to support the development of such small businesses, including the self-employed. This will help create local jobs, higher quality local job opportunities and income for local people, and support the delivery of local services.

For example we could seek funds to:

- Encourage new businesses to develop in all sectors, for example retail, personal and business services, traditional crafts and skills, tourism as well as production.
- Help businesses develop new products, services and markets.
- Help specific groups like women and young people start up businesses

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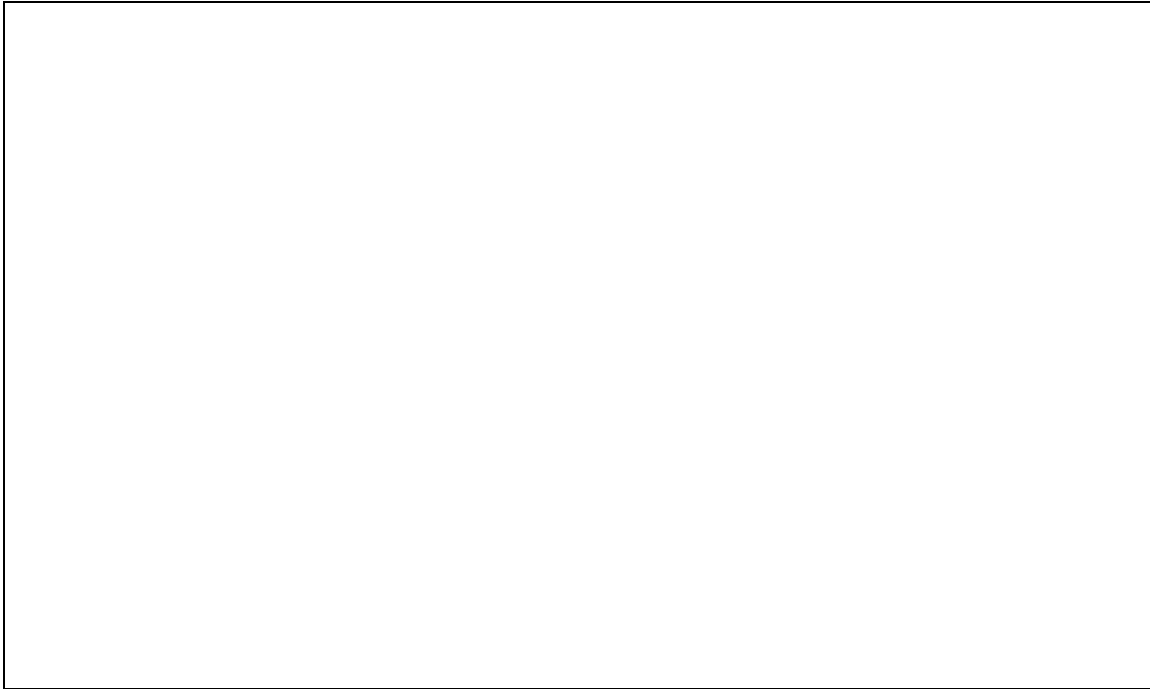
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## Local services and communities

We can bid for money to help support the delivery of local services in this rural area. These might include a wide range of services like energy, health and social care, retail, training, advice and information, and social opportunities. We can also bid for funds to support village and rural communities to come together to identify problems and needs, plan and bring about local improvements.

For example we could seek funds to:


- Improve or develop community buildings to provide local services and community space
- Improve access to services – for example health care, child care, advice, training in rural areas
- Help develop community-based enterprises and ‘social enterprises’ to deliver key services
- Address gaps in people’s skills and training
- Bring together different sections of the rural community and support the development of community groups
- Support communities to protect and enhance their local heritage, environment and countryside assets
- Support innovative schemes like community-based renewable energy projects or recycling projects

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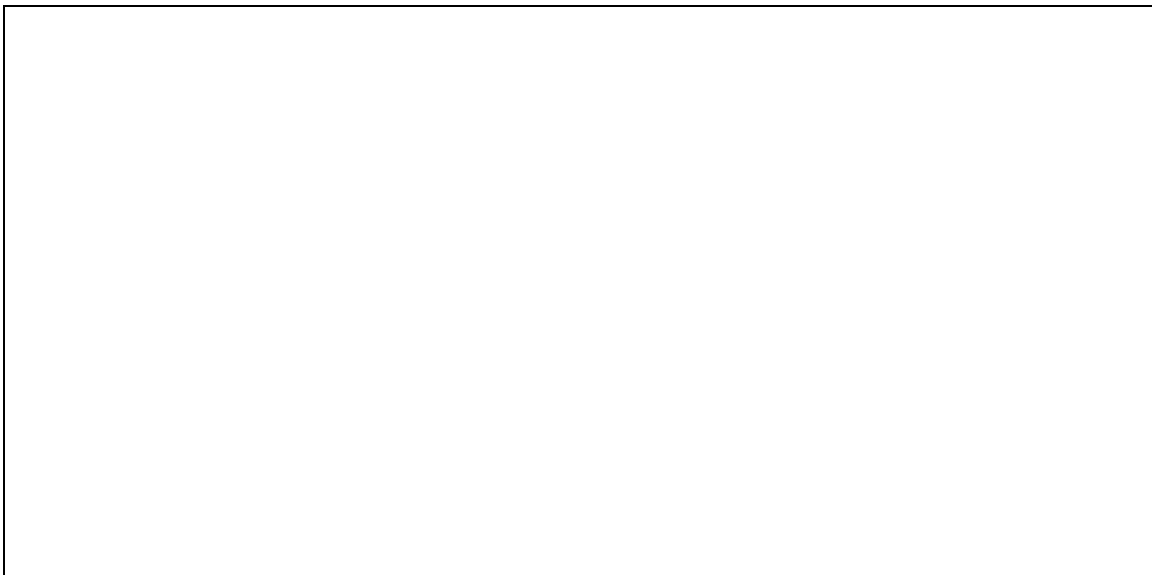
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