**GUIDELINES**

**Dorset Growth Hub – Growth Grant**

**What is the DGH Growth Grant?**

* As part of a Grant Scheme, the Dorset Business Growth Programme (DBGP) funded by The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and run by Dorset Growth Hub (DGH), funding may be available to assist your business with its plans to implement a step change in the business as part of the business’ growth ambitions.
* Growth Grants are match funded by the business making the application for funding (3:1) up to a **maximum grant amount of** **£10,000 with a minimum grant amount of £5,000**.
* For example, a minimum contribution of 75% of the total cost of the eligible project costs is required from your business. Hence the **minimum project size is £20,000**, but for example if the total project costs are £40,000 or over then the maximum grant of £10,000 is available.
* Examples of eligible project costs are provided later in these guidelines. DGH are happy to consider grants for projects that include ineligible project costs, but the grant match award will be applied to the eligible project costs only.

**Who can apply for the DGH Growth Grant?**

* In order to be eligible, you will need to be a **Small or Medium Sized Enterprise (SME) based in Dorset** and have been **trading viably.** This will need to be demonstrated with both historic trading accounts and management accounts.
* Your business must **formally engage with the DGH programme** if requested. It may be suitable for a Growth Advisor to visit and discuss your project as part of the grant application process.
* You will need to be able to demonstrate that **a grant will assist your business to grow** in the next 6 months from an existing sustainable position. Hence, businesses that have only short trading histories will not be eligible.
* Growth can be demonstrated in a number of ways but DGH are particularly interested in your planned job creation (direct employment only), introduction of new products or services to market (diversification), or improving business processes/digital capability (productivity). Focus on at least one of these areas in your grant application is essential.
* DGH will not support planned business activities that do not add to the net growth of the Dorset economy by merely displacing the activity of other local businesses.

**Who CANNOT apply for the DGH Growth Grant?**

* Please also note that some sectors are not eligible for support on this programme due to Central Government Legislation. These sectors include: \*Fishery & Aquaculture, \*Primary production, processing and marketing of agricultural products, \*Coal, Steel and shipbuilding sectors,\*Synthetic Fibres, \*Generalised School Age Education, \*Banking and Insurance Companies, \* Nuclear related activity (\*please follow the link for full eligibility guidelines)

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/760264/ESIF-GN-1-003_ERDF_Eligibility_Guidance_v9.pdf>

* Most local retailing and local service activities are also ineligible.

**How do I apply for the DGH Growth Grant?**

* Application is by **Expression of Interest (EOI) and supporting documentation** that is obtainedafter an initial enquiry through our website assessing the eligibility of your business and project idea.
* It is essential that the last available full years business accounts (profit and loss account and balance sheet) together with the most recently available management accounts are provided to support the application.
* Quotes or illustrations for the planned expenditure are helpful supporting documents if available.
* Upon receipt, applications will be initially assessed for conformance with these guidelines and thereafter reviewed by a panel who will make the grant award decision.

**When will I receive a decision about my DGH Growth Grant application submission?**

* We aim to make grant award decisions ASAP.
* Quality of initial application is directly correlated to the timescale for decision making. This can be as quick as 7 days.
* If successful a grant offer letter will be issued within 2 weeks following the initial decision.
* Grant monies will be paid following submission of relevant project cost receipts, evidence that these have been settled from a bank account and evidence that procurement policies have been adhered to. Full claim procedures with be provided with the grant offer letter.
* Grants **must be** **claimed in full before 22nd December 2022**.

**What can the Growth Grant be used for?**

**The Growth Grant can be used for eligible project costs**, which may typically be:

* Acquisition of plant, machinery, tooling (title must held by the applicant)
* Outsourced specialist projects/consultants – procured expertise
* IT or digital infrastructure costs & cloud-based technology
* Digital marketing costs eg. consultancy costs / website development/design, App development, online content production) relating to a brand-new product launch only
* ***NB*** *- Grants are not suitable for replacement expenditure or what are considered “business as usual” business costs. Equipment can be new or used. The grant is looking to help your additional investment decisions to aid growth.*

**The Growth Grant cannot be used for:**

* Repayment of debts
* Land/property purchases, and rental payments/deposits
* Direct Labour- Salaries/wages, and staff training
* Stock and consumables
* General running costs of the business or working capital including the provision of laptops/phones/tablets, software licenses, professional fees, normal marketing budgets
* Repairs & Renewals including replacement of plant & equipment (without increased capability)
* Vehicles and highly portable equipment
* Projects that have already commenced or previously incurred expenses
* Projects that are unlikely to conclude during 2022, as all claims must conclude by 22 December 2022

**What else might I need to know about applying for the DGH Growth Grant?**

* **The grant application process is competitive, and funds are limited**. The onus is on the applicant to present as strong a case as possible as with any other application for external finance.
* Recipients of our former grant schemes can receive additional grant support. Please indicate the success of past projects in your new application.
* Applicants must provide supporting accounting information to demonstrate your current business viability and future ambitions. Moreover, clear articulation of what the business plans to do (The Project) and how the project is a step change from existing operations (a point of difference or additionality) are the key to a successful grant application.
* Please note that there are specific procurement policies that must be complied with for grant claims where individual eligible project costs and/or single supplier combined costs exceed £25,000. For example, evidence will be required for tendering for works or services, and the provision of 3 quotes for purchases of equipment. Full guidance is provided with grant offers.
* Any claims for project costs must be in the future following the contractual signed agreement date. No retrospective claiming will be eligible. Hence, your grant must be agreed before your project costs are incurred.

**Where can I find more information about the DGH Growth Grant?**

* This guidance and the application process have been made as simple as possible and have not attempted to answer every question which might arise. Specific questions on what can be funded, the application process or anything else, can be addressed to a DGH Business Growth Consultant who will help you ensure your application is robust and ready to be submitted.
* If you require more information or are unsure if you are eligible for the support we offer, you can call us on **0345 458 6480** or email **grants@dorestgrowthhub.co.uk** and a member of the DGH team will be happy to help.
* The EOI form is available on the DGH website