



case study

equal opportunities



Objective One is part-financed by the European Union



The Objective One Partnership for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly

RURAL TOURISM IMPROVEMENT FUND

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the project

The Rural Tourism Improvement Fund is a gateway fund designed to help farmers wishing to diversify into new and innovative projects (this includes quality upgrading and additional facilities) which will attract tourists to Cornwall outside the normal holiday season. The aim of the fund is to support the tourism industry by improving the quality and range of facilities available for visitors to Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

The Programme has invested £4,069,874 from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) in the project which has a total cost of £18,464,127.



Pollaughan Farm Cottages on the Roseland peninsula provide self catering facilities for people with disabilities

The Rural Tourism Improvement Fund has two parts that provide:

1. Capital grants to help improve the quality and range of facilities that will attract more visitors to farm enterprises, especially out of season, and;
2. Access grants providing grants to improve access to the countryside for visitors to tourism businesses.

Investment from the fund includes farm trails, access for disabled people, small-scale environmental measures and recycling.

measures of equal opportunities adopted

The types of projects that have received investment from the improvement fund have included:

- Upgrading for both self catering and B&B businesses to provide facilities for people with disabilities, including en-suite facilities.
- Quality improvements which have enabled farm kitchens to meet health and safety standards and enhanced the working conditions of the proprietor. Laundry rooms have also been provided which, again, provide enhanced working conditions.
- Additional facilities to encourage greater tourism outside the main season which have taken the form of central heating; children's play areas; swimming pools and saunas; covered tea rooms on both the Camel Trail and the Bissoe Cycle trails; sports facilities created in barns which are also able to be accessed by local community groups; hard standings and electrical hook-ups on caravan sites.
- Projects that meet a proven identified niche market, eg activity holidays. One project provides riding holidays, however the owner is able to use sign language and caters for people with impaired hearing. Fishing, archery, shooting and even astrology are all niche markets which are now provided within Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. There is also a business offering 'rescued dog' training courses and a redundant barn has been converted to provide music and theatre workshops.
- New accommodation has been eligible if the applicant has been able to demonstrate the need, for example focusing on out of season bookings. One project on the Isles of Scilly has enabled two wooden chalets to be demolished and two new bungalows to be built which has resulted in offering year round accommodation. Other projects have included the provision of self catering accommodation on campsites to enable older family members who no longer wish or are able to camp to enjoy family holidays.



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- Additional accommodation for an existing tourism business has been eligible where the applicant has demonstrated that business growth is hampered by the lack of sufficient accommodation, eg family has outgrown existing farm and is being forced to share or camp or even leave home, or a proven need for increased visitor accommodation.

Rural Access Grants have provided:

- Farm trails with surfacing suitable for people with mobility difficulties
- Fishing platforms for wheelchair users
- Ponds and pathways
- Access to small animal areas for young children
- Sensory planting
- Buggies and adapted link boxes which both people with disabilities and those with young children can access to enjoy farm tours etc.
- Tidied lanes and provided parking to ensure an improved "first impression"

benefits of equal opportunities

The benefits of the measures taken within these funds are many, including:

- A considerable number of the 479 businesses which have received investment through the fund are run by women either as sole traders in their own right or as the partner most heavily involved in this area of the farming business.
- An increased number of bed spaces within Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly suitable for people with disabilities.
- The tourism sector has benefited through being able to offer a better quality product in the rural sector which is being recognised and welcomed by a more discerning customer.
- Individual beneficiaries have benefited by being able to offer improved and or increased facilities which command a higher price. Occupancy rates are increased as is the length of the season, all resulting in raised income levels.
- The local economy has benefited from local sourcing of goods and services. For example, all self catering providers receiving investment must provide a locally sourced welcome pack and all B&B providers must source bacon and eggs etc, locally. One project now provides a wedding venue; cars, florists,



Glenleigh Fisheries have installed fishing platforms for wheelchair users

photographers and additional accommodation is all sourced locally.

- Networking has increased across the sector with accommodation providers meeting up with and discussing issues with local food producers etc.

lessons learnt

Annette Cole, project manager, has visited every applicant and said:

"Constant investment is vital to ensure the industry doesn't stand still. The public demands both higher standards of accessibility and a higher quality of goods and services provided. We have to keep on top of the market."

Annette said that she tries to help people fulfil both their business potential and the needs of the industry. As examples she quoted a couple who are passionate about gardening. They are now able to suggest garden tours to their guests, enhancing their standard of living and allowing them to indulge and share their interest.

In addition, Annette talked about a retired couple attempting to run a B&B in an old cottage. They had achieved only eight weeks letting (downstairs bathroom, two rooms upstairs). The project funded a complete upgrade and the business now achieves 35 weeks of letting and scenes from the TV series 'Doc Martin' are filmed on the farm.

For more information about how you can incorporate equal opportunities into your project please contact the Objective One Partnership Office on 01872 241379 or email objectiveone@cornwall.gov.uk.