



# DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

*News Release*

**19 June 2014**

## **DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER LAUNCHES £200M REGIONAL GROWTH POT TO SUPPORT SOUTH WEST BUSINESSES**

South West businesses can bid for a share of £200 million, the Deputy Prime Minister will announce today as he launches round six of the Regional Growth Fund (RGF).

The Government is investing £210 million from the first five rounds of the Regional Growth Fund in the South West, which is supporting 39 projects and programmes across the region, to create and safeguard thousands of jobs and stimulate £700 million of private sector investment.

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg said:

“The Regional Growth Fund is a helping hand from Government to create thousands of jobs that last, boost the private sector and rebalance the economy.

“I’ve seen first hand at Mulberry in Somerset how the fund is supporting businesses that are working hard to fuel our recovery and help us build a stronger economy.

“I would encourage any businesses that can generate significant private sector investment and sustainable jobs to bid for a share of the £200 million available from the fund.”

Round six will be open to private sector bidders seeking £1 million or more. The Government is calling on companies to plan high quality projects that will generate significant private sector investment and sustainable jobs. Businesses will be able to submit their bids until noon on 30 September, 2014.

Companies in the South West that have already had support from the RGF include:

- Mulberry Company (Design) Ltd was awarded a £2.53 million grant in RGF round two for a project to double the company's UK capacity and create 300 new jobs. The company has opened a second factory in Somerset, with an estimated total investment of £7.5 million. The RGF grant is supporting the

recruitment and training of the new staff for the factory. The factory was officially opened by the Deputy Prime Minister in March 2014.

- Johnson Matthey, a speciality chemicals company, was awarded £4.4 million RGF funding to enable the company to develop a world class manufacturing capability in Swindon. This project fits very well with the low carbon industry sector ambitions of the Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Forward Swindon. The company manufactures and supplies high performance electrode assemblies (MEAs), the multi-layer laminate device that is at the heart of a fuel cell system. JMFC's ambition is to be the leading supplier of high technology catalytic components for fuel cell systems worldwide.

To help bidders on their applications, road shows and expression of interest days will be held throughout the country from today to provide advice on how to make a successful bid. Events will be held on July 15 at the **University of the West of England in Bristol** and on July 31 at the **University of Plymouth**.

The Deputy Prime Minister will make the announcement at the Manufacturing Summit in Merseyside today, where he will speak to business leaders and manufacturers.

The Business Secretary, Vince Cable, and Business Minister Michael Fallon, will also speak at the Summit.

Vince Cable said:

“The Regional Growth Fund is a fundamental part of our efforts to boost manufacturing and rebalance the economy, helping to create new jobs in the South West. Round six is now open for applications and I urge businesses to see how it can help them to increase their workforce or expand to new markets.”

Business Minister Michael Fallon said:

“Through the Regional Growth Fund, we are investing £210 million in the South West, which will help growing businesses create long-term, highly skilled jobs.”

## **Notes to editors**

1. The Regional Growth Fund is a flexible and competitive fund operating across England. It supports projects and programmes that are using private sector investment to create economic growth and sustainable employment.

2. Round six of the Regional Growth Fund opens today and will close to applications on 30 September 2014 at noon.

3. For more information, and further details of the expression of interest events in your areas please go to [www.gov.uk/understanding-the-regional-growth-fund](http://www.gov.uk/understanding-the-regional-growth-fund) or email [growthfund@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:growthfund@bis.gsi.gov.uk)

4. Applicants should be aware of the EU state aid changes which take effect on 1 July 2014. You can find out more information [at https://www.gov.uk/state-aid](https://www.gov.uk/state-aid)

5. To keep up to date on further RGF developments please follow us on Twitter: @RGFGrowthFund

6. If your business is a small or medium sized business looking for less than £1 million or if it is not eligible for the Regional Growth Fund, there are plenty of other government backed finance options available. You can search the range of government finance schemes at <https://www.gov.uk/business-finance-support-finder> and for information on other financing options, visit <http://www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/finance-for-growth-peer-to-business-lending/>

10. In December the Government published its commitment to help small businesses to succeed - we want to make the UK the best place to start and grow a business. You can see our offer to small businesses online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/small-business-commitment>

11. The Government's economic policy objective is to achieve 'strong, sustainable and balanced growth that is more evenly shared across the country and between industries.' It set four ambitions in the '[Plan for Growth](#)', published at Budget 2011:

- to create the most competitive tax system in the G20
- to make the UK the best place in Europe to start, finance and grow a business
- to encourage investment and exports as a route to a more balanced economy
- to create a more educated workforce that is the most flexible in Europe.

Work is underway across government to achieve these ambitions, including progress on more than 250 measures as part of the Growth Review. Developing an [Industrial Strategy](#) gives new impetus to this work by providing businesses, investors and the public with more clarity about the long-term direction in which the government wants the economy to travel.

**ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER BY THE REGIONAL NEWS NETWORK**