

Breckland Enterprise & Learning Account (Phase 3) ***Supporting business creation and survival*** **Application Guidance**

1. Introduction

The Breckland Enterprise & Learning Account (BELA 3) is available to all established and prospective micro businesses (less than 10 employees) in the Breckland district, as long as the applicant fulfils the criteria contained within this guidance and is not a hobby or secondary activity.

The aim of BELA 3 is to support financially viable and stable businesses and business start ups that demonstrate the opportunity to grow. BELA 3 can offer a small flexible grant that will provide a subsidy to aid business and skills development and engage the applicant in the full range of business support and skills services available where no other funding exists.

BELA 3 is administered and managed by Breckland Council's Economic Development team on behalf of the Breckland Partnership. You are advised to discuss your application with a member of the Economic Development team prior to submission. (Contact details in section 7)

BELA 3 can provide assistance to applicants who often need early stage business and skills support in areas such as:

- Access crucial or critical training schemes
- Purchase professional services (i.e. consultancy and advice)
- Purchase/hire essential small items of equipment.
- Patenting and intellectual property.
- Accreditation of quality standards.
- Investment in new, or upgrading of IT software or the development of company website.

BELA 3 cannot support the following:

- Paying off debts or refinancing.
- Purchase of land or buildings.
- Financial investments.
- Salaries, travel or subsistence (unless in connection with any of the eligible categories).
- Ongoing normal business costs (i.e. business rates, overheads etc.).
- VAT payments.

NB The above lists are not exhaustive; please refer to the Economic Development Team for further assistance.

2. Eligibility

- Turnover of applicants must be less than 2 million Euros (approx £1.342m) per annum. (please note exchange rates will vary).
- Applicants must have no more than 10 employees
- Applicants (based on registered business or main operational base) must be located in the Breckland district.
- Applicants will need to provide proof of company existence or intention to trade (for start-ups). Hobbies and secondary activities will not be supported.
- Applicants should not be in receipt of Job Seeker allowance or other State Benefits.
- Applicants will not be employed by or work for Breckland Council.

3. How it works

- Total maximum grant amount is £500¹ (minimum amount £100).
- The applicant must match the grant amount approved. The grant will only provide a maximum of 50% of costs (up to £500).
- Applicants will receive one grant only for a total up to and not exceeding £500.
- Applications must be made on the official BELA 3 grant application form.
- Grants should be claimed within 2 months of receiving the grant offer letter.
- Applicants will need to provide annual years profit and loss account for up to 3 years depending on how many years of trading or if a new business, a business plan should be provided.
- All grant payments are made as reimbursements to the applicant, based on proof of expenditure.
- In line with European competition rules, applicants will need to sign a State Aids declaration (included in the application form) covering the last 3 years.

4. Grant Application Form Guidance

- There are a limited number of grants available therefore to assist your application you need to supply as much detail and supporting evidence as possible. This information needs to give the appraisal panel a clear indication of your business circumstances, how you intend to turn it into a viable, profit making business, that has a market or growth potential, and that can support you.
- The panel can only appraise your application on the written information and evidence you provide via the application process.
- Question 14 – “to purchase a piece of machinery” would provide insufficient information for a decision to be made. A better response would include details of

¹ Subject to availability of funds. The BELA 3 scheme has limited availability – funds are allocated on a first come, first served basis.

- the machinery, why you need it and how it will be used in the business / compliment other machinery / processes.
- Question 15 – Example areas that could be included in this answer are details of your business activity, the number of staff you employ, or intend to employ, why you can't get funding anywhere else and why you feel the Breckland Partnership should support you.
 - Evidence that you may provide to support your application could include contract information, customer base, market research and competition, growth plans, financial forecast, and future marketing.

5. Successful Grant applicants will be expected to:

- Share basic company information with the Economic Development team to assist in its monitoring obligations.
- Provide all required evidence for claiming the grant.
- Cooperate in PR and marketing activities if required.

6. Decision-making process

Applications will be assessed fortnightly. Assessment will be by panel consisting of three members of the Economic Project Group of the Breckland Partnership, or in exceptional circumstances two members. The Panel has the right to refuse Grant assistance and this decision is final. Applicants will receive written confirmation of the decision within 1 week of the panel decision. The applicant cannot commit expenditure until receiving the grant offer letter.

Please allow a maximum of one month from the time that we receive your application to the time a decision is reached. If incomplete applications are submitted this may take longer.

7. Contact

For further details or assistance please contact:

Lindy Warmer – Economic Development Officer (Skills)
Lindy.warmer@breckland.gov.uk
07748 116931
Economic Development Service
Breckland Council, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham, Norfolk, NR19 1EE

This is Version 1 of the BELA 3 Guidance. From 1st April 2009, all applications received need to adhere to these guidance notes.