

# Redditch & Alcester **Advertiser** BUSINESS DAILY

## West Midlands firms can bid for share of £200m growth fund cash

7:10am Friday 20th June 2014 in [Business Daily](#)

Redditch Advertiser: 'ENSURE CONTINUITY': Steelite.



WEST Midlands businesses can bid for a share of £200 million, the Deputy Prime Minister announced as he launched round six of the Regional Growth Fund (RGF).

Local companies which have already had support from the RGF:

- Goodwin PLC, a Stoke-on-Trent engineering group, is using its £2 million RGF grant to help the 130-year-old company expand, with 147 jobs due to be created by 2020. The company is building a new facility and 75 of the 125 apprentices scheduled to be trained during the project have already been employed.
- Bladon Jets is using its £3.1 million RGF grant at the company's Coventry R&D facility to fund 20 new high-value research jobs and to acquire specialised research and development equipment intended to put Bladon Jets at the forefront of micro gas turbine power generation technology.

To help bidders on their applications, roadshows and expression of interest days will be held throughout the country to provide advice on how to make a successful bid. On July 29 an event will be held at the University of Coventry.

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Lorraine Holmes, Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) area director for the North and West, which covers the West Midlands, said: "Our latest Barometer reveals manufacturing confidence continues to build in the West Midlands, with record numbers of firms looking to recruit (65%)

and planning to invest in machinery and plant (71%).

"We have a team of advisers engaging with companies on the ground and the overwhelming feedback we are getting is that they recognise the need to build for the future and that

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innovation and growth go hand in hand."

She added: "At MAS, we're supporting this approach by developing, validating and bringing new products/processes to market and encouraging creative thinking around strategy and business opportunities.

"We are there to help with process improvements, supply chain development and ensuring they access specialist initiatives, such as Grow.OffshoreWind and ReshoreUK.

"Automotive and aerospace continue to enjoy unrivalled investment and this is certainly having a positive effect down our supply chain. There is also growth being unlocked in medical, renewables and 3D printing... three emerging markets we must capitalise on.

"It's good to see that manufacturing still matters in the West Midlands and that our firms are seizing the opportunity to grow and create jobs."

Adrian Maxwell, managing director of Birmingham coffee machine manufacturer, Fracino, said: "At Fracino we champion UK manufacturing by engraving a British flag on each of the 4,000-plus machines we produce every year.

"From a standing start in 2009, exports now make up 28 per cent of our turnover and our machines are sent to over 70 countries worldwide, including Italy. Our export success has powered the business from strength to strength and we employ 50 people.

"As a British manufacturer of espresso and cappuccino machines celebrating our 50th anniversary last year, one of our proudest moments was being invited by 10 Downing Street to loan 11 of our Piccino espresso coffee machines to the prestigious 2013 G8 Summit.

"We received a personal letter of thanks from the Prime Minister David Cameron, which has a special place in our reception. Our goal is for exports to make up 50 per cent of our turnover by 2018 and we're looking forward to shouting about all things British in another 50 years."

Helen Smith, director of design at Stoke-on-Trent firm Hudsons of England Ltd said: "Hudsons of England are still manufacturing quality fine bone china on the very same original site as we were in 1875, using traditional techniques.

"This is unique in the industry today and provides the cultural backdrop and set of values to our well established business.

"The brand name of Hudson and Middleton is universally known and highly respected for our product, which is steeped in quality, combined with innovative, market leading designs.

"The benefits of manufacturing a British-made product and selling it to our home and export markets have allowed our business to develop significantly and expand into new markets.

"It has allowed substantial investment back into key areas, such as product development, manufacturing efficiencies and an expanding workforce, which includes new apprenticeships."

Kevin Oakes, chief executive of Stoke-on-Trent table-wear manufacturer Steelite International, said: "Steelite International's products are exclusively manufactured in the UK.

"As a company, we are proud of our Made in England back stamp, which is truly valued by customers throughout the world. Not only are we able to retain skills and create much-needed employment but we can also ensure the continuity of our heritage in Stoke on Trent."

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