**Farming Innovation Programme - large R&D partnerships Round 2**

## Description

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) will invest up to £8 million in innovation projects.

This funding is part of Defra’s Farming Innovation Programme which is delivered in partnership with UKRI’s [Transforming Food Production Challenge](https://www.ukri.org/our-work/our-main-funds/industrial-strategy-challenge-fund/clean-growth/transforming-food-production-challenge/).

The aim of this competition is to:

* fund industrial research and experimental development projects that will address major on-farm or immediate post farmgate challenges or opportunities
* drive the development and demonstration of commercially relevant solutions with the potential to substantially improve overall productivity, profitability, and environmental sustainability
* support the development of scalable solutions that can be taken up widely, be integrated into existing production systems, and have widespread impact
* accelerate research development of new solutions by actively engaging collaboration between the agri-food sector and wider UK research community in the innovation process

Your proposal must be able to demonstrate how the project will benefit farmers, growers or foresters in England.

It is your responsibility to ensure you submit your application to the correct competition for your project. You will not be able to transfer your application and it will not be sent for assessment if it is out of scope.

In applying to this competition, you are entering into a competitive process. This competition closes at 11am UK time on the deadline stated.

## Funding type

Grant

## Project size

Your project’s total costs must be between £3 million and £5 million.

## Who can apply

If your application is successful, any awards given to primary agricultural producers are subject to the green box exemption under the WTO Agreement on Agriculture.

Please see further guidance on green box subsidies [WTO Guidance for support in Agriculture](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/agric_e/agboxes_e.htm). Applicants receiving this type of support must ensure that there is minimal to no distortion of trade and comply with the requirements of [Annex 2 of the Agriculture Agreement](https://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/14-ag_02_e.htm#annII).

**Your project**

Your project must:

* have total costs between £3 million and £5 million
* start by 1 November 2023
* end by 30 November 2027
* last up to 48 months
* carry out all of its project work in the UK
* intend to exploit the results from or in England

You must only include [eligible project costs](https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/costs-we-fund/) in your application.

Under current restrictions, this competition will not fund any procurement, commercial, business development or supply chain activity with any Russian and Belarusian entity as lead, partner or subcontractor. This includes any goods or services originating from a Russian and Belarusian source.

**Lead organisation**

To lead a project your organisation must:

* be a UK registered business of any size
* collaborate with other UK registered organisations
* be or involve at least one grant claiming [micro, small or medium-sized enterprise](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/life-of-a-company-annual-requirements/life-of-a-company-part-1-accounts#micro-entity) (SME)
* involve at least one grant claiming [academic institution, research and technology organisation (RTO), charity, not-for-profit or public sector organisation](https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/funding-rules/?_ga=2.234451870.1435084649.1641290923-404390041.1639048509)

More information on the different types of organisation can be found in our [Funding rules](https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/funding-rules/#contents-list).

[Academic institutions](https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/funding-rules/?&_ga=2.120177547.2087684246.1675070634-1526066964.1659694595#contents-list) cannot lead.

**Project team**

To collaborate with the lead, your organisation must be a UK based farmer, grower or forester, or a UK registered:

* business of any size
* academic institution
* charity
* not for profit
* public sector organisation
* research and technology organisation (RTO)

Each partner organisation must be invited into the Innovation Funding Service by the lead to collaborate on a project. Once accepted, partners will be asked to login or to create an account and enter their own project costs into the Innovation Funding Service.

To be an eligible collaboration, the lead and at least one other organisation must apply for funding when entering their costs into the application.

**Non-funded partners**

Your project can include partners that do not receive any of this competition’s funding, for example non-UK businesses. Their costs will count towards the total project costs.

**Subcontractors**

Subcontractors are allowed in this competition.

Subcontractors can be from anywhere in the UK and you must select them through your usual procurement process.

You can use subcontractors from overseas but must make the case in your application as to why you could not use suppliers from the UK. You must provide a detailed rationale, evidence of the potential UK contractors you approached and the reasons why they were unable to work with you. We will not accept a cheaper cost as a sufficient reason to use an overseas subcontractor.  
  
All subcontractor costs must be justified and appropriate to the total project costs.

**Number of applications**

A business can only lead on one application but can be included as a collaborator in a further 2 applications.

If an organisation is not leading any application, it can collaborate in any number of applications.

## Previous applications

You can use a [previously submitted application](https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/before-you-start-an-application/#contents-list) to apply for this competition.  
  
We will not award you funding if you have:

* [failed to exploit](https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/before-you-start-an-application/?&_ga=2.166930365.2087684246.1675070634-1526066964.1659694595#contents-list) a previously funded project
* an overdue [independent accountant’s report](https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/before-you-start-an-application/#contents-list)
* failed to comply with grant terms and conditions

## Subsidy control (and State aid where applicable)

This competition provides funding in line with the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Further information about the Subsidy requirements can be found within the [Subsidy Control Act 2022 (legislation.gov.uk)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/23/enacted)

Innovate UK is unable to award organisations that are considered to be in financial difficulty. We will conduct financial viability and eligibility tests to confirm this is not the case following the application stage.

EU State aid rules now only apply in limited circumstances. Please see our [general guidance](https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/funding-rules/#contents-list) to check if these rules apply to your organisation.

**Further Information**

If you are unsure about your obligations under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 or the State aid rules, you should take independent legal advice. We are unable to advise on individual eligibility or legal obligations.

You must always make sure that the funding awarded to you is compliant with all current Subsidy Control legislation applicable in the United Kingdom.

This aims to regulate any advantage granted by a public sector body which threatens to, or actually distorts competition in the United Kingdom or any other country or countries.

## Funding

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) has allocated up to £8 million to fund innovation projects in this competition. Defra will be working in partnership with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Transforming Food Production Challenge. Funding will be in the form of a grant.

For this competition a minimum of 50% of any grant that is requested by farmers, or growers or foresters in your application, must be allocated to farmers, or growers or foresters based in England.

If your organisation’s work on the project is commercial or economic, your funding request must not exceed the limits below. These limits apply even if your organisation normally acts non-economically but for the purpose of this project will be undertaking commercial or economic activity.

For industrial research projects, you could get funding for your eligible project costs of:

* up to 70% if you are a micro or small organisation
* up to 60% if you are a medium sized organisation
* up to 50% if you are a large organisation

For experimental development projects which are nearer to market, you could get funding for your eligible project costs of:

* up to 45% if you are a micro or small organisation
* up to 35% if you are a medium sized organisation
* up to 25% if you are a large organisation

For more information on company sizes, please refer to the [company accounts guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/life-of-a-company-annual-requirements/life-of-a-company-part-1-accounts#micro-entity). This is a change from the [EU definition](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_en) unless you are applying under State aid.

If you are applying for an award funded under State aid Regulations, the definitions are set out in the [European Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_en).

**Research participation**

The research organisations undertaking non-economic activity as part of the project can share up to 30% of the total eligible project costs. If your consortium contains more than one research organisation undertaking non-economic activity, this maximum is shared between them. Of that 30% you could get funding for your eligible project costs of up to:

* 80% of full economic costs (FEC) if you are a Je-S registered institution such as an academic
* 100% of your project costs if you are an RTO, charity, not for profit organisation, public sector organisation or research organisation

## Your proposal

The aim of this competition is to fund industrial research and experimental development projects that will address major on-farm or immediate post farmgate challenges or opportunities.

Your solutions or project outputs must significantly improve:

* productivity
* sustainability and environmental impact of farming
* progression towards net zero emissions​
* resilience

Businesses within a supply chain, are encouraged to come together as a partnership to solve major challenges or opportunities.

Your proposal must be able to demonstrate how the project will:

* benefit farmers, growers, or foresters in England through commercially relevant solutions
* actively work with end users across the whole supply chain to identify the major on-farm or immediate post farmgate challenges or opportunities
* accelerate the development and demonstration of new agricultural solutions through collaboration with the wider UK research community
* build understanding of how your approach can best achieve widespread use, developing a theory of change, working with economists, social scientists, and other relevant experts
* have scalable solutions that can be taken up widely, be integrated into existing production systems, and have widespread impact
* demonstrate how the project will support a transformative change in the agricultural sector
* develop and deliver a knowledge exchange (KE) plan that identifies the targets for the solution with a clear dissemination plan to relevant stakeholders and the wider sector
* exploit the outputs of the project, and expected outcomes in terms of solution adoption, for example, number of end users, area of land, and percentage of production using the new solution

**Portfolio approach**

We want to fund a variety of projects across different technologies, markets, technological maturities, and research categories and business sizes. We call this a [portfolio approach](https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/what-happens-after-you-have-submitted-your-application/#contents-list).

## Specific themes

Your project must address a significant industry challenge or opportunity in at least one of the industry subsectors below:

* livestock
* plants
* novel food production systems
* bioeconomy and agroforestry

## Research categories

We will fund industrial research and experimental development projects, as defined in the [guidance on categories of research](https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/categories-of-research-and-development/#contents-list).

## Projects we will not fund

We are not funding projects that are:

* are equine specific
* involve wild caught fisheries
* involve aquaculture for fish production or human consumption
* involve cellular expression of proteins or cultivated meat
* involve acellular production systems, fermentation systems for bacteria, yeast or fungi for human consumption
* are for the production of crops or plants for medicinal or pharmaceutical use
* do not benefit farmers, or growers or foresters in England

We cannot fund projects that are:

* dependent on export performance, for example giving a subsidy to a baker on the condition that it exports a certain quantity of bread to another country
* dependent on domestic inputs usage, for example giving a subsidy to a baker on the condition that it uses 50% UK flour in their product

## Before you start

You must read the [guidance on applying for a competition on the Innovation Funding Service](https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/your-application/#contents-list) before you start.

Before submitting, it is the lead applicant’s responsibility to make sure:

* that all the information provided in the application is correct
* your proposal meets the eligibility and scope criteria
* all sections of the application are marked as complete
* that all partners have completed all assigned sections and accepted the terms and conditions (T&Cs)

You can reopen your application once submitted, up until the competition deadline. You must resubmit the application before the competition deadline.

**What we ask you**

The application is split into 3 sections:

1. Project details.
2. Application questions.
3. Finances.

**Accessibility and inclusion**

We welcome and encourage applications from people of all backgrounds and are committed to making our application process accessible to everyone. This includes providing support, in the form of reasonable adjustments, for people who have a disability or a long-term condition and face barriers applying to us. Read more on [how we are making our application process more accessible and inclusive](https://www.ukri.org/blog/together-making-innovation-truly-accessible-and-inclusive/) for everyone.

You must contact us as early as possible in the application process. We recommend contacting us at least 15 working days before the competition closing date to ensure we can provide you with the most suitable support possible.

You can contact us by emailing [support@iuk.ukri.org](mailto:support@iuk.ukri.org) or calling 0300 321 4357. Our phone lines are open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

## Interviews

If your application passes the first stage of assessment, you may be invited to attend an [interview](https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/what-happens-after-you-have-submitted-your-application/#contents-list), where you must give a presentation. Your interview will take place either online or at a designated location. The date and time of your interview will be included in your invitation.

If you are not invited to interview your assessor feedback will not be released until after the interviews have taken place, after final notifications have been sent.

Before the interview and by the deadline stated in the invitation email, you:

* must send a list of who will attend the interview
* must send your interview presentation slides
* can send a written response to the assessors’ feedback

**List of attendees**

Agree the list with your consortium. Up to 9 people from your project can attend, ideally one person from each organisation. They must all be available on all published interview dates. We are unable to reschedule slots once allocated.

**Presentation slides**

Your interview presentation must:

* use Microsoft PowerPoint
* be no longer than 20 minutes
* have no more than 20 slides
* not include any video or embedded web links

You cannot change the presentation after you submit it or bring any additional materials to the interview.

**Written response to assessor feedback**

This is optional and is an opportunity to answer the assessors’ concerns. It can:

* be up to 2 A4 pages in a single PDF or Word document
* include charts or diagrams

**Interview**

After your presentation the panel will spend 30 minutes asking questions. You will be expected to answer based on the information you provided in your application form, presentation and the response to feedback.

**After your interview**

The panellists will [individually score](https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/what-happens-after-you-have-submitted-your-application/#contents-list) your application and these will be averaged for your overall interview score. This score will supersede the one you received from initial assessment unless stated otherwise in the competition brief. We will notify you whether you have been successful or not by email and you will receive feedback on your interview within a week of notification.

## 1. Project details

This section provides background for your application and is not scored.

**Application team**

Decide which organisations will work with you on your project and invite people from those organisations to help complete the application.

**Application details**

Give your project’s title, start date and duration.

**Research category**

Select the type of research you will undertake.

**Project summary**

Describe your project briefly and be clear about what makes it innovative. We use this section to assign the right experts to assess your application.

Your answer can be up to 400 words long.  
  
**Public description**

Describe your project in detail and in a way that you are happy to see published. Do not include any commercially sensitive information. If we award your project funding, we will publish this description. This could happen before you start your project.

Your answer can be up to 400 words long.

**Scope**

Describe how your project fits the scope of the competition. If your project is not in scope it will not be sent for assessment. We will tell you the reason why.

Your answer can be up to 400 words long.

## 2. Application questions

The assessors will score all your answers apart from questions 1, 2 and 3. You will receive feedback for each scored question. [Find out more about how our assessors assess.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xyHgqGjxeCU)

You must answer all questions. Your answer to each question can be up to 400 words long. Do not include any website addresses (URLs) in your answers.

**Question 1. Applicant location (not scored)**

You must state the name and full registered address of your organisation and any partners or subcontractors working on your project.

We are collecting this information to understand the geographical location of all applicants.

**Question 2. Farmers, or Growers or Foresters location (not scored)**

You must provide the address for any farmers, growers or foresters requesting grant funding in your project. This is required for subsidy control and eligibility purposes. If no farmers, or growers or foresters are requesting grant funding, please leave this box blank.

Please note: If your project has farmers, or growers or foresters requesting grant funding, a minimum of 50% of the amount requested by those organisations, must come from farmers or growers geographically based in England.

**Question 3. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (not scored)**

How have you incorporated equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) into your project delivery and project outcomes?

Describe the details relating to any challenges or opportunities relating to EDI arising from your project, and the methods and approaches used to address them:

* during project delivery
* for governance
* for project team and advisory boards
* for stakeholder and end-user engagement
* for design thinking

Please note: Questions relating to EDI will not form part of the funding decision but will be used to inform the development of EDI activities for the programme.

**Question 4. Need or challenge**

What is the business need, technological challenge, or market opportunity behind your project, and how will this deliver the competition aims?

Explain:

* the farming or agricultural problem, need, technological challenge, or market opportunity identified
* how your project outputs would deliver large improvements in productivity, resilience, sustainability, while significantly decreasing the environmental impact of farming
* how your project is helping the industry transition towards net zero emissions and benefiting farmers, growers or foresters in England
* the wider economic, social, environmental, cultural, or political challenges which are influential in creating the opportunity

**Question 5. Approach and innovation**

What approach will you take and where will the focus of the innovation be?

Explain:

* what is the approach or innovation and how will it address the identified problem, need or challenge
* any work you have already done to respond to this need, for example if the project focuses on developing an existing capability or building a new one
* how your project will complement existing technologies to deliver a more efficient and sustainable farm production system
* the nature of the outputs you expect from the project (for example report, demonstrator, know-how, new process, product or service design) and how these will help you to target the need, challenge or opportunity identified

You can submit one appendix to support your answer. It can include diagrams and charts. It must be a PDF and can be up to 2 A4 pages long and no larger than 10MB in size. The font must be legible at 100% zoom.

**Question 6. Team and resources**

Who is in the project team and what are their roles?

Explain:

* the roles, skills, and experience of all members of the project team that are relevant to the approach you will be taking
* the resources, equipment and facilities needed for the project and how you will access them
* how you will work with farmers, growers or foresters throughout the project to ensure outputs remain focussed on end users' needs
* the details of any vital external parties, including subcontractors, who you will need to work with to successfully carry out the project
* the current relationships between project partners and how these will change as a result of the project
* any roles you will need to recruit for

You must submit one appendix. This can include a short summary of the main people working on the project to support your answer. It must be a PDF and can be up to 4 A4 pages long and no larger than 10MB in size. The font must be legible at 100% zoom.

**Question 7. Market awareness**

What does the market you are targeting look like?

Describe:

* the target markets for the project outcomes, any other potential markets (domestic, international or both)
* the size of the target markets for the project outcomes, backed up by references where available
* who are your actual target customers or end users, what is the value to them, and why they would use or buy your product or service
* the structure and dynamics of the target markets, together with predicted growth rates within clear timeframes
* the current UK position in targeting these markets
* the target markets’ main supply or value chains and business models

If your project is highly innovative, where the market may be unexplored, describe or explain:

* what the market’s size might be
* how your project will try to explore the market’s potential

**Question 8. Outcomes and route to market**

How will you commercialise your project outputs? How will you grow your business and increase long term productivity as a result of the project?

Explain:

* your current position in the market(s) and supply or value chains outlined, and whether you will be extending or establishing your market position
* your route to market
* how you will protect and exploit the outputs of the project, for example through know how, patenting, or designs
* how you are going to profit from the innovation, including increased revenues or cost reduction
* how the innovation will affect your productivity and growth, in both the short and the long term

If there is any research organisation activity in the project, describe:

* your plans to spread the project’s research outputs over a reasonable timescale
* how you expect to use the results generated from the project in further research activities

**Question 9. Competitors and barriers**

Who else is operating in this space and what barriers limit your ability to exploit your project output?

Explain:

* the process you have completed to evaluate the work of competitors including those near market or in development
* how does your proposal build on, or differentiate from competitor offerings
* where applicable, what regulatory, cultural and or other barriers exist, both in the UK and internationally that prevent you from fully exploiting this opportunity

**Question 10. Wider impacts**

What impact might this project have outside the project team?

Describe and, where possible, measure:

* the environmental, sustainability and resilience benefits from the project to external parties for example, contributing to net-zero targets for emissions and reduction of waste
* the economic benefits from the project to external parties, such as productivity increases and import substitution at a regional or national scale
* the long-term social and welfare impacts from the project
* how you have determined that the project outputs will not widen any farming inequalities, including any negative impacts that you have identified, and how will you mitigate against these

**Question 11. Project management**

How will you manage your project effectively?

Explain:

* the main work packages of your project, indicating the lead partner assigned to each and the total cost of each one
* your approach to project management, identifying any major tools and mechanisms you will use to get a successful and innovative project outcome
* the management reporting lines
* your project plan in enough detail to identify any links or dependencies between work packages or milestones

You must submit a project plan or Gantt chart as an appendix to support your answer. It must be a PDF, up to 2 A4 pages long and no larger than 10MB in size. The font must be legible at 100% zoom.

**Question 12. Risks**

What are the main risks for this project?

Explain:

* the main risks and uncertainties of the project, including the technical, commercial, managerial and environmental risks, providing a risk register if appropriate
* how you will mitigate these risks
* any project inputs that are critical to completion, such as resources, expertise, and data sets
* any output likely to be subject to regulatory requirements, certification, ethical issues and so on, and how you will manage this

You must submit a risk register as an appendix to support your answer. It must be a PDF, up to 2 A4 pages long and no larger than 10MB in size. The font must be legible at 100% zoom.

**Question 13. Added value**

How will this public funding help you to accelerate or enhance your approach to developing your project towards commercialisation? What impact would this award have on the organisations involved?

Explain:

* what advantages public funding would offer your project, for example, appeal to investors, more partners, reduced risk or a faster route to market (this list is not exhaustive)
* the likely impact of the project outcomes on the organisations involved
* what other routes of investment you have already approached
* what your project would look like without public funding
* how this project would change the R&D activities of all the organisations involved

**Question 14. Costs and value for money**

How much will the project cost and how does it represent value for money for the team and the taxpayer?

In terms of your project goals, explain:

* your total project costs
* the grant you are requesting
* how each partner will finance their contributions to your project
* how this project represents value for money for you and the taxpayer
* how it compares to what you would spend your money on otherwise
* the balance of costs and grant across the project partners
* any subcontractor costs and why they are critical to your project

**Question 15. Knowledge exchange and dissemination**

What approach and resources you will use to increase awareness of the research and drive uptake of the outputs developed during the project?

Explain:

* how you will communicate and work with the target market and how this will inform your knowledge exchange plan
* how you will encourage use of the outputs beyond the initial target market
* what new or different approaches will you use to encourage farmers, growers or foresters in England to use the outputs developed
* how you will measure progress and success during and after the dissemination activities

You can submit one appendix to support your answer. It can include diagrams and charts. It must be a PDF and can be up to 2 A4 pages long. The font must be legible at 100% zoom.

## Finances

Each organisation in your project must complete their own project costs, organisation details and funding details in the application. Academic institutions must complete and upload a [Je-S form](https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/costs-we-fund/costs-guidance-for-academics/).

For full details on what costs you can claim see our [project costs guidance.](https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/costs-we-fund/costs-guidance-for-non-academic-organisations/)

## Background and further information

This funding is from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Farming Innovation Programme, and is being delivered in partnership with UKRI’s [Transforming Food Production (TFP) Challenge](https://www.ukri.org/our-work/our-main-funds/industrial-strategy-challenge-fund/clean-growth/transforming-food-production-challenge/).

The Farming Innovation Programme will fund ambitious research and development projects to overcome barriers and create a more productive and sustainable sector.

Projects will benefit England’s farmers, growers, foresters and other businesses to conduct R&D to help boost productivity, enhance sustainable practices, support economic growth improve environmental outcomes and reduce carbon emissions in England’s agricultural and horticultural sectors.

The programme provides a key means to deliver against the government’s goals. The goals are set out in the [Agricultural Transition Plan](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-transition-plan-2021-to-2024), [25 Year Environment Plan](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf), [Government’s Food Strategy](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-food-strategy) and [Net Zero targets](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1033990/net-zero-strategy-beis.pdf). Its aims are to develop a renewed agricultural sector, producing healthy food for consumption at home and abroad, where farms can be profitable and economically sustainable without subsidy. This gives farming the opportunity to contribute significantly to environmental goals, including addressing climate change.

The Farming Innovation Programme is made up of three funds. Two of these, the Industry-led R&D Partnerships Fund, and Farming Futures R&D Fund, are being delivered in partnership with UKRI.

This competition is part of the Industry-led R&D Partnerships Fund, which aims to:

* drive innovation for responsive, commercially -relevant solutions to address immediate practical industry challenges affecting farmers, growers, foresters and the sector.
* accelerate the impact of new solutions to deliver positive benefits for England’s farmers, growers, or foresters
* create opportunities for government and the farming industry to work together to make farming greener and more productive,
* to help grow the economy, create jobs and improve food security.
* drive collaboration between the agri-food sector and wider UK research and innovation expertise
* enable widespread adoption by delivering effective knowledge exchange and driving commercialisation of new solutions.

**Defra’s partnership with UKRI**

Defra and UKRI have developed a strong partnership for agrifood and agriculture innovation. This is built upon the success of UKRI’s Transforming Food Production (TFP) Challenge, the recent Farming Innovation Pathways competition, and our shared ambition for a more productive, sustainable, and low carbon agrifood sector. We are taking this partnership to the next level with Defra’s Farming Innovation Programme.

Defra and UKRI are looking to fund bold ideas and encourage collaboration between businesses, researchers, farmers, growers or foresters, to deliver solutions for a more productive, environmentally sustainable and resilient sector.

**Data sharing**

This competition is jointly operated by Innovate UK, and The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) (each an ‘“agency’”).

Any relevant information submitted and produced during the application process concerning your application can be shared by one agency with the other, for its individual storage, processing and use.

This means that any information given to or generated by Innovate UK in respect of your application may be passed on to Defra and vice versa. This would include, but is not restricted to:

* the information stated on the application, including the personal details of all applicants
* scoring and feedback on the application
* information received during the management and administration of the grant, such as Monitoring Officer reports and Independent Accountant Reports

Innovate UK and Defra are directly accountable to you for their holding and processing of your information, including any personal data and confidential information. Data is held in accordance with their own policies. Accordingly, Innovate UK, and Defra will be data controllers for personal data submitted during the application. Innovate UK’s Privacy Policy is accessible [here](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ukri.org%2Fpublications%2Finnovate-uk-privacy-notice-and-information-management-policy%2F&data=05%7C01%7CSachin.Patel%40iuk.ukri.org%7C2db344cc64874c4498af08da7aad0a7e%7C8bb7e08edaa44a8e927efca38db04b7e%7C0%7C0%7C637957180862665866%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=rEidvwM3vbiu4Y%2F9rtbipO504DMTA1SVqKLLEUAhz%2Bc%3D&reserved=0).

## Find a project partner

If you want help to find a project partner, contact [Innovate UK KTN](https://ktn-uk.org/).

## Support for SMEs from Innovate UK EDGE

If you receive an award, you will be contacted about working with an innovation and growth specialist at [Innovate UK EDGE](https://www.innovateukedge.ukri.org/?utm_source=innovateuk&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=competitionsifs). This service forms part of our funded offer to you.

These specialists focus on growing innovative businesses and ensuring that projects contribute to their growth. Working one-to-one, they can help you to identify your best strategy and harness world-class resources to grow and achieve scale.

We encourage you to engage with Innovate UK EDGE, delivered by a knowledgeable and objective specialist near you.

## Next steps

If you are successful with this application, you will be asked to set up your project.

You must follow the unique link embedded in your email notification. This takes you to your IFS Set Up portal, the tool that Innovate UK uses to gather necessary information before we can allow your project to begin.

You will need to provide:

* the name and contact details of your project manager and project finance lead
* a redacted copy of your bank details
* a collaboration agreement
* an exploitation plan

At least one member of your project team must attend a 1 hour briefing webinar within 10 days of receiving your successful notification.

At the webinar we will provide you with detailed information relating to setting up and starting your project. We will tell you about the briefing in your notification letter.

In this competition all projects awarded funding must upload evidence for each expenditure with every claim made. These can include invoices, timesheets, receipts or spreadsheets for capital usage. This is part of Innovate UK’s obligations under the [Managing Public Money](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-public-money) government handbook in relation to assurance, financial management and control.

In order to process your claims, we need to make sure that the bank details you give to us relate to a UK high street bank that is regulated by the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA). The account must have a BACS clearing facility and be in the same company name as your application.

If you have any doubts that your bank account will not meet Innovate UK's funding criteria, you can use the [sort code checker](https://newseventsinsights.wearepay.uk/sort-code-checker). If you input the sort code and find a tick next to the ‘BACS Direct Credit payments can be sent to this sort code’, this will give you an indication that the bank account you hold is acceptable.

**Finance checks**

We will carry out checks to make sure you are an established company with access to the funds necessary to complete the project.

You must check your IFS portal regularly and respond to any requests we have sent for additional information to avoid any delays.

Failure to complete project setup may result in your grant offer being withdrawn.

**Your Grant offer letter (GoL)**

Once you have successfully completed project setup, we will issue your GoL.

The GoL will be made available on your IFS portal. You will need to sign and upload this before you start your project.

Your GoL will show the start date for your project, do not start your project before this date. Any costs incurred before your start date cannot be claimed as part of your grant.

**If your application is unsuccessful**

If you are unsuccessful with your application this time, you can view feedback from the assessors. This will be available to you on your IFS portal following notification.

Sometimes your application will have scored well, and you will receive positive comments from the assessors. You may be unsuccessful as your average score was not above the funding threshold or your project has not been selected under the portfolio approach if this is applied for this competition.