



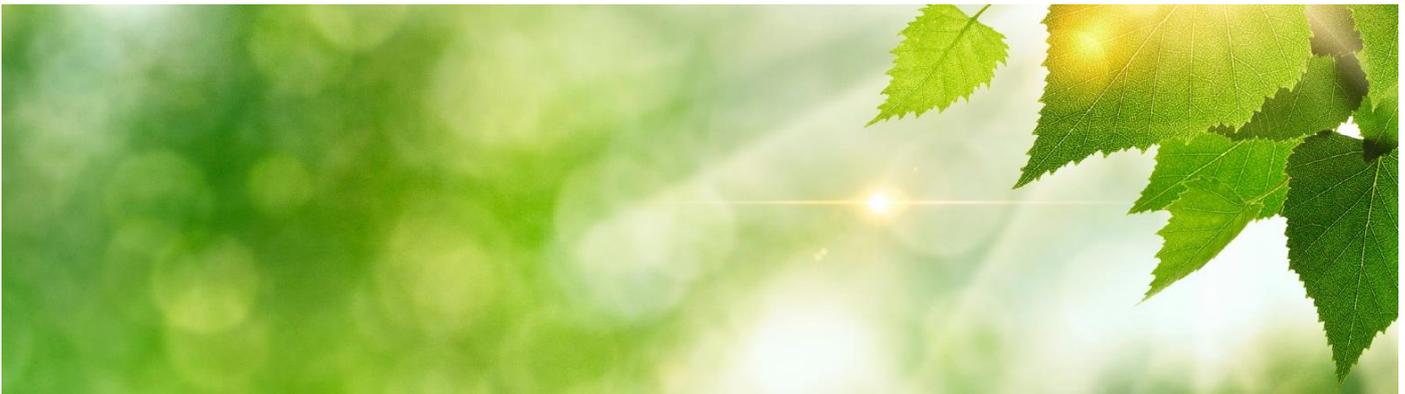
ENVIRONMENT AND LAND USE

2 DECEMBER 2021

REFERENCE

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DEFRA FARMING INNOVATION PROGRAMME (ENGLAND ONLY)



1. INTRODUCTION

The Defra Farming Innovation Programme (FIP) is a new long-term funding programme to support farmers, foresters and other businesses to embrace innovative ways of maximising agricultural productivity, driving sustainability and improving the resilience of the sector. The principle behind the programme is to enable insights from science and business to be applied to solve challenges in the sector. The main aims of the FIP are to:

- Help farmers, growers and foresters increase productivity, sustainability and resilience.
- Reduce the environmental impact of agriculture and horticulture.
- Apply agricultural research to provide real benefits for farmers, growers and foresters.
- Use science to develop solutions for the practical challenges in agriculture and horticulture.

The Farming Innovation Programme is being administered by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). There are three funds that will be open in competition rounds:

- I. **Industry-led R&D partnerships fund**
- II. **Farming futures R&D fund**
- III. **Project to accelerate adoption fund**

All the funds will be collaborative and farmers, foresters and growers can get involved through working with researchers in designing projects, attending problem solving workshops, taking part in field trials and demonstrations, and in sharing the results of research.

Applications to the funds will be through competitions during the programme. Details of the funds and application processes will be made available when the funds are launched. Information on the funds and competitions is available at [UKRI](#). Full details on eligibility and how to apply will be released on the [Innovation Funding Service](#) when each competition opens.

2. KEY DETAILS OF THE FUNDS

I. Industry-led R&D Partnerships Fund

The **Industry-led R&D Partnerships Fund** was the first of the 3 main funds to be launched in Autumn 2021. There is £17.5 million available for this round which has 4 separate project funds, 3 of which are now closed.

Project fund	Application dates	Aim
Research Starter Pilots	Closed on 24 Nov 2021	To help farmers and growers with early stage ideas to help them build a collaborative team. Eligible for 70% of costs up to £56,000.
Feasibility Projects	Closed on 1 Dec 2021	To test the feasibility of early-stage solutions and inform follow on R&D projects. Project size: £200,000-£500,000 Up to 2 years
Small R&D Partnership Projects	Closed on 1 Dec 2021	To carry out R&D for innovative solutions of between £1 - 3 million.
Large R&D Partnership Projects	Opening early 2022	For larger scale R&D and demonstration projects of between £3 - 5 million.

The **Large R&D Partnership Projects** fund is due to launch in March 2022. This will provide funding for larger-scale R&D and demonstration of solutions that have the potential to substantially improve overall productivity, sustainability and resilience of the sector.

Key information on the Large R&D Partnership Projects Fund:

- Launches March 2022.
- Projects can last up to 4 years.
- Competitions are for projects that cost between £3m-£5m.
- Applications need to show how the project will:
 - Solve a real-world problem for farmers, growers or foresters
 - Increase productivity
 - Reduce emissions and the environmental impact of farming
 - Improve the resilience of farming businesses in England
- Applicants must collaborate with at least one other business or research organisation.
- Farmers, growers or foresters must be involved throughout the project, to demonstrate that any new product or service works in practice.
- The amount of funding that can be claimed depends on the size of the applicant's business. There is guidance [here](#) on how you can check your business size:
 - Small or micro size businesses can claim 70% of the project costs
 - Medium size businesses can claim 60% of the project costs
 - Large size businesses can claim 50% of the project costs

Full details on eligibility and how to apply will be released [here](#) when the competition opens.

II. Farming Futures R&D Fund

The **Farming Futures R&D Fund** is for longer-term projects that will solve real-world farming problems, increase productivity, reduce the environmental impact of farming and improve resilience. Each competition will have a different theme, with the first competition in early 2022 focussing on development of solutions to reduce emissions in existing agricultural practices. Involvement of farmers, growers and foresters is required, which could be directly to develop a product, by having farmers on the advisory or project boards, or through product testing.

Key information on the Farming Futures R&D Fund:

- Projects can last up to 4 years
- Competitions are for projects that cost between £3m-£6m
- Projects should lead to a new product or service.
- There will be several competition rounds, with each having a different theme. The first theme will be 'Development of solutions to reduce emissions in existing agricultural practices.'
- Applications need to meet the aims of the specific completion theme and of the overall farming Innovation Programme
- Farmer, grower or forester involvement is required.
- Full details on eligibility and how to apply will be released [here](#) when the competition opens.

III. Project to accelerate adoption fund

This fund is still in development and will focus on smaller-scale projects to trial new technologies, processes and practices on farms.

Full details on eligibility and how to apply will be released [here](#) when the competition opens.

3. ADVICE FOR GETTING INVOLVED IN R&D

These funding programmes are designed to bridge the gap between research and farm practice and are an opportunity for farmers to get involved. It should not be seen as a programme for academics and research organisations, although they will be a key part of most projects.

Getting involved with research and development projects is not for everyone but if you are eager to get involved or have ideas for research projects or products that will solve the real-world problems that the industry is facing, then this programme presents an avenue for funding.

Having said that, finding a route to get involved in research can feel like a black box and the scale of funding and duration often intimidating. So, what can you do to get involved, either to progress an idea you have, or to participate in the research projects?

- Do some basic background reading on the Farming Innovation Programme, its aims and objectives.
 - Sources of information include [Defra website](#) and [UKRI](#)
 - It is worth looking at some of the previous UKRI projects on [Farming Innovation Pathway](#) to get an idea of the type and scale of projects.
- Collaboration is key for this programme
 - Research organisations will be looking for farmers, growers and foresters to work with them on the projects – it is a requirement for most of the funds.
 - Register your interest with the [Knowledge Transfer Network](#).
 - Actively contact organisations who may wish to work with farmers, growers and foresters. Examples include the [Agri-EPI Centre](#) or [Innovative Farmers](#).

- Speak to your supply chain buyers, as they may also have an interest.
- Plan ahead
 - Applications windows for expressions of interest are often quite short so you need to have plans and networks developed in advance.
- The Defra Farming Innovation Programme is only one of a number of R&D funding programmes focusing on farming and land use.

4. FURTHER INFORMATION

The Defra Future Farming and Countryside Programme has a number of other schemes to support agricultural productivity, animal health and welfare, and environmental land management. These schemes are summarised in the CLA Guidance Note *Overview of Defra Agriculture Transition Schemes*. There are individual CLA Guidance notes for many of the schemes that each provide key information and advice on whether and how to apply.

If you have any questions please contact your regional office or the national team. If you wish to keep up to date with changes in Defra Future Farming Programme please register for their email blog [here](#).

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