Competition Overview and Scope

Robert Crook, Innovation Lead, Innovate UK

Farming Innovation Programme

- Part of Defra's Agricultural Transition Plan

- £270M of grant funding for R&D through to 2028/29

- To enhance productivity, environmental sustainability and resilience in England's farming sectors

- Funding is awarded on a competitive basis to high quality, innovative projects

- Collaborative projects must benefit farmers and growers in England.

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Farming Innovation Programme
Current Picture

This is 4th round of Research Starter funding.

- Research Starter Round 1 projects started   August 2022
- Research Starter Round 2 projects started   April 2023
- Research Starter Round 3 projects started   November 2023

Farming Innovation Programme: https://farminginnovation.ukri.org/

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Farming Innovation Programme – three funds

INDUSTRY-LED R&D PARTNERSHIP FUND
Connecting groups of farmers, growers, foresters and businesses with researchers for R&D that is responsive to immediate, practical industry needs

FARMING FUTURES R&D FUND
Driving more fundamental R&D into strategic and sector-wide challenges that will improve productivity and enhance environmental outcomes in the long term.

ACCELERATING ADOPTION FUND
Smaller-scale, agile projects to trial the on-farm viability of new technology ideas, processes and practices and boost their adoption by farmers and growers.

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Industry-led R&D Partnership Fund

	What you want to do ⟶	Take a look at
🌱	Explore an idea that could benefit your farm and others	Research Starter
☑	Check whether an idea works in practice	Feasibility
⚙	Develop a new farming product or service	Small R&D Partnership

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Explore an idea that could benefit your farm and others
RS4 Competition Scope

This competition aims to provide applicants with the knowledge and information support to investigate their idea to understand the potential for further development.

The competition is for collaborative feasibility studies to investigate new solutions to industry identified challenges, or opportunities for farmers, growers or foresters that have the potential to significantly improve:

· productivity
· sustainability and environmental impact
· progression towards net zero emissions
· resilience

Projects must focus on developing on-farm or immediate post farmgate solutions.

Projects must be led by an English farmer, grower or forester

Explore an idea that could benefit your farm and others
What projects are we looking for

- Ideas with the potential to substantially improve overall productivity, sustainability, resilience and move existing agricultural sectors to net zero

- Ideas to solve complex issues that would make a difference to farmers if solutions were developed

- Problems or opportunities where currently there is no existing or obvious solution

- Not easy and not going to be solved overnight

- Not going to be solved on-farm – will need some serious 'science' or 'tech' to help work out a solution

- Ideally solution will benefit a large numbers of farmers, growers or foresters in England

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Explore an idea that could benefit your farm and others
In / Out of Scope

In scope

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

- livestock

- plants

- novel food production systems

- bioeconomy and agroforestry

Out of scope

- are equine specific

- involve wild caught fisheries

- are cellular or acellular production systems, fermentation systems for bacteria, yeast or fungi

- are for the production of crops or plants for medicinal or pharmaceutical use

- are aquaculture, including algae and seaweed, for human consumption

- do not benefit farmers, growers or foresters in England

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Explore an idea that could benefit your farm and others

Possible outcomes

Project shows the idea has potential and is worth further research and development to commercialise	Project identifies that a solution, system or product already exists	Project shows that the concept is not viable

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Explore an idea that could benefit your farm and others
Research Starter 4

Summary - Full Stage Competition

- **£850k** total budget

- Total eligible project costs between **£28,000 - £56,000**

- Projects **6 to 18 months** duration to start by **1st October 2024**

- Lead must be a farming, growing or forestry business of any size based in England

- Not have been awarded Innovate UK funding as a project lead within the last 5 years

EoI Stage deadline 14th February 2024 11:00 am

Full stage application will be by invitation starting in March 2024

Explore an idea that could benefit your farm and others
1 Competition. 2 Stages - EoI and Full Stage

Stage 1 (Expression of Interest)

- **Simple application**

- **Explain your idea.**

- **Tell us your problem and your ideas for a solution**

18th Dec 2023 – 14th Feb 2024

Stage 2 (Full application)

- **Tell us the details of your project approach, team and budget**

- **We will provide help to complete this stage**

March - May 2024

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Explore an idea that could benefit your farm and others

EoI Stage – application details.

Project plan, budget and team

No detail plan or budget required

No funding or project award
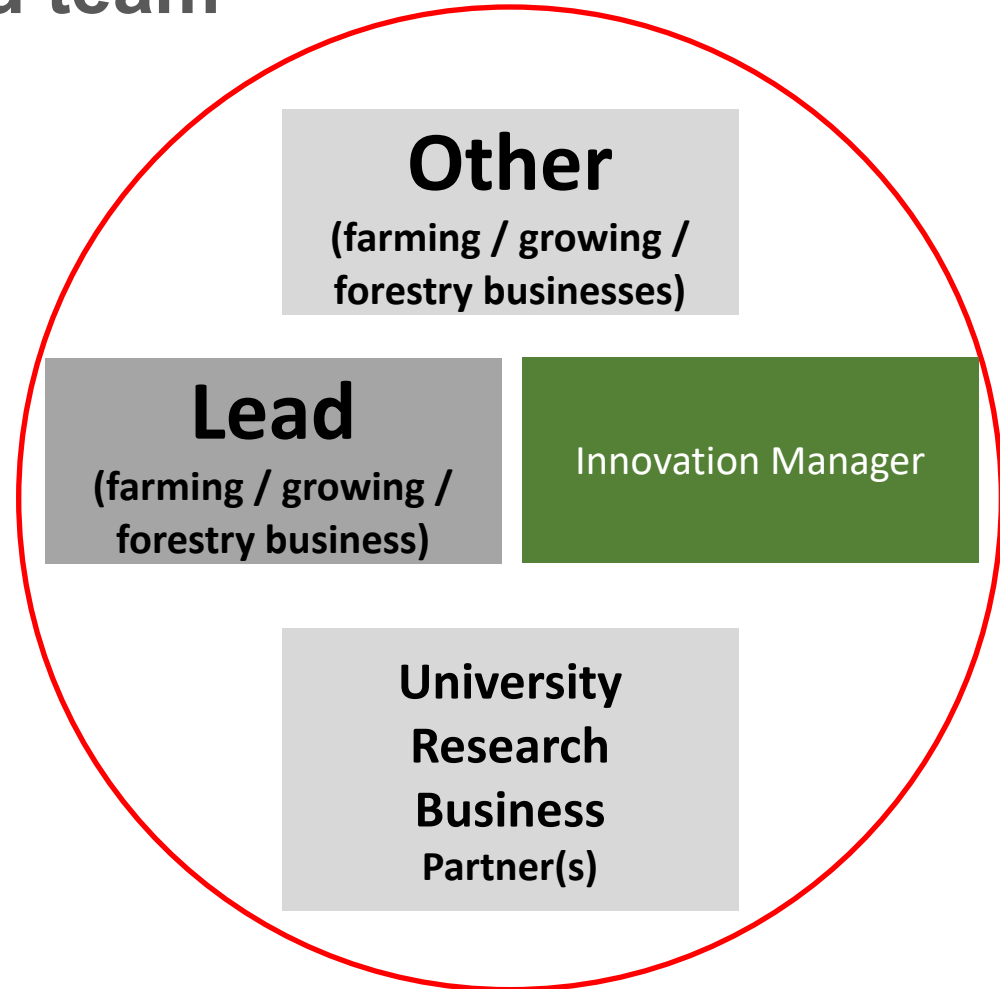
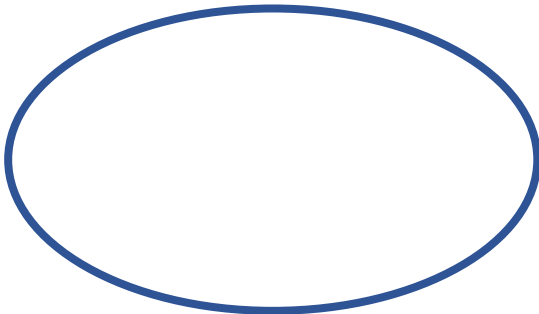Single Applicant

(farming / growing / forestry business)

Explore an idea that could benefit your farm and others
Three sources of dedicated support

EoI stage

Full application stage

'Approved Project' delivery stage

'Innovation Broker'
Innovate UK KTN
Agri-Food

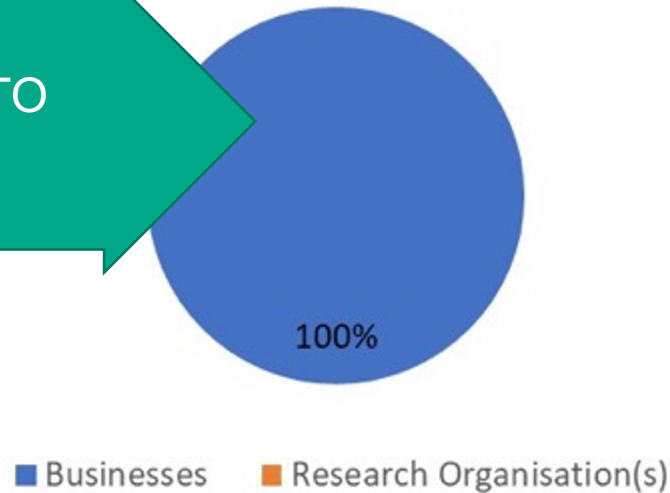Innovation Manager
In project team

IUK
Monitoring
Officer

Finance – Benefits of Collaboration

£56,000 Maximum Project Costs

RTO Funding 60% Maximum

Note. Innovation Manager will be funded out of project costs

No use of RTO allowance

100%

■ Businesses ■ Research Organisation(s)

Business Contribution
£56,000 @ 30% **= £16,800**
Grant
£56000 @ 70% **= £39200**

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Max use of RTO allowance of 60% = £33600
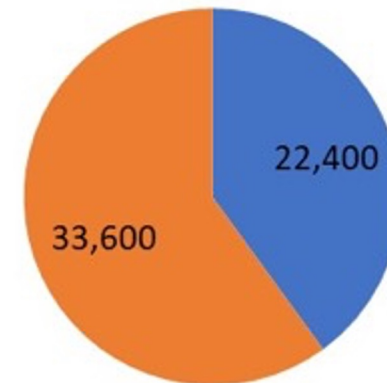
22,400

33,600

■ Businesses ■ Research Organisation(s)

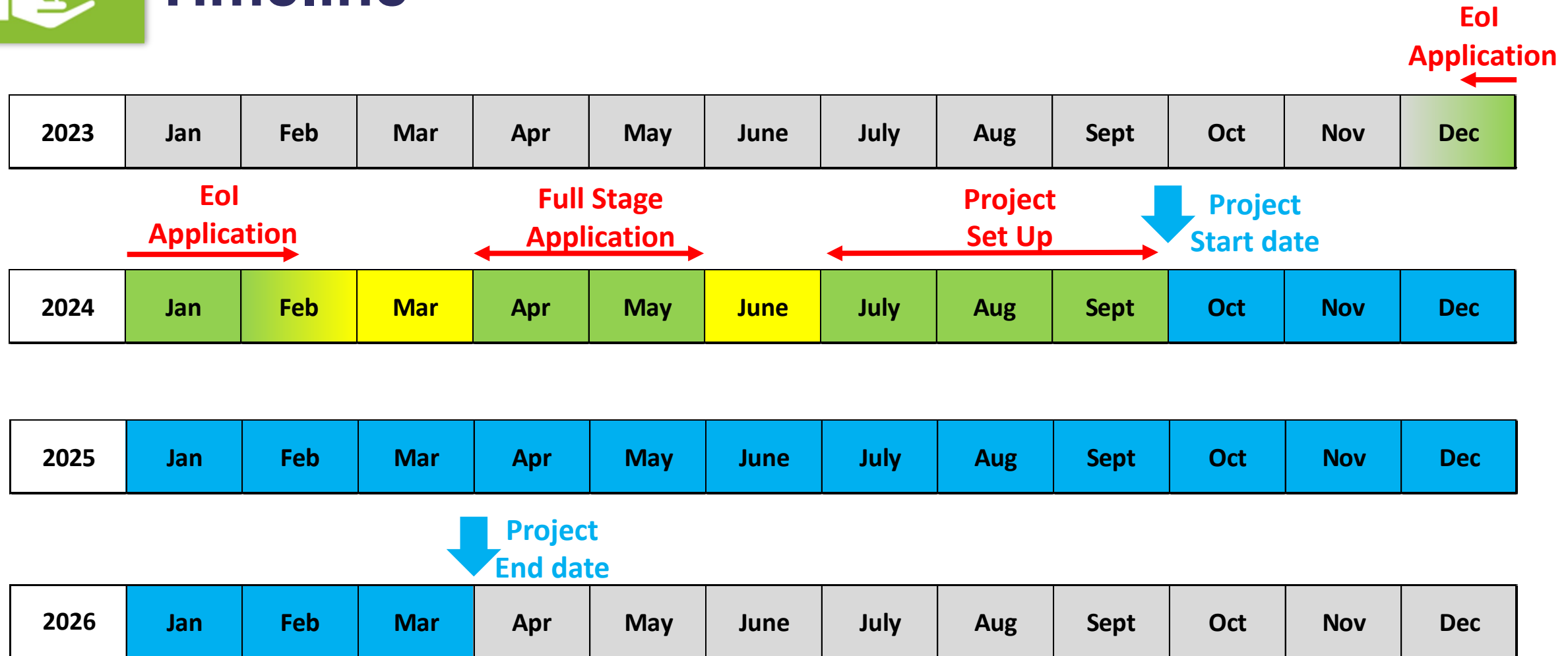**Business Contribution**
£22,400 @ 30% = **£6,720**
Grant
22,400 @70% = £15,680 + £33600 = **£49280**

Explore an idea that could benefit your farm and others
Timeline

EoI Application

2023	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec

EoI Application   **Full Stage Application**   **Project Set Up**   **Project Start date**

2024	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec

2025	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec

Project End date

2026	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec

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Explore an idea that could benefit your farm and others

Project Durations

- Allowable project durations are 6 – 18 Months

- All projects must complete project set up to start on 1st October 2024

- For simple 6, 12 or 18 months projects starting 1st October will finish on 31st March 2025 or 30th September 2025 or 31st March 2026

- It might be that to meet a cropping or breeding season you only need to start work actively for 6 months starting April 1st 2025 and finishing 30th September 2025. This would be a 12-month project.

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Application Questions - EoI

1. Seven questions. Four are scored

2. Written responses. 400 words max.

3. Simple short responses can be good

4. Provide enough detail so assessors can understand your idea and the potential benefits

5. Explain why your idea is good, why the funding is useful and why it should progress to full stage

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Explore an idea that could benefit your farm and others

Application questions

1. Location of farmer, grower and forester who is project lead for this application (not scored)

2. Animal Testing (not scored)

3. Tell us about you and your business (not scored but will be used to judge eligibility)

4. What do you want to achieve from this funding?

5. What is your 'big idea' for a solution or new opportunity?

6. Where did the idea come from?

7. If your solution is successful, what improvements will it offer?

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Eligibility of Lead Organisation

To lead a full stage project your organisation must:

- **be an active farming, growing or forestry business of any size based in England**

- **be able to evidence that you are an established commercial business, including sole traders and partnerships**

- have a UK bank account

- not have been awarded Innovate UK funding as a project lead within the last 5 years before 14 February 2024

- **More information on the different types of organisation can be found in our Funding rules.**

The aim of this funding is to enable a commercial farming, growing or forestry businesses to investigate their own idea. It is not intended to fund the development or testing of an existing product or idea by an external company on a farm or forestry application.

The lead applicant must be a farmer, grower or forester running a commercial agricultural or forestry business. Examples of organisations that would not be eligible as the lead applicant include research and technical organisations, manufacturers and suppliers of products, equipment or services, trade and membership organisations, not for profit organisations.

Please ensure you apply using the correct and eligible business name that will lead the application

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Hints and Tips

Preparation is Key

  ▪ Do not leave until last minute

Eligibility and Scope

  ▪ Read and check carefully to avoid missing out before assessment

Start to think about your partners

  ▪ skills and capabilities you might need

  ▪ who you might need to work with

Lead applicant must be a business but not necessarily a registered limited company

  ▪ When you start the application and enter your business name there is a process to get round the step that requires the company registration number