



Farming Innovation Programme ADOPT Information FAQs'

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This document has been produced based on the questions that were asked during the FIP ADOPT Information webinar held on 30th April 2025.

- For further information please reach out to the following:
- For any questions specifically around scope please send your query to support@iuk.ukri.org
- For support with your application please get in touch with the ADOPT Support Hub: farmpep.com/adopt or 0800 987 8006
- For questions regarding the Project Facilitator role please get in touch with Innovate UK Business Connect: ADOPTfacilitator@iukbc.org.uk or 0330 106 6400

General ADOPT questions

What does the acronym ADOPT stand for?

Accelerating Development of Practices and Technologies

ADOPT targets smaller-scale, farmer-led R&D projects to trial and demonstrate the on-farm viability of new and existing innovation.

What is ADOPT?

The Defra Farming Innovation Programme in England consists of three distinct funds which seek to address different parts of the innovation pipeline and includes the following 2 funds that have been running successfully for the last few years.

Fund 1: Industry-led R&D Partnerships Fund: collaborative, industry-led research and development responsive to specific technologies, processes and practices to address immediate on-farm productivity sustainability challenges and shared industry needs

Fund 2: Farming Futures R&D Fund: strategic & sector wide challenges impacting on sustainability, productivity and resilience.

In response to demand from industry, Defra and Innovate UK are now starting

Fund 3: ADOPT Fund: Smaller projects up to 2 years, to test new technologies and approaches and demonstrate new methods to the farming community. These projects will be farmer-led and focussed on finding practical solutions to immediate on-farm productivity challenges and the fund will be accompanied by a bespoke support service to provide expert advice to participants

The aim of the ADOPT Full Grant is to:

- Increase adoption of innovative technology, processes and practices by farmers and growers.
- Fund farmer-led projects to demonstrate on-farm innovation through trials to drive on-farm productivity, resilience and sustainability.
- Increase the participation of farmers, growers and foresters in the integration of innovative solutions to benefit business resilience, sustainability and reduce the impact of climate change
- Create new routes for collaborative peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange between farmers, growers and foresters to facilitate the adoption of the new technology, processes and practices.
- Increase awareness amongst researchers of farming businesses' innovative ideas, and the benefits of working collaboratively to further develop these.
- Enhance skills and capabilities around innovation and R&D.
- Support the work of the other Farming Innovation Funds (i.e. Funds 1 and 2)

What does the Full ADOPT Grant cover?

The scope of the competition is for on-farm trials / experiments to test new ideas or solutions and demonstrate that they will address the needs of **English** farmers/ growers / foresters.

This includes identified on-farm and immediate post farmgate challenges or opportunities that have the potential to significantly improve:

- productivity
- resilience
- sustainability and progression towards net zero farming

The list seems quite open and lacks specifics?

This is intentional, to create the widest opportunities for your ideas.

We aim to take a “portfolio approach” which will allow a range of funding to assist all sectors of the agricultural industry. This will include a variety of technologies practices and processes, industry sectors and regions

Are there any exclusions on what I can do?

Yes, there are exclusions. Project proposals that include any of the following will be deemed to be out of scope and not assessed nor funded.

We are **not** funding projects that:

- do not benefit farmers, growers or foresters in England
- are based on equine systems
- involve wild caught fisheries
- are for the production of crops or plants for medicinal or pharmaceutical use
- are based on funded crop variety plot trials
- are based on existing demonstration trials or projects
- include aquaculture, such as algae and seaweed, for human consumption
- fermentation systems for bacteria, yeast or fungi or cultivated meat

What value are the Grants?

The Full Grant will support project costs from £50K- £100K. See below for details of the Support Grant.

How long can the project run for?

Projects must be between 6 and 24 months.

Can I get some help?

Yes, this ADOPT Fund and Programme has been designed to offer support and assistance to those farmers who may have never been involved in this type of funding before. ADOPT is made up of a Support Grant leading to a Full Grant.

The initial Support Grant of £2500 is available to pay for a Project Facilitator to assist you in the early development of your idea through to applying for the Full Grant.

Help and a list of Project Facilitators is available from IUK Business Connect. Please see the Support Grant FAQ section.

ADOPT [Support Hub](#) will also provide advice when creating the Full Grant application.

Must I use the support grant to apply for the full grant?

No, you can proceed to Full Grant application without applying for the Support Grant.

The resources provided by the [Support Hub](#) to assist with the development of your idea and application process for a Full Grant will still be available to you if required.

Application questions

How many applications can I make to the Full Grant?

As the lead partner you are able to make one application as the lead and apply to be a part of one additional project. If you are not a named lead on any ADOPT applications, you can apply as a part of as many applications as you wish.

Full details can be found in the [Full ADOPT Grant: Round 1 Competition Brief](#)

Can farmers/growers/foresters apply if they are sole traders?

Yes. In order to apply as a sole trader you will need to follow a specific signup process on IFS – you can find details of this process on the [Briefing Video](#) from 25 mins into the recording.

Will applications that are based on existing demonstration trials or projects be funded?

No. Projects need to be looking at new demonstration trials or building on findings from previous grants received.

If applications are received that are based on similar ideas is there the potential for both to be funded?

The ADOPT competition process is competitive and therefore projects will be assessed on their merits. The competition will also take a portfolio approach.

If I'm unsuccessful in the first round am I able to resubmit my application in a subsequent round?

Yes. This competition allows you to resubmit an application to one further round. This will provide you with the opportunity to consider the assessors feedback and adjust your application as necessary.

Is there any other help available?

Yes, in addition to the Support Grant, the ADOPT Support Hub, run by ADAS, in conjunction with the UK Agri-Tech Centre and the Soil Association, have been commissioned to work on ADOPT to provide support to applicants and funded projects throughout their ADOPT journey.

The ADOPT Support Hub can:

- act as the first point of contact for the applicant providing advice on scope, suitability or on-farm trial practicalities
- help form connections in finding expertise, partners and capabilities necessary for a full grant application
- provide and promote standards on best practice for on-farm R&D
- support the exchange of information and outputs from funded projects to share amongst farmers to enable broader knowledge exchange and dissemination.

To sign up for updates from the ADOPT Support Hub and request advice and support at any stage of your ADOPT application or project, please visit their website here www.farmpep.net/adoptsupport.

Members of the Agri-Food team at Innovate UK Business Connect will also offer information and support when working with applicants looking to find a Project Facilitator.

Assessment questions

Who are the assessors for the competition?

The assessors will be chosen from a pool of approved Innovate UK assessors who have experience in the relevant sectors. For this competition each application will be assessed by three assessors. Further information on the assessors can be [found here](#).

What will an assessor look for in my project?

There are some guidance videos that you can watch to help you understand the process looking at [how our assessors assess](#) and [how we select applications for funding](#).

The Support Hub are also here to help with your application, you can contact them via their website: farmpep.net/adopt

Cost questions

What are the funding intervention rates?

- Up to 80% if you are an active farming, growing or forestry business based in England, Wales or Scotland
- Up to 70% if you are a micro or small organisation, including active farming, growing or forestry businesses based in Northern Ireland
- Up to 60% if you are a medium sized organisation

If I am a farmer/grower and an SME what intervention rate applied to me?

Depending on what capacity you are partaking in a project the intervention rates are as follows:

- Up to 80% if you are an active farming, growing or forestry business based in England, Wales or Scotland
- Up to 70% if you are a micro or small organisation, including active farming, growing or forestry businesses based in Northern Ireland
- Up to 60% if you are a medium sized organisation

When will I receive my grant payments?

The payments for the project are quarterly in arrears, once Innovate UK have received the quarters claims. This is something that your named Project Facilitator can support you with and your assigned Project Monitoring Officer will also work with you to prepare.

Is the lead partner responsible for all the costs?

No. Each named partner on the project is responsible for their costs. These are then reimbursed by Innovate UK quarterly in arrears based on your intervention rates.

What evidence is required to allow me to reclaim my costs?

For detailed guidance around what you will need to provide quarterly to Innovate UK to reclaim your project costs please read the [ADOPT funding guidance](#) page.

How much of the project costs can be allocated to a research organisation?

The research organisations undertaking non-economic activity as part of the project can share up to 60% 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.

What costs can I claim if I need to buy new equipment for my project?

You are able to claim depreciation costs for any equipment that is required for your project. Further details on funding eligibility can be found on the [ADOPT funding guidance](#) page.

What evidence do I need to provide as a part of my quarterly claims for labour?

We appreciate that many farmers are not PAYE and therefore won't be able to provide pay slips. In these cases we accept timesheets as an acceptable form of evidence.

Can technologies be purchased from overseas?

If technology is to be purchased from overseas this needs to include clear justification around why you are unable to source it from the UK.

Does a technology that is being used by a farmer need to be commercially available or can it be a product that is nearing commercialisation?

A technology being used as a part of the project does not need to be commercially available. The ADOPT project is exploring if new technology will work in multiple different scenarios or can solve problems for a number of farmers/growers

What is the definition of farmer/grower/forester that is being used for the ADOPT project?

The measures that will be used to ensure that you meet the criteria of being a farmer/grower/forester will be your answer to Question 4 in the full grant application form.

The four key points being:

- your name and role in the business
- the trading names of your farming, growing or forestry businesses if different from your registered name
- which county your main farming, growing or forestry activity is based in
- what you grow or produce, and the scale of the operation

Location questions

Who can lead an ADOPT project?

To lead a project you 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
- collaborate with at least one other farming or growing businesses of any size, based in the UK

It is desirable that you also collaborate with other UK registered organisations.

Does the lead applicant need to be based in England?

Yes, the lead applicant must be an active farming, growing or forestry business of any size based in England

Can I work with project partners based in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales?

Yes, you are able to collaborate with partners based in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. If you are collaborating with other farming businesses the farmers/growers based in England must claim at least 50% of the total costs allocated to farmers/growers in the project.

Can I work with partners in countries outside of the UK?

No. All partners must be based in the UK to be eligible for the ADOPT competition funding.

Partnering questions

In order for a project to be eligible who does the lead partner need to collaborate with?

The lead applicant must partner with at least one other farmer/grower to be eligible. It is desirable that you also collaborate with further UK businesses.

How many farmers can be part of an application?

There is no limit to the number of farmers that can be part of an application.

Do I need to name all my intended partners on the Support Grant?

No. The support grant aim does not require detailed information about your project team.

I am part of a farming co-operative, am I able to apply?

Yes. If you are part of a farming co-operative, you will need to nominate a lead applicant from the co-operative to begin the application process. The lead must be an active farmer/grower/forester based in England, other co-operative members can be listed as project partners.

Project Facilitator questions

Can the Project Facilitator also have another role in the project?

Yes. We advise that the project facilitator role is as a subcontract and that other project roles are carried out as a partner.

Do I have to have a Project Facilitator?

Yes. The requirement for a Project Facilitator is a mandatory requirement for both the Support Grant and the Full Grant. Your named Project Facilitator will need to be approved and listed in the [Innovate UK Business Connect Project Facilitator database](#).

Who receives the support grant payment if successful?

The £2,500 support grant will be paid to the lead applicant. It is then their responsibility to distribute the grant accordingly.

Is the Project Facilitator an individual or can it be a business?

The Project Facilitators are individuals. The assessment is based on the merits of an individual rather than a business or company as a whole.

Are the costs of the Project Facilitator part of the total project cost?

Yes. The costs of the Project Facilitator are to be included within your project costs of between £50,000 & £100,000. This is not covered by the £2,500 support grant.

What are the implications of a Project Facilitator being a subcontractor?

As a subcontractor the full cost of the Project Facilitator will be paid for by one project partner. The project partner will then be able to reclaim the costs at the intervention rate relevant to them.

How many support grants can I apply for?

As a farmer/grower you can lead on only one application per round of the support grant competition.

How can a potential facilitator apply to be on the database?

You can apply to be a project facilitator via the Innovate UK Business Connect website. All applications must be submitted at least 2 weeks before the competition closing date. Competition closing dates can be found on the following page.

How can I find an approved Project Facilitator for my project?

To find an approved Project Facilitator please use the [Project Facilitator database](#). If you have any queries please reach out to Innovate UK Business Connect: 0330 106 6400 or ADOPTfacilitator@iukbc.org.uk

Timing questions

Can I apply if I have received previous funding, such as from the FIP Research Starter competition?

Yes. As long as the project that you are apply for is different you are able to apply for the ADOPT competition.

How will ADOPT outcomes be communicated and what about confidentiality?

As a part of the competition you are expected to embrace open innovation principles and be willing to share results with other farmers, growers or forester. Any business sensitive information is not expected to be shared.

Can I start my project earlier than the 1st November start date started in the Competition Brief?

No. The dates specified in the competition brief are the dates to which projects will need to comply.

When will the next rounds of competitions open?

Competition	Competition round	Opens	Closes
Facilitator Support Grant	Round 1	28 April 2025	11 June 2025
	Round 2	12 June 2025	23 July 2025
	Round 3	24 July 2025	September 2025
	Round 4	September 2025	October 2025
	Round 5	October 2025	November 2025

Competition	Competition round	Opens	Closes
Full ADOPT Grant	Round 1	28 April 2025	25 June 2025
	Round 2	26 June 2025	20 August 2025
	Round 3	21 August 2025	October 2025
	Round 4	December 2025	February 2026
	Round 5	Future competition dates will be posted in due course	