

News story: Efficient and sustainable agriculture: apply for funding

UK organisations can apply for a share of up to £20 million for projects to transform how the agrifood sector works with crop and animal-based agricultural systems.

The funding is part of the government's Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund's transforming food production challenge. It is provided by [UK Research and Innovation](#) and delivered through Innovate UK.

Why agriculture systems need to change

Due to the continued growth in global population, the UK, alongside many other countries, needs to produce more food. However, agricultural production issues such as costs and environmental factors mean we must do so in ways that are significantly more efficient, resilient and sustainable.

To support businesses to create disruptive technologies and embed precision approaches that meet these goals, the government is offering grants through its Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund.

The transforming food production challenge is a £90 million government investment that will make it easier for farmers and agricultural businesses to embrace technology and innovation.

This £20 million funding competition is one element of the programme, which looks to bring together the agri-food sector with expertise in real-time robotics sensing, data, AI and earth observation.

The aim is to transform food production in the UK by encouraging rural growth and creating high-skilled jobs and new export opportunities.

Developing new systems and technology solutions

We are looking for projects that improve productivity and sustainability in crop and ruminant agriculture.

There is £20 million to be shared across 2 types of project:

- productivity solutions, which develop a single intervention within a supply chain or production system
- supply chain solutions, which develop multiple interventions across at least 3 parts of the supply chain, for example:
 - beef producers, beef processors and supermarket retailers
 - plant breeders, arable producers and food manufacturers

Projects should focus on one of 2 themes, to:

- drive productivity and improve environmental outcomes in crop and ruminant production systems
- develop new, highly efficient, high-value production systems that maximise productivity and improve environmental performance

This could include:

- combining digital technologies and engineering solutions with biological, environment or social science to improve productivity
- developing technologies and systems that connect farms and supply chains
- transferring an innovative technology from another sector into agriculture

A clear route to market

As this competition is part of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, it needs to meet the government's objectives to transform food production. This wants to:

- boost the efficiency and productivity of UK agricultural systems
- embed sustainable food production with improved environmental impacts, such as enhancing biodiversity, soil and air quality, and reducing emissions, pollution and waste
- create growth and increase exports of agricultural technologies

Projects must also:

- have a clear route to market
- develop an optimised prototype that can be demonstrated within the production system or supply chain

Competition information

- this competition opens on 20 August 2018, and the deadline for applications is midday on 24 October 2018
- depending on the size of your business, you can work alone or collaborate with others
- to lead a project you can be a UK-based small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) if project costs are below £100,000, or a UK business of any size if project costs are above £100,000. You can work with academic organisations, charity, public sector or research and technology organisations. You must include at least one SME
- total project costs can be:
 - up to £2 million for productivity solutions projects
 - up to £5 million for supply chain solutions projects
- you could receive up to 70% of your project costs
- projects must start by April 2019 and can last up to 36 months
- as part of the competition you can attend a briefing event or webinar, where you'll find out more about how to create and submit a quality application. Register for:
 - the [webinar](#) on 27 August 2018

- the briefing [event](#) in Birmingham on 29 August 2018
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News story: S4C Reappointments

John Davies has been appointed for six months commencing 1 April 2018. Sian Lewis and Guto Harri have been appointed for two years commencing 9 July 2018.

John Davies

John Davies FRAGS, MRAC was Leader of Pembrokeshire County Council from 2004 until his retirement in 2012.

John has over the years been involved with the media in Wales having been a S4C presenter in the early years of the channel and is currently a regular contributor to current affairs programmes both on Television and Radio.

From 2008 till May 2012 he was the Principal Leader of the Welsh Local Government Association. He was a member of Dyfed – Powys Police Authority and Chairman of its Finance Committee for 9 years.

In recognition of his efforts to Local Government in Wales he was anointed the title of ITV Wales Local Politician of the Year in December 2008. He is the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society. At the 2009 Royal Welsh Show he was awarded Fellowship of the Royal Agricultural Societies of the UK for his services to agriculture and rural Wales.

For 9 years John was the farming and rural voice on the Electricity Consumer Council and subsequently became a member of Energywatch Wales. He is also a member of the Gorsedd of Bards. He holds a number of public non-executive directorships.

Sian Lewis

Sian graduated in Business & HR from UWIC. After a brief period working for independent television company, Fflic TV, she joined Urdd Gobaith Cymru (Wales League of Youth) as a Development Officer and later Area Manager. She was later invited to join Cardiff's Welsh language initiative, Menter Iaith Caerdydd.

As Chief Executive of 'Menter' her role was to promote and expand the use of the Welsh language within the Cardiff Community. Sian established successful partnerships with a multitude of stakeholders which have been key to her strategy to increase the local community's engagement with the language.

In December 2017, Sian was appointed Chief Executive of Urdd Gobaith Cymru. The Urdd's aim is to provide the opportunity, through the medium of Welsh,

for the children and young people in Wales to become fully rounded individuals, developing personal and social skills that will enable them to make a positive contribution to the community. The Urdd is the largest Welsh Language Youth organisation in Wales, with over 55,000 members, 10,000 volunteers, 300 workforce and a turnover of over £10 million.

Guto Harri

Guto began his career as a BBC journalist, spending most of it covering UK politics for the Corporation's main television and radio outlets. He presented a number of flagship shows and was Chief Political Correspondent at Westminster before taking 2 foreign postings to Rome and New York.

Guto left the BBC to handle communications for Boris Johnson and helped mastermind his re-election as Mayor of London in May 2012. He joined Liberty Global in February 2015 as managing director of external communications.

The roles

The roles are remunerated at £9,650 per annum. These reappointments have been made in accordance with the [Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments](#).

The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Under the Code, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election.

John Davies has declared that he has acted as a County Councillor as an Independent Member for Pembrokeshire County Council since 1999 and Guto Harri has declared that he worked for the former Mayor of London in 2012. Sian Lewis has declared no such political activity.

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[Press release: Progress continues on new North East fish pass](#)

New fish pass 'baffles' to help fish get across a barrier in the River Wear have been installed this week in a significant step forward for the new Stanhope Fish Pass.

The Environment Agency resumed work on the fish pass in June after it was postponed in November due to health and safety concerns about high river levels, and to allow for fish to spawn.

The £260,000 project at Stanhope Weir includes a Larinier fish pass to open up the river and make it easier for salmon and sea trout to move up the River Wear to spawn.

Baffles are a series of metal plates which are fixed to a sloped concrete channel – they slow the flow of the water so that fish can swim over the top of them easily.

The Environment Agency is also carrying out repairs to the weir which will improve the river flow and level monitoring capability of the Stanhope River Gauging Station.

'Significant step forward'

Daniel Magee Project Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

It's a significant step forward for the new fish pass to see the baffles going in – this is going to make it so much easier for fish to reach their natural spawning grounds and is good news for the River Wear.

By also improving the monitoring capabilities of the gauging

station we can continue to provide an accurate and timely flood warning service to around 400 homes at risk of flooding from the River Wear.

When the work is complete it safeguards the flood warning system for the future as well as creating environmental improvements. We appreciate the community's continued patience while this work has been ongoing.

Stanhope Gauging Station is ranked in the top 10 most important flow sites in the North East area. Opened in September 1958 it has an almost continuous record of flow data, making it one of the longest flow records in the North East area at 60 years.

Work is expected to be completed by the end of this month.

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