[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 projects 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