[News story: Safer, more nutritious food for Africa: apply for funding](#)

UK businesses and research organisations can apply for a share of up to £3 million to develop and embed agri-tech and food chain innovations in Africa, collaborating with African countries.

The funding, announced by International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt, is part of a [package of support](#) to help farmers across Africa grow their businesses and protect livestock.

Funding in this Agri-tech Catalyst competition comes from the [Department for International Development](#) (DFID), with the process managed by Innovate UK.

The challenge in Africa

Three-quarters of the poorest people in Africa (75%) live in rural areas and are reliant on agriculture and livestock for their livelihoods.

Yet, while agriculture and food systems are quickly evolving, uptake of new technologies and practices is low in African countries. For example, just 28% of cultivatable land in Africa grows modern crop varieties, compared with 65% worldwide.

Action is needed to ensure that Africa can adapt in order to deliver a nutritious, sustainable and secure food supply that supports a healthy population.

For UK organisations, there is an opportunity to apply agri-tech skills and knowledge to a new market, further innovate and support international development.

Increase pace and scale up

This competition aims to increase the pace of development and scale up innovative agricultural and food systems in Africa.

It is looking for projects that transform how Africa approaches existing and new technologies and embraces change. These should target farmers and others involved in the food value chain including manufacturers, processors, retailers, distributors and wholesalers.

Projects can be for early-stage feasibility studies, mid-stage industrial research or late-stage experimental development. They should:

- be sustainable and support environmental challenges such as climate change and resource scarcity
- minimise negative outcomes such as pollution, food losses and waste
- promote safe, healthy and nutritious diets for people

They could include:

- primary crop and livestock production, including aquaculture
- non-food uses of crops, for everything excluding ornamentals
- challenges in food processing, distribution or storage, and adding value, such as through a change in the physical state or form of the product
- improving the availability and accessibility of safe, healthy and nutritious foods

Other factors to consider are gender equality, particularly how empowering girls and women could tackle unequal access and control of assets and improve agricultural productivity or food security. Projects should also have the potential to benefit animal welfare.

Competition information

- the competition is open and the deadline for registrations is at midday on 21 November 2018
- to lead a project in the UK, you can be a business, academic organisation, charity, public sector or research organisation. You'll need to work with at least one partner from an eligible African country
- projects can be carried out in the UK or in Africa
- projects can last between 1 year and 3 years with total costs between £100,000 and £1 million, depending on the project type
- you could get up to 70% of your eligible costs
- projects must start by 1 April 2019
- you can register to attend an [online briefing webinar](#) on 10 September 2018 to find out more about the competition and how to make a quality application