

Helping farmers to work more efficiently: apply for funding

We need to produce our food in a more sustainable and efficient way if we are to meet the expected 60% increase in global demand for food by 2050.

Better ways of working the land can lead to reduced emissions and pollution, less waste and improvements to the soil.

UK companies are global leaders in the technologies that will help to achieve this, including in environmental management, earth observation, sensors, big data, artificial intelligence and robotics.

However, there is often a lack of connection between the developers of these technologies and the farmers, agronomists and vets that could take advantage of them.

The UK Government's Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund Transforming Food Production Challenge has up to £90 million to help businesses invest in new data-driven precision-agriculture technologies that could transform food production.

Innovate UK, as part of UK Research and Innovation, has up to £15 million from the fund to invest in feasibility studies and demonstration projects that help to turn these technologies into practical solutions and get them into the hands of those who could benefit.

Research can be in arable, livestock and aquaculture

Projects must all work on precision, data-driven solutions. They can undertake research in 1 or more areas including:

- arable, such as cereals, field-scale vegetables or potatoes
- dairy
- ruminants, such as beef, lamb, goat
- monogastrics, such as pork, poultry and eggs
- horticulture, including berries, apples, lettuce and tomatoes but not ornamentals
- aquaculture

They should also have the potential to improve productivity and sustainability and contribute to the target of net zero emissions from agriculture by 2040.

Feasibility studies must also look at business

models

Up to £5 million is available for feasibility projects. They must evaluate potential solutions that tackle challenges identified by industry to see if they could be commercialised.

They must:

- look at business models alongside technical feasibility and draw in expertise to do this
- work with end users to make sure solutions meet their needs

Competition information for feasibility studies

- the competition is open, and the deadline for applications is at midday on 26 February 2020
- businesses of any size may apply
- projects could range in size between £75,000 and £250,000

Demonstrator projects will develop best practice

Up to £10 million is available for a series of demonstrator projects. The projects will be used to develop best practice and shape future investment in science.

Projects will be expected to take part in the work to share results and reach potential users of the technology.

Projects must:

- demonstrate the viability of combinations of precision solutions to transform food production
- demonstrate solutions across different production environments, to encourage their widespread use
- work with end users
- produce evidence of technical feasibility and economic viability at commercial scale

Competition information for demonstrators

- the competition is open, and the deadline for applications is at midday on 26 February 2020
 - businesses of any size may apply
 - projects could range in size between £400,000 and £4 million
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Heavy rain to increase flood risk across Surrey

The Environment Agency is warning communities in Surrey that persistent heavy rain will lead to an increased risk of flooding over the next few days.

The forecast heavy rain could cause surface water flooding in local communities and see a rise in river levels, increasing flood risk to communities, and disrupting travel as roads and rail lines may be affected.

Environment Agency staff are working across the county to reduce the risk and impact of flooding, and are using temporary flood barriers in Guildford and Leatherhead.

There are currently 13 flood alerts and 2 flood warnings in force across the county, and with further rainfall forecast this figure is expected to go up.

Ian Nunn, Duty Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

Heavy downpours across Surrey could lead to surface water flooding and significant disruption to travel today, Friday, and into the weekend. Due to the heavy rain, we are planning to put up temporary flood barriers in Guildford, on Mary Road, through the bus depot and on to Leas Road today and in Leatherhead at Guildford Road bridge if required.

Our teams have been out on the ground checking flood defences, clearing debris from rivers, and will continue to support our partners to reduce the impacts of the heavy rain. We will issue flood warnings and alerts where necessary.

We urge the public to prepare to take action when at risk of flooding, even if a temporary barrier is in place. There are a number of things you can do to prepare for flooding to keep yourself and your family safe. Find out if your home is at risk, sign up for flood warnings and be ready to take action. For more information visit www.gov.uk/flood or call Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

People should remain vigilant, check their flood risk and plan to stay safe. We advise people to stay away from swollen rivers and not to walk or drive through flood water as just 30cm/12inches of flowing water is enough to move your car.

People on Twitter can follow updates on flood-risk on the Environment Agency's South East and national accounts, @EnvAgencySE and @EnvAgency.

Improving railway security and safety: apply for contracts

Network Rail is seeking technological solutions to challenges it faces from fare-dodging, theft and vandalism and in improving and speeding up work to detect structures and vegetation alongside rail lines.

The company that owns the UK's rail network faces issues with trespassers at platform ends and edges trying to evade fares and from people intent on theft or vandalism.

Its traditional process for assessing new or existing structures alongside rail lines to ensure trains can pass by – known as gauging – is also time-consuming and can take years to complete. Improving it could increase safety and help with planning maintenance and introducing new rolling stock.

Network Rail is using the Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) to support 2 funding competitions for organisations that have innovative ways to meet these challenges.

Competition 1: Detecting and deterring trespassers

Network Rail is looking for physical or technological systems that detect and deter trespass at platform edges at different types of station, from those with no staff to larger ones where staff can respond quickly.

Projects will be expected to research their solution for 3 months before installing it at a station.

Solutions should:

- be able to deter trespass physically, visually or audibly
- be trialled at 2 live stations for 12 months
- be adaptable to different stations
- be capable of being installed at a platform edge without interfering with existing equipment or trains

Competition information

- the competition opened on 2 December 2019, and the deadline for registration is at midday on 22 January 2020
- organisations of any size may apply
- we expect projects to be awarded contracts of between £200,000 and £360,000

Competition 2: Accurately identifying rail-side structures

This competition to find innovative ways to automate processing of structure gauging for Network Rail is in 2 phases.

Projects will be expected to train the application to identify structures in the first phase.

They can apply for further funding to demonstrate it in a second phase.

Systems must be able to accurately demonstrate:

- identification of existing structures when compared with the existing National Gauging Database
- correct identification of vegetation and masonry
- reading of structure distance and track cant (difference in elevation between inner and outer rail) and curvature
- identification of changes such as removed structures and added structures
- conversion of data from 3D scanning into structural gauging files

Competition information

- the competition opened on 2 December 2019, and the deadline for registration is at midday on 22 January 2020
- organisations of any size can apply
- we expect projects to be awarded contracts of up to £90,000 in phase 1 and up to £360,000 in phase 2

[Taizé meeting in Wrocław travel advice](#)



British Embassy
Warsaw

A Taizé meeting will take place in Wrocław from 28 December 2019 to 1 January 2020.

If you are a UK national and you plan to travel to Poland over Christmas and

New Year's Eve, it is advisable to:

- keep your passport safe, fill out the last page (emergency contacts) and keep plenty of copies of the data page
- consider having adequate travel insurance while travelling
- obey Polish laws, regulations and instructions from local authorities
- if you are arrested the British Embassy cannot get you out of police detention until the police proceedings are completed. The British Embassy does not provide legal advice
- ask for a receipt from taxi drivers so your belongings can be retrieved if left in a taxi
- if you drink alcohol, drink responsibly and be aware that alcoholic drinks may be stronger in Poland than in the UK

Read more in the [Poland travel advice](#).

Emergency service numbers

All emergencies – 112

Contact the Embassy

British Embassy Warsaw
ul. Kawalerii 12
00-468 Warsaw

Tel: +48 22 311 0000

Fax: +48 22 311 0311

Opening hours: Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri from 9am-12.30pm. Wed – closed.

If you are in Poland and you need urgent help (for example, you've been attacked, arrested or someone has died), call +48 22 311 00 00. If you are in the UK and worried about a British national in Poland, call 020 7008 1500.

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[Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Denmark – August 2020](#)



Mrs Emma Hopkins OBE has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark

Mrs Emma Hopkins OBE has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark in succession to Mr Dominic Schroeder who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Mrs Hopkins will take up her appointment during August 2020.

Full name: Emma Kate Hopkins

Married to: Steven Hopkins

Children: Two daughters

2015 to present	Sofia, Her Majesty's Ambassador
2012 to 2014	FCO, Head of Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative
2009 to 2012	Home Office, Head of EU/International Team, Legal Adviser's Branch
2006 to 2009	Home Office, Head of Organised Immigration Crime, Organised and Financial Crime Unit
2001 to 2006	Home Office, Legal Adviser's Branch, Senior Advisory Lawyer
1995 to 2001	Chambers of Kieran Coonan Queen's Counsel, Barrister

Further information

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