

Farming Futures R&D: Low Emission Farming - Assessor guidance for applicants

This document contains the guidance and scoring used by the Assessors when reviewing your application. Assessors will review your answers for each scored question and mark each of them between 1 and 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest).

Any questions that are not scored will not be reviewed by the Assessor.

Question 1: Applicant location (not scored)

You must state the name and full registered address of your organisation and the partners or subcontractors working on your project.

You must also provide a list of any farmers, growers or foresters requesting grant funding in the project.

Note: a minimum of 50% of any grant requested by farmers, growers or foresters in the project, must be allocated to farmers, growers or foresters based in England.

We are collecting this information to understand more about the geographical location of all applicants.

Question 2. Animal testing (not scored)

Will your project involve any trials with animals or animal testing?

You must select one option:

- Yes
- No

We will only support innovation projects conducted to the highest standards of animal welfare.

Further information for proposals involving animal testing is available at the [UKRI Good Research Hub](#) and [NC3R's animal welfare guidance](#).

Question 3. Permits and licences (not scored)

Will you have the correct permits and licences in place to carry out your project?

We are unable to fund projects which do not have the correct permits or licences in place by your project start date.

You must select one option:

- Yes
- No
- In process of being applied for
- Not applicable

Question 4. Challenge and ambition

What is the existing agricultural challenge you are addressing, and specifically which emissions are you looking to reduce?

Describe what you expect to achieve from your solution and the overall impact it could have in supporting UK farmers to achieve low emission farming.

Describe:

- specific greenhouse gases (GHG) reduction targets and the scale of reduction being sought
- how you will ensure your targets and scale of reduction are met
- how your project aims to contribute to achieving low emission farming goals
- the farming or agricultural problem, need, technological challenge or market opportunity identified

- the wider economic, social, environmental, cultural or political challenges which are influential in creating the opportunity such as incoming regulations
- how your project outputs would deliver significant improvements in productivity, resilience and sustainability
- what benefits English farmers, growers or foresters will gain from your project

Question 4. Assessor guidance and scoring

Scores 9-10

There is a compelling motivation for the project. There is a clear understanding of the agricultural problem being addressed and the scale of reduction of emissions and progress towards low emission farming which could be attained. Any wider challenges influencing this opportunity are identified.

Scores 7-8

There is a good motivation for the project. There is a good awareness of the agricultural problem being addressed and the scale of reduction of emissions and wider factors influencing the opportunity.

Scores 5-6

The project motivation is good but a lack of understanding of the agricultural problem being addressed is evident and the scale of reduction of emissions is underwhelming. Wider factors influencing this opportunity have not been addressed.

Scores 3-4

Project motivation is poorly defined or not relevant to the applicant or team. References to the agricultural problem and the scale of reduction of emissions are not offered or are not relevant.

Scores 1-2

There is little or no business drive to the project. References to the current agricultural problem and the scale of reduction of emissions are not offered or are not relevant.

Question 5. Approach and innovation

What novel approach will you take, and what additional research will you need to support your project?

Explain:

- what the approach or innovation is, and how will it address the identified problem
- if you are proposing a single innovative solution or a combination of innovative solutions
- how your project will push the boundaries of current leading edge solutions
- previous research or development which is the basis of the solution being provided
- what type of size, production environment and location the deployment potential will be tested and trialled in
- how your project will complement existing technologies to deliver a more efficient and sustainable farm production system

You can submit one appendix to support your answer. It can include diagrams and charts. It must be a PDF no larger than 10MB. It can be up to two A4 pages and must be legible at 100% zoom.

Question 5. Assessor guidance and scoring

Scores 9-10

The approach addresses the need, challenge or opportunity identified in Q4. The main innovations are identified. Evidence is presented to show how the innovation and project outputs will differentiate from those of competitors. The project is significantly innovative either commercially or technically and will make a substantial contribution to the field. Solid evidence is presented to substantiate the level of innovation and freedom to operate.

Scores 7-8

The project addresses the need or challenge identified in Q4 and the main innovations are highlighted. Evidence shows that the proposed development is innovative and that the applicant has the freedom to operate. It is demonstrated how the project outputs will differentiate from those of competitors.

Scores 5-6

The project may address the need or challenge identified in Q4 and the innovations are highlighted. The level of innovation or freedom to operate is not strongly backed up with evidence. The main risks are not fully identified. Innovation focus is plausible and shows a link to improvements in competitiveness or productivity.

Scores 3-4

The approach is poorly defined with an unconvincing link to the need or challenge identified in Q4. Improvement in competitiveness or productivity is not very convincing.

Scores 1-2

The approach is not well defined or inconsistent with the need or challenge identified in Q4. There is no identification of how this will improve competitiveness.

Question 6. Team and resources

Who is in the project team and what are their roles?

Explain:

- the main partners in the project, the relationships between partners and the rationale for working together
- the roles, skills and experience of all members of the project team that are relevant to the approach you will be taking
- the resources, equipment and facilities needed for the project and how you will access them
- the details of any vital external parties, including subcontractors, who you will need to work with to successfully carry out the project
- how you will work with farmers, growers and foresters throughout the project to ensure outputs remain focussed on end users needs
- any roles you will need to recruit for

You can submit one appendix, with a short summary of the main people working on the project to support your answer. It must be a PDF no larger than 10MB. It can be up to two A4 pages and must be legible at 100% zoom.

Question 6. Assessor guidance and scoring

Scores 9-10

The project team is well placed to carry out the project and exploit the results. There is a clear plan to obtain all the resources, equipment and facilities they will need. There is strong evidence that the project team will work well. There is clear role for farmers and growers throughout the project.

Scores 7-8

The project team makes sense given the approach described in Question 5. The applicant indicates how access will be obtained to all the resources, equipment and facilities they will need. The project team is likely to work well. There is a role for farmers and growers throughout the project.

Scores 5-6

The project team has most, but not all, of the necessary skills and experience required. It is unclear whether or not the project team will work well together and no clear role for farmers and growers throughout the project.

Scores 3-4

There are significant gaps in the project team, with little or no information about how these will be filled. There may be some members of the team with little relevance to the project activities.

Scores 1-2

The project team will not be capable of either carrying out the project or exploiting the results.

Question 7. Project impact and life cycle assessment

How will your project impact be measured through a life cycle assessment (LCA)?

Describe:

- a summary of your key deliverables during the project
- the impact of your solution to reducing emissions and the economic benefits you expect, such as productivity increases and import substitution
- how you have determined that the proposed solution will not widen any farming inequalities
- how you will carry out the LCA for the solution developed to demonstrate impact, and measure carbon as a number, to facilitate footprinting and potential trading
- the metrics you propose to use, how you will measure emissions and quantify reductions relative to existing practices, and how you will ensure the reliability and validity of this data
- the impact across the food supply chain and how you will collaborate with other innovation systems or broader requirements such as sustainability, traceability and transformation partnerships

Question 7. Assessor guidance and scoring

Scores 9-10

The key deliverables from the project are fully quantified and evidenced. The impacts of the solution across the food supply chain are substantiated and described in detail. Implications on farming practice of the proposed solution determined and addressed.

Scores 7-8

The key deliverables from the project are quantified and evidenced. The impacts of the solution across the food supply chain are substantiated and described in brief. Implications on farming practice of the proposed solution are determined.

Scores 5-6

The key deliverables from the project are identified but not quantified. The impacts of the solution across the food supply chain are not considered. Implications on farming practice of the proposed solution are mentioned.

Scores 3-4

The key deliverables from the project are not identified or quantified. The impacts of the solution across the food supply chain are not considered. Implications on farming practice of the proposed solution are not discussed.

Scores 1-2

No key deliverables from the project are identified. The impacts of the solution across the food supply chain are not considered. Implications on farming practice of the proposed solution are not discussed.

Question 8. Outputs and exploitation

How will you exploit and disseminate your project results?

Provide a brief summary of your consortium exploitation plan.

Describe:

- your expected project outputs, including products, services, processes and capabilities
- how will you work with wider sector and other stakeholders and how this will inform your knowledge exchange and dissemination plans
- the structure and dynamics of the target markets, including customer segmentation, together with predicted growth rates within clear timeframes

You must submit an exploitation plan as an appendix to support your answer. It must be a PDF, up to three A4 pages long and no larger than 10MB in size. The font must be legible at 100% zoom.

You can include one or more of the following in your exploitation plan:

- an executive summary including a short context of the business proposal and how it will impact the commercial prospects of partners
- the expected outputs of the project in terms of new products, processes, technology adoption or business models at the end of the project compared to the start of the project

- your likely customers, customer benefits, unique selling points, market segmentation, geographic territories where exploitation is to be targeted
- the routes to market or supply chains for products, technologies, services or licences, particularly as this extends to the partners in the project
- your plans for marketing channels as appropriate
- for each output, quantify financial returns as far as is possible over the period two to five years post-project, this must include details such as possible price points and cost of sales
- the barriers to market, including competitors or any likely follow on work or necessary investment to further develop the technologies to commercialisation
- your plans for intellectual property (IP) protection and accessibility
- your plans for dissemination, which are mandatory for research technology organisations (RTOs) and university partners
- technology and market roadmaps

Your exploitation plan can be updated during the project, subject to agreement by UKRI.

Question 8. Assessor guidance and scoring

Scores 9-10

The exploitable outputs of the project are clearly identified, strongly evidenced and credible, for example, product, service, knowledge exchange. The methods described for exploiting these outcomes are credible and robust. The likely commercial and environmental impacts on conclusion of the project for the business are substantial and identified along with a realistic timeline. There is a very clear and credible business model to deliver the ambition as described. There is a very strong chance of successful exploitation of the project results. The return on investment is substantial, evidenced, quantified and realistic.

Scores 7-8

The exploitable outputs of the project are identified and evidenced well and are credible, for example, product, service, knowledge exchange. The methods described for exploiting these outcomes are realistic and clear. The likely commercial and environmental impacts on conclusion of the project for the business are substantial and identified however the timeline may be unrealistic. The

business model is credible, good and expressed well. There is a good chance of successful exploitation of the project results. The return on investment is good, quantified and realistic.

Scores 5-6

Most of the exploitable outputs of the project are identified and some are credible. Exploitation methods are defined but lacking in some detail or are feasible. There is a chance of successful exploitation of the project results. The likely commercial and environmental impacts of the project for the business are moderate and identified. The business model is broadly credible but with some flaws. There is moderate chance of successful exploitation of the project results. Return on investment is not sufficiently defined but appears plausible.

Scores 3-4

The main exploitable output is identified. The exploitation methods described are unrealistic or ill-defined. The likely commercial and environmental impacts for the business of the project are limited. There is a business model but it is not sufficiently credible. There is little chance of successful exploitation of the project results. Return on investment is not defined or is unrealistic.

Scores 1-2

No exploitable output is identified. The exploitation method is missing or not feasible and unlikely to succeed. There are no impacts on the business identified. There is no business model. No plausible return on investment is provided.

Question 9. Benefits realisation

What benefits is your project expected to deliver to external parties and over what timescale?

Explain:

- how inputs and activities are expected to lead to outputs and outcomes, based on information provided in your logic model
- your Theory of Change, the methodology which maps the assumptions which inform planned interventions
- how your project will contribute to targets for low emissions and reduction of waste
- how your project fulfils its environmental, sustainability and resilience objectives
- how your project will benefit the productivity, safety and welfare expectations of farmers, growers or foresters

- what the costs are associated with these benefits and how they compare to the cost of existing practices or services
- what socio-economic, cultural and political benefits do you expect to achieve as a result of your proposed solution

Distinguish between benefits you expect to deliver, both inside and outside the project consortium, which may include benefits to farmers, growers or foresters, and the wider agrifood industry, the UK economy and others.

You must download the logic model template and guidance document. Once completed, submit as one appendix to support your answer. It must be uploaded to this question as a PDF. The font must be legible at 100% zoom

Question 9. Assessor guidance and scoring

Scores 9-10

The positive impact on others outside of the team is understood, for example, (supply chain partners, customers, broader industry). Benefits to the consortium and spill over benefits outside of the business are clearly defined, realistic and of significantly positive social, economic or environmental impacts are considered. Any possible negative impacts are fully mitigated where appropriate.

Scores 7-8

There is good awareness of how the project may impact others outside of the team. Benefits to the consortium and spill over benefits outside of the business are well defined, realistic and of positive economic, environmental and social impact. Any possible negative impacts are partially mitigated where appropriate.

Scores 5-6

There is basic awareness of how the project could impact some spill over benefits outside are described but are not significant. Some relevant stakeholders are not considered. Little mitigation is offered where there may be negative impacts.

Scores 3-4

Benefits are inadequately described and are of little significance.

Scores 1-2

The project has no benefits described, or the project is potentially damaging socially, environmentally or economically (negative benefits).

Question 10. Project management

How will you manage the project effectively?

Explain:

- the main work packages of the project, indicating the lead partner assigned to each and the total cost of each one
- your approach to project management, identifying any major tools and mechanisms you will use to get a successful and innovative project outcome
- the management reporting lines
- your project plan in enough detail to identify any links or dependencies between work packages or milestones

You must submit a project plan or Gantt chart as an appendix to support your answer. It must be a PDF no larger than 10MB. It can be up to two A4 pages and must be legible at 100% zoom.

Question 10. Assessor guidance and scoring

Scores 9-10

The project work packages are outlined with the research category, lead partner and total cost provided for each one. The approach to project management is described. The plan is designed to meet the objectives of the project in a realistic and efficient way. Any links or dependencies between work packages or milestones are identified.

Scores 7-8

The project work packages are outlined with the research category, lead partner and total cost provided for each one. The approach to project management is stated. The plan seems appropriate to the project objectives. Any links or dependencies between work packages or milestones are identified.

Scores 5-6

The project work packages are outlined but there are some details missing. The plan seems reasonable but is not tailored to the objectives of the project.

Scores 3-4

The plan has serious deficiencies or major missing aspects. The plan has little chance of meeting the objectives of the project.

Scores 1-2

The plan is unrealistic or fails to meet the objectives of the project.

Question 11. Risks

What are the main risks for this project?

Explain:

- the main risks and uncertainties of the project, including the technical, commercial, managerial and environmental risks
- how you will mitigate these risks
- any project inputs that are critical to completion, such as resources, expertise and data sets
- any output likely to be subject to regulatory requirements, certification, ethical issues and other requirements identified, and how you will manage this

You must submit a risk register as an appendix to support your answer. It must be a PDF no larger than 10MB. It can be up to two A4 pages and must be legible at 100% zoom.

Question 11. Assessor guidance and scoring

Scores 9-10

The key risks and uncertainties of the project are fully considered and mitigated. Critical inputs to the project are identified. Relevant constraints or conditions on the project outputs, for example, regulatory requirements, certification or ethical issues, are identified. The risk analysis is appropriate and professional.

Scores 7-8

The key risks and uncertainties of the project are considered with appropriate mitigations. Relevant constraints or conditions on the project outputs are identified.

Scores 5-6

Most major risks have been identified, but there are some gaps, or the mitigation and management are insufficient to properly control the risks.

Scores 3-4

The risk analysis is poor or misses major areas of risk. The mitigation and management are poor.

Scores 1-2

The risk analysis is superficial with minimal mitigation or management suggested.

Question 12. Added value

How will this public funding help you to accelerate or enhance your approach to developing your project towards commercialisation? What impact would this award have on the organisations involved?

Explain:

- what advantages public funding would offer your project, for example: appeal to investors, more partners, reduced risk or a faster route to market
- the likely impact of the project outcomes on the organisations involved
- what other routes of investment or means of support you have already engaged with and why they were not suitable

- how any existing or potential investment or support will be used in conjunction with the grant funding
- what your project would look like without public funding
- how this project would change the R&D activities of all the organisations involved

Question 12. Assessor guidance and scoring

Scores 9-10

There is a compelling case for the positive difference funding will make with specific evidence of the impact on GHG levels and achieving low emission farming. Alternative sources of support are described with an explanation of why they are discounted or used in conjunction with the grant funding. The project will significantly increase the R&D activities of the organisations involved during the project and afterwards.

Scores 7-8

The arguments for public funding are good and justified with some evidence of the impact on GHG levels and achieving low emission farming. Alternative sources of support are described, with an indication of why they are discounted. The project will significantly increase the R&D activities of the organisations involved.

Scores 5-6

The public funding arguments are acceptable, but the difference made by the grant will be modest and no mention of specific evidence on the impact on GHG levels and achieving low emission farming. Any alternative sources of support are not fully described or discounted. The project will improve the R&D activities of the organisations involved.

Scores 3-4

The funding arguments are poor or not sufficiently justified. Alternative sources of support are not described, or no reason is given why they are discounted. There is not likely to be any improvement to the R&D activities of the organisations involved

Scores 1-2

There is no justification for public funding and no reason why the applicant should not fund the work.

Question 13. Costs and value for money

How much will the project cost and how does it represent value for money for the team and the taxpayer?

In terms of your project goals, explain:

- your total eligible project costs
- the grant you are requesting
- how each partner will finance their contributions to your project
- how this project represents value for money for you and the taxpayer
- how it compares to what you would spend your money on otherwise
- the balance of costs and grant across the project partners
- any subcontractor costs and why they are critical to your project

Question 13. Assessor guidance and scoring

Scores 9-10

The project costs are entirely appropriate and represent excellent value for money for the team and the taxpayer. The partners have a clear idea of how they will finance their contribution. The balance of costs and grant between partners, and use of subcontractors, is justified and reasonable for the proposed project.

Scores 7-8

The project costs are appropriate and should be sufficient to successfully complete the project. The partners have explained how they will finance their contribution. The balance of costs and grant between partners, and use of subcontractors, seems reasonable. The project represents good value for money for the organisation and the taxpayer.

Scores 5-6

The project costs seem to be acceptable, but the justifications are not clear. The partners have indicated how they will finance their contribution. The balance of costs and grants between partners is not entirely satisfactory and use of subcontractors not completely appropriate. Little information is offered about the value for money this project offers.

Scores 3-4

The project costs appear to be too high or too low given the proposed project. The partners have not been clear on how they will finance their contribution. The split of costs and grant between partners is unbalanced. There is inappropriate use being made of subcontractors.

Scores 1-2

The costs are not appropriate or justified. The partners have not indicated how they will finance their contribution. The balance of costs and grant between partners and use of subcontractors is not justified.