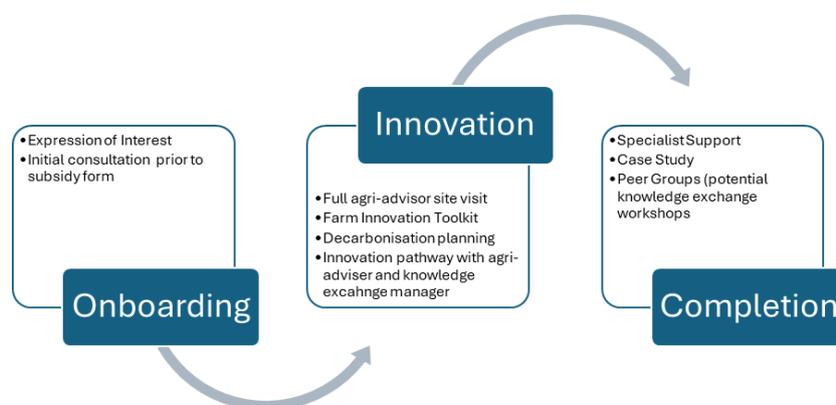


Proposed Agri-Innovation Pilot continuation under SPF- January 2025

1. Background

The success of local authorities across Devon and Heart of the South West in developing the agri-tech sector and encouraging farm innovation, has exceeded expectations over the last 3 years through: The Devon Agri-tech Accelerator (DATA); Agri-tech Alliance; DEFRA funded Future Farm Resilience (FFR); and the SPF Agri-Innovation Programme, the latter two of which end on 31.03.2025 leaving a huge gap, which this programme has been designed to fill. For farm businesses who wish to invest more into farm innovation, the Agri-Innovation Programme has been piloted in West Devon and South Hams under Shared Prosperity funding, which supported 20 farm businesses in each district. Following the pilot's success, The Satellite Applications Catapult funded a further 13 farms across Devon through the Environmental Space Living Lab Project, and DCC funded a further 5 County Farms Estate businesses.

The following holistic model is based on the learning from the Pilot, ESLL Project and Future Farm Resilience Programme. An extended roll out is proposed under SPF to include the following elements:



2. Programme Details

2.1 Marketing & Finance

In the previous programme, beneficiary leads came from FFR, however this will have finished and therefore a modest marketing budget has been included for direct mailouts, and other campaigns. This could also allow for a slightly more ambitious event where appropriate. Finance time allows for 1k per district for finance admin around the grants to farm businesses.

2.2 Innovation diagnostic

A farm business adviser will work with the farm business to do an audit of their farm/business (this can be a diversification such as a farm shop), bringing together tried and tested methods from DATA and FFR including:

- ✓ Farm Carbon Toolkit audit – taking into account soils, livestock, crops, buildings and energy.
- ✓ Business and financial analysis
- ✓ Farm Innovation toolkit - a digital toolkit that uses a multiple choice questionnaire to identify areas of potential innovation and growth and map strengths and areas of development for the business on the innovation wheel, resulting in a substantial report to guide development.

2.3 Supported Pathway

Using the results of the assessments above a farm business adviser will work collaboratively with the farm business to identify areas where innovation can support efficiency, productivity, and environmental improvements. They will explore any further investigation/ action needed to develop the findings of the Innovation Toolkit into a tangible business action plan. This involves setting clear business goals and developing a Mobilisation / Action plan and potentially grant application support.

2.4 Broker introductions

The advisor and Knowledge Exchange Manager (KEM) will utilise the Agri-tech Alliance to expand their network and broker introductions for businesses throughout their journey where relevant. For example, to tech developers, research organisations, consultants and other relevant organisations as appropriate for further investigation (e.g. soils analysis), collaborative work, solution testing etc.

2.5 Specialist support

Each farm business will access up to £1k worth of specialist support which will be brokered and identified working with the advisor and KEM.

2.6 Knowledge Exchange Activities

Associated knowledge exchange activities and events will be undertaken, ensuring up to date network, information and ongoing consultation with farming communities and experts within the field. This will also include (Opt.1 25%, Opt. 2 50%, Opt. 3 75%) the costs of developing the Devon Agri-Tech Alliance (DATA), plus events:

- ✓ Devon Agri-Tech Alliance – 4 steering groups per year
- ✓ Events (1 in each LA area)
- ✓ Attendance at events and shows - Rootstock, Agri-Tech South West, the Devon County Show

3. Outputs & Outcomes

Each farm business will:

- ✓ produce a decarbonisation plan or an innovation plan;
- ✓ engage with knowledge exchange;
- ✓ implement new processes or technologies.

Outcomes from the current programmes can't yet be measured because they are still active, however the examples below of beneficiary activities (*commercial in confidence*) give a flavour of the expected outcomes:

- Feasibility study and significant reduction in carbon by various means on several farms.
- Prototype development of various engineering equipment to convert animal processing waste to fertiliser, devise a mobile abattoir, etc
- Educational forest school assessment to diversify the business and create a new job, in addition to biodiversity net gain studies to offer new diversifications on several farms.
- Nutrient density testing to increase profit margins, demonstrate that regenerative farming improves food quality, productivity, animal welfare and biodiversity, and a 44% greater output by hectare on several farms.
- Renovation of a disused buildings into a commercial kitchen to solve a local demand and supply issue, maintain short supply chains, increase productivity, support local businesses and other diversifications.
- Development of a heat stack to create a regenerative, off grid, source of heat for increased productivity, and other renewable energy related projects.

Currently there are four case studies, exemplifying the intensive support and its varied nature, which can be provided on request as they aren't yet on the website.

4. Budget Illustrations

Option 1: Two districts, 40 farm businesses, up to 15 hours of agri-adviser support and £1k of specialist funding per farm, plus a bank of 1 hour consultations to allow for 50% more applications than accepted for support.

- 40 agricultural businesses engage in knowledge exchange
- 40 decarbonisation plans or innovation plans
- 40 agricultural businesses implementing new processes or technologies

- 2 workshops for knowledge exchange (assume £1,000 per workshops and 30 attendees)
- 1 full time project manager/ knowledge exchange manager. Typically, this will entail 4 days out of 5 working directly with the clients and specialist support suppliers as the KEM and 1 day per week functioning as the Project manager to ensure reporting, budget monitoring, risk management, appropriate targeting of support and compliance.

Option 2: Four districts which are assumed to be rural; 80 farm businesses supported; up to 15 hours of agri-adviser support and £1k of specialist funding per farm; a bank of 1 hour consultations; 80 of each of the outputs bulleted above; 4 workshops; 1 FT G Project / Knowledge Exchange Manager; 1 FT E Project Assistant to support administration of suppliers, compliance and tax checks, research, organisation of webinars, events and workshops for networking and information monitoring, create marketing materials, process claims and invoices, and assist with comms.

Option 3: Six rural districts; 120 farm businesses; up to 15 hours of agri-adviser support and £1k of specialist funding per farm business; a bank of 1 hour consultations; 120 of each of the outputs bulleted under option 1; 6 workshops; 1 FT G Project / Knowledge Exchange Manager; 0.5 F Grade additional Knowledge Exchange Management capacity; 1 FT E Project Assistant as above.

	Innovation Diagnostic & Supported Pathways	Staff & Brokered Introductions	Specialist Support	Knowledge Exchange Activities	Marketing & Finance	TOTAL
Option 1 2 Districts 40 outputs 2 Workshops	Per district: £26,970 Total: £53,940	Per district: £27,350 Total: £54,700	Per district: £20,000 Total: £40,000	Per district: £2,500 Total: £5,000	Per district: £3,500 Total: £5,000	Per district: £80,320 Total: £160,640
Option 2 4 Districts 80 Outputs 4 Workshops	Per district: £26,970 Total: £107,880	Per district: £24,176 Total: £96,704	Per district: £20,000 Total: £80,000	Per district: £2,500 Total: £10,000	Per district: £3,500 Total: £14,000	Per district: £77,146 Total: £308,584
Option 3 6 rural districts 120 Outputs 6 workshops	Per district: £26,970 Total: £161,820	Per district: £20,247 Total: £121,482	Per district: £20,000 Total: £120,000	Per district: £2,000 Total: £12,000	Per district: £3,500 Total: £21,000	Per district: £72,717 Total: £436,302

- Cost per output from the South Hams and West Devon Agri-Innovation 23/25 was £7,000 and in this programme it's £3,841 although this proposal will deliver up to 15 hours of support instead of 30, which reflects business need & available funding.
- There are agri-businesses which are situated in more urban areas which would be eligible for this programme as some farm diversifications are situated in towns and cities.
- The above illustrations give an idea of costs, but discussion is welcomed around individual district farm business needs or budget, and we can bespoke the programme in each area in terms of hours and outputs.
- For the pilot area, a follow on programme could be considered to enable current beneficiaries to build on their previous support.