



# European Innovation Partnership (EIP) Wales

## Frequently Asked Questions



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## What is EIP Wales?

The European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI) was launched by the European Union in 2012 to contribute to the Union's 'Europe 2020' strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. This strategy sets the strengthening of research and innovation as one of its five main objectives and supports a new interactive approach to innovation: European Innovation Partnerships.

EIP Wales aims to contribute to the steady supply of food, feed and biomaterials, and to the sustainable management of the essential natural resources on which farming and forestry depend, working in harmony with the environment. To achieve this aim, EIP Wales brings together innovation actors (farmers, advisors, researchers, businesses, Non Government Organisations, etc) and helps to build bridges between research and practice through Operational Group. These activities are supported financially through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and Welsh Government.

## What are Operational Groups?

Operational Groups (OG) are set up to tackle specific challenges and investigate new innovate approaches which will be of value to others in the agricultural or forestry industry. Both the size and composition of the OG depend on the project, therefore one OG will look completely different from another.

OG members can consist of a range of individuals or organizations from various backgrounds, such as those listed below, who would be defined as 'actors'.

- Farmers
- Foresters
- Researchers involved in agriculture, food or forestry
- Agricultural/forestry advisors
- Agricultural, agri-food or forestry businesses involved in the supply chain
- Non-governmental organisations

## What is the minimum criteria for Operational Group Members?

As a minimum, an OG must consist of:

- Two farmers/foresters from separate businesses who are registered with Farming Connect. The registration form and eligibility criteria can be found on the following link: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/farming-connect-registration>
- One additional member which could be a researcher, advisor, non-governmental organisation or agri/forestry business

There is no limit to the size of an Operational Group but all members must have a unique and active role and input into the group activities. The group can be newly formed or be based on an existing group that would like to investigate a new challenge or opportunity. Each group should establish terms of reference which each member will agree to. All group members must have their specific role or function identified clearly within the application, as well as any additional specialist support required.

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## What support is available?

Farming Connect is supporting the development of EIP Wales through the Knowledge Exchange Hub (KE Hub) and by providing access to innovation brokers.

This support will help with the development of Operational Groups, providing initial sign posting and access to baseline evidence and related activities from elsewhere, including through the wider EU EIP Agri-Network.

Farming Connect is the first point of contact for farmers and foresters in Wales wishing to register an interest in developing their innovative ideas, and to access the support and expertise of an innovation broker. Individuals can contact the EIP Wales team directly through a dedicated online portal:

<https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/european-innovation-partnership-wales-enquiry-form>

## How can the KE Hub assist with the development of Operational Groups?

The KE Hub will initially assess the innovative idea to determine whether or not it is within scope of EIP Wales and to ensure the proposal is not already being developed elsewhere in the EU. The KE Hub will also link up similar projects to avoid duplication of activity and identify opportunities for added value through sharing of project data and information.

If the idea is within scope of EIP, the group will be able to select an Innovation Broker from the approved Farming Connect Brokerage list who will then help them develop their Operational Group and to formally submit an application for their project.

Projects which are outside the scope of EIP will be supported and signposted to other relevant elements of Farming Connect or partner support initiatives.

## Who cannot apply?

The following organisations or individuals cannot act as the 'lead actor' or be a OG member:

- Government departments
- Organisations funded wholly or partly by public money, e.g. Non- Departmental Public Bodies, levy boards or farms owned and run by local authorities

## The Role of the Innovation Broker

The Innovation Brokers will guide the group through the application stage and if appropriate, through the delivery of their project. In the first instance they will assist in defining project objectives and help to identify and recruit appropriate group 'actors' who can actively contribute to the activities of the Operational Group. They also have access to baseline evidence and related activities from elsewhere, including the wider EU EIP Agri-Network

It is not mandatory for any group to use the services of an Innovation Broker to develop and deliver their proposal.

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## **What is being funded?**

The main focus of approved projects will be in areas including:

- technical solutions to increasing productivity or resource efficiency
- ecosystem services
- soil functionality
- water management
- integrated supply chain solutions
- benchmarking and managerial innovation for producers
- development of new food quality and livestock health care schemes

Other innovative proposals which clearly support EU priorities will also be considered.

## **Are there any priorities for EIP Wales?**

Projects funded through EIP Wales must address Priority 1 and Focus areas 1a and 1b, as well as at least one of the remaining Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 Focus areas as outlined within the Scheme Guidance notes.

Projects which demonstrate potential to address more than one of the remaining Priority/Focus area are strongly encouraged.

Projects that demonstrate potential innovation solutions that can be applied across more than one agricultural sector, as well as having members from various sectors are strongly encouraged.

## **What is the maximum funding threshold?**

The role of the Innovation Broker is fully funded in order to support the development of the Operational Group, and the execution of the project, subject to EIP Wales approval. There is a maximum of £5,000 available to cover the costs of Innovation Brokers in the development phase, which includes supporting the group in preparing the application and any supporting documents that may be required. An additional £12,000 is available to cover the cost of the Innovation Broker to support the execution of the project.

Up to £40,000 is available to successful OG applicants to deliver the project. Further information on what items and activities are eligible and ineligible for funding through the project can be found in the Scheme Guidance notes.

All costs associated with undertaking the project following approval from EIP Wales will need to be clearly identified and justified within the application and supporting project plan.

## **Is match funding required?**

No match funding is required but the project application will be strengthened by demonstrating additional commitment from group members.

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### **Are there any limitations?**

Due to EIP Wales being a cross cutting scheme, Welsh Government will make specific calls for applications if certain priority and focus areas are under subscribed, to ensure an equal distribution of supported projects.

A proportion of funding allocated against focus areas 4a, 4b & 4c over the programme period will be specifically allocated to forestry projects. Further information on Priorities and Focus areas are available within the Scheme Guidance.

### **How do I apply?**

The first step is to contact EIP Wales with your project idea. This can be done via:

- A preliminary enquiry form on the Farming Connect website (<https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/european-innovation-partnership-wales-enquiry-form>)
- E-mail ([eipwales@menterabusnes.co.uk](mailto:eipwales@menterabusnes.co.uk))

After an initial discussion about your potential project idea an outline proposal will be submitted to the Farming Connect Knowledge Exchange Hub (KE Hub). All potential EIP Wales projects will be required to undertake initial scoping by the KE Hub who will undertake background literature searches on your behalf to see what is already known about your subject area.

If there is a knowledge gap you will be invited to complete a project outline form. Guidance will be provided to all applicants.

### **How will my application be assessed?**

The full application will be appraised in accordance with the Scheme Guidance and eligibility rules. They will be subject to full due diligence appraisal and eligibility checks and only at that point will a final decision be taken to offer a grant. There is no guarantee that a project proposal will be approved for a grant. The appraisal process for full applications will normally take a maximum of three months from receipt of a fully completed application and all relevant information.

### **How long will it take to appraise my application?**

Full application appraisal will be completed within 90 days of receipt of the application

### **How are project results disseminated?**

Dissemination of the project outcomes is an important part of the process. Regular progress reports will need to be submitted and a final report to EIP Wales

Farming Connect will use the information from the reports to disseminate the findings to the wider industry through a variety of mechanisms including the Farming Connect website, technical articles and presentations at meetings and events.

Members of Operational Groups may be required to participate in knowledge transfer activities of both Farming Connect and its partners in order to share and disseminate lessons learnt and best practice with industry. This may include (not exhaustively) assisting with preparing technical articles, participating in discussion group activities,

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delivering presentations or being available to participate in Farming Connect Demonstration Network activities.

It is also a condition of the funding that all project reports are submitted to the EIP AGRI website <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en>

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