

ADOPT FACILITATOR

The ADOPT Fund's goal is to support farmers, growers and foresters testing new ideas on farm (either new practices or new technologies) in a collaborative, farmer-led way. But, as facilitators know, these are time intensive processes that require internal and external coordination, research and planning; however, farmers are already time-poor which presents a challenge. To help address it, ADOPT has made it **mandatory** to engage a **facilitator** to support the process.

What is expected from you as a facilitator? What requirements do you need to meet? How can you connect with farmers? In this document we aim to address these questions and provide useful links for further information.

What is expected from an ADOPT facilitator?

From the earlier stages of planning this programme, it was clear that securing support for farmers would be critical for success.

That is why ADOPT has made it mandatory (and has financed ways) to engage a facilitator to help navigate the complexities of on-farm trials as well as the funding requirements and reporting processes to Innovate UK and Monitoring Service Providers (MSPs).

ADOPT has requirements on how facilitators are expected to support farmers. The role is flexible and could involve project management, reporting, and ensuring overall success, adapting to project needs and budget. These include:

ADOPT FACILITATORS, WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DELIVER?	
Support lead farmers, growers and foresters and their project partners in developing, writing and submitting their ADOPT applications (<i>and review and resubmit in a new round if required</i>)	
Once a project is live, act as a project manager for the duration of the project (up to 24 months): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liaising with Innovate UK and MSPs, including support with the delivery and submission of the required reporting and documentation• Ensure that the project remains on track and that good communication is maintained.• Provide expertise in order to help ensure the project is a success	
INTERNAL TEAM COORDINATION	TEAM COORDINATION WITH Innovate UK & MSPs
Support farmers interested in applying to ADOPT in exploring their ideas.	"Translating" and managing Innovate UK requirements on behalf of the group during the application phase.
Support farmers interested in applying to ADOPT in shaping their project.	"Translating" and managing Innovate UK requirements if the project is successful.
Support project partners in implementing the project successfully and keeping it on track.	Preparing and managing paperwork for Innovate UK and the MSPs (for example, periodic reports)
Ensure communications amongst project partners is effective and on time.	Co-ordinating the submission of quarterly claims.

Connect with the right actors and expertise.	
Support the dissemination of results.	

As a facilitator, keep in mind that you will be expected to ensure that the project stays on course, team members engage with the process and that communication and reporting to Innovate UK and the MSP run smoothly based on their requests.

However, the **level of support** that will be required *is for the farmers to decide* depending on their needs:

- If farmers need more support, you might be required to take on a central role, managing most aspects of the project and supporting coordination with Innovate UK.
- If farmers are confident in their experience and capacity to coordinate the project, facilitators can be less involved, acting as a general coordinator and providing strategic guidance on compliance, reporting or general coordination.

It is important to agree on what kind of support the project partners will need from their facilitator from the start. This is not only relevant to ensure the correct facilitator involvement, but also to make sure the budgeting of the facilitator role aligns with their expected responsibilities.

Who can be an ADOPT facilitator and how to become one?

One of the key features of the ADOPT Fund is that it is **mandatory** to have a Project Facilitator, and this facilitator **must be registered** in the [Project Facilitators database](#) managed by Innovate UK Business Connect. The goal is to ensure a baseline of expertise from facilitators across grants; and to have a standardised list of experts for farmers to choose from.

To be eligible as an ADOPT facilitator you must:

- Be based in the UK (not only England).
- Have worked within agriculture, horticulture, forestry for a minimum of five years.
- Have facilitation experience, including working with groups of farmers and growers on key projects (ideally Innovate UK funded but other relevant public funded grants will be considered).
- Have experience in successfully supporting and writing R&D/Innovation grant applications (ideally Innovate UK funded but other relevant public funded grants will be considered).
- Have experience with successfully managing R&D/Innovation grant funded projects. (ideally Innovate UK funded but other relevant public funded grants will be considered)

Project Facilitators are individuals. The assessment is based on the merits of an individual rather than a business or company as a whole.

Applying and, if accepted, appearing in the database is free.

To apply, facilitators must complete [this short application form](#). Make sure to provide information that supports how you meet the eligible requirements highlighted above.

It will take up to 2 weeks to receive a mail with the decision (positive or negative, so consider this in your timeline if you are coordinating an application to a **Facilitator Support Grant** or **Full Grant** (details on these grants below).

If your application is rejected, you can reapply. Feedback or guidance on which aspects of your application could be strengthened is available by contacting a member of the Innovate UK Business Connect team at ADOPTfacilitator@iukbc.org.uk. They will be happy to advise you on how to enhance your application for future opportunities.

Remember that ***if a Project Facilitator is not registered in the database, the grant application will be rejected.***

As a facilitator, how to engage with farmers or other partners interested in exploring the ADOPT opportunity?

You might already know some fantastic farmers you are working with and would like to explore the ADOPT opportunity; or might be referred to a group interested in exploring the opportunity. If you already know them, and they trust you, they might ask you to be their facilitator. Remember that to be part of ADOPT applications **you must be registered** in the [Project Facilitators database](#) managed by Innovate UK Business Connect.

Potential projects can also connect with you as a facilitator by exploring the [Project Facilitators database](#). In it, facilitators can be found by *Region* and *Industry Sectors*; your organisation and contact information will be available in the directory once approved.

Remember that facilitators can be involved in as many or as few projects as you feel comfortable in and are able to deliver, so you might explore more than just one of these avenues.

What ADOPT funding is available to engage facilitators?

The ADOPT programme has 2 kinds of grants, and both fund facilitator-time to make projects successful:

Support grant: funding to engage a facilitator before the full ADOPT application.

- Facilitators can play a key role in helping groups explore ideas, find the right connections and partners, and lead the writing of a compelling Full ADOPT Grant application
- The *Support grant* can fund a set amount of £2,500 to fund the work of a Project Facilitator supporting farmers in the pre-application stages of a project, from idea exploration and fine tuning until the submission of a Full ADOPT Grant application. If your grant submission is successful, the amount is paid upon submission of a full grant.
- This is a competitive grant and to apply the facilitator **must be registered** in the [Project Facilitators database](#) managed by IUK Business Connect.

While applying to this grant is not a prerequisite to apply to the full grants, facilitators can play a central role in developing applications and it is a good way to finance the early stages of facilitator engagement. However, it is not up to the facilitator to apply for this grant: the Facilitator Support Grant application must be done by a lead farmer,

grower or forester located in England who runs an established business. Farmers, growers or foresters can follow the relevant round [links in this page to apply](#) .

Full grant: a facilitator in the team.

- Farmers applying for an ADOPT full grant **must engage** a Project Facilitator registered in the [Innovate UK Business Connect Directory of Facilitators](#).
- The costs of the facilitator in the Full Application must be included within the project costs. This is another reason why assessing the right level of required support will be very important.
- Facilitators can be engaged in the project either as a subcontractor to one of the partners (it doesn't have to be the lead farmer) or as a project partner. This decision is up to the project consortium.

You can find more information about facilitators and ADOPT grants [here](#).

How can you support a project?

Facilitators can support in different areas:

Expertise and Strategic Input: facilitators can also help farmers develop their project by leveraging their specific expertise or, if needed, by connecting with the right experts to make your plan develop and move forward. Some aspects can be:

- Supporting the development of the Full ADOPT Grant application.
- They may offer sector-specific insights to strengthen project outcomes.
- They may help interpret and apply innovation strategies to on-farm challenges.

Coordination and internal communication: facilitators often play an important role in supporting a project team to help them deliver the best outcomes. Here are some of the activities they might take ownership for:

- Solicit input from stakeholders, team members and subject matter experts to create an effective process that is fit-for-purpose.
- Guide discussions, encouraging participation and using active listening to ensure everyone in the group is heard.
- Manage group dynamics, creating a sense of psychological safety and facilitating effective, inclusive collaboration among the group.
- Encourage the group in generating their own ideas, coming up with solutions and taking shared responsibility for a common goal.
- Create a good environment to get things done!
- Report back to stakeholders after a session to support further action and create momentum.

Project Management: facilitators' expertise often covers project management aspects that could be welcomed/needed by projects, such as:

- Coordinate timelines, deliverables, and partner responsibilities.
- Ensure the project remains on track and aligned with its objectives.
- Serve as the project manager for the full duration (up to 24 months).

Administrative and Compliance Support: to make sure farmers are properly supported in every aspect, ADOPT requires facilitators to be able to support with administrative and compliance processes associated to the grant process if needed. For example:

- Prepare and submit required documentation to Innovate UK and the MSPs
- Assist with quarterly claims, and other compliance-related paperwork including final report.
- Help navigate Innovate UK's processes and expectations.

External communication and dissemination: facilitators are often excellent communicators and connectors across networks and can therefore support your communication efforts. Sometimes they can be involved in communication and dissemination directly if they have the necessary know how, while other times they will rather help the team connect with the right experts or networks. It is important to discuss how this will work at the outset.

Further questions?

If you need more information, you can find it in the [ADOPT Support Hub website](#), specifically in its [facilitator-specific information in our FAQ document](#).

You can also contact the Support Hub directly ([here](#)) or join our online Drop In Sessions ([find details on our events page](#)) to ask further questions to an expert, whether you are an aspiring ADOPT facilitator (who is thinking of registering or has already applied), registered facilitator or a farmer looking for the right facilitator fit!

You can also visit the Innovate UK Business Connect [Directory of facilitators here](#); or contact Innovate UK Business Connect here: ADOPTfacilitator@iukbc.org.uk.