



# Devon Agri-Tech Accelerator (DATA)

Handbook

Contact details: [data@devon.gov.uk](mailto:data@devon.gov.uk)

## **Introduction:**

Devon County Council Business Support & Innovation team have secured £503,318.58 from the Community Renewal Fund to deliver a programme of support to Farmers & the Agri-Tech Sector. This is known as the Devon Agri-Tech Accelerator Programme (DATA) and seeks to develop the agricultural sector in Devon, stimulating innovation and increasing the market for Agri-Tech.

One element of the project is the Knowledge Exchange and Voucher Scheme (pilot). This will support a minimum of 14 Agri-Tech businesses through specialist support and expertise.

The DATA project is led by DCC, in collaboration with the University of Plymouth, Duchy College and Business Information Point (BIP). It is funded by the UK government through the UK [Community Renewal Fund, which is managed by Devon County Council](#).

## **Project Overview:**

### **Knowledge Exchange and Voucher Scheme pilot:**

There is £210,000 available to fund specialist support for Agri-Tech businesses, this part of the project is led by the University of Plymouth. A Knowledge Exchange Manager will work with a minimum of 14 businesses across Devon to identify bespoke support, advice or services needed to develop Agricultural technology and innovation to grow your business. Vouchers worth up to £15,000 will be available to pay for the support identified. If you are an Agri-Tech business who would like to gain financial support to develop your innovation further, please contact the Knowledge Exchange Manager (details below).

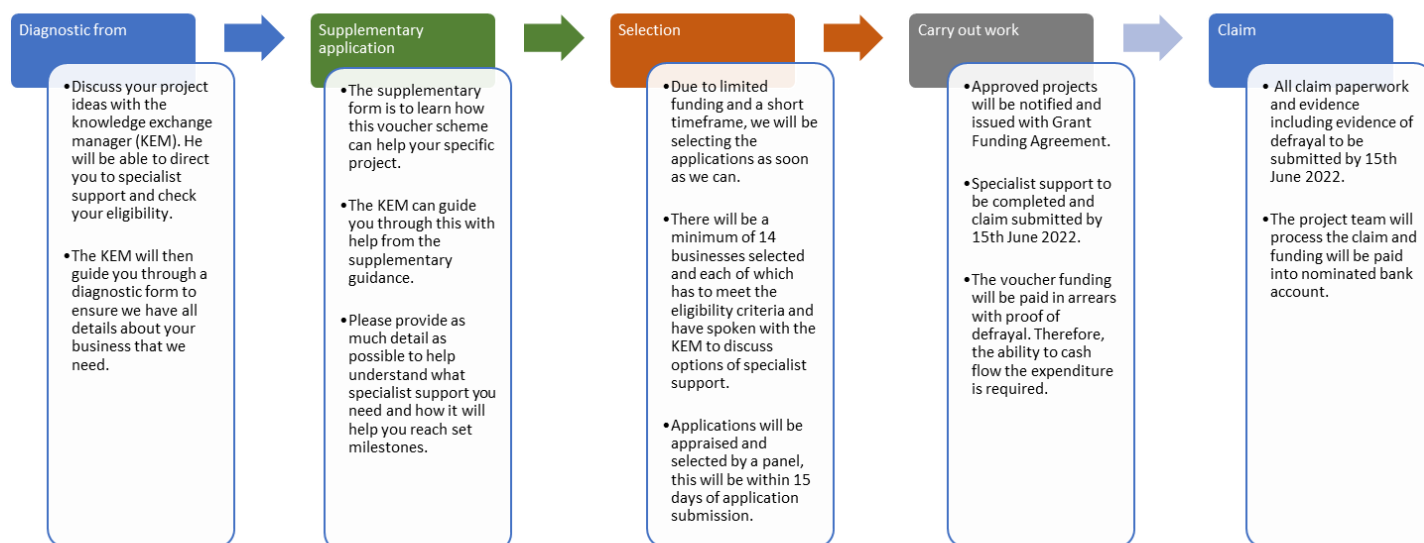
This voucher scheme will be carried out with a Knowledge Exchange Manager to help guide applicants through the application process, and to guide them in finding the right support. The Knowledge Exchange Manager is the University of Plymouth's leading expert in the Agri-Tech sector. Their role is to work with the applicant Agri-Tech businesses to find and recommend bespoke and specialist support to enhance their product or business. This could be in the form of specialist consultancy, extra lab time or specialist advice.

The voucher can be spent on specialist equipment. However, this must be £4,999 or under (inc. VAT) and accompanied by specialist support. For example, £10,000 can be spent on specialist support and then £4999 can be spent on a sensor to apply the specialist support to the field/sector.

The Knowledge Exchange Manager will also be organising two Agri-Tech showcase events. These events are to show what Agri-Tech businesses are working on in the area and what tech is available to potential users. This is not to try to sell products, but instead to make people aware of what Agri-Tech is available and start to explore what the sector could look like in Devon.

*Knowledge Exchange Manager contact:* [agritech@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:agritech@plymouth.ac.uk)

## Customer journey:



## Geographical area covered by the project:

Eligible organisations are from Devon County Council's administrative area, (E.g., TQ14, EX1). includes:

- Exeter
- Teignbridge
- East Devon
- West Devon
- North Devon
- Mid Devon
- Torridge
- South Hams

Please check your postcode via <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

If your business sits outside of the DCC administrative area, but most of the work carried out by your business/ most profit made is within the DCC administrative area, then your project may still be considered. Discuss any queries with the knowledge exchange manager to see whether your business is eligible.

## Programme Themes/Priorities:

The main theme of this project is to enhance the Agri-Tech sector within Devon. This voucher scheme pilot provides an opportunity for Agri-Tech businesses to improve their business and their products through receiving specialist support.

- Providing specialist support for Agri-Tech businesses.
- Providing an opportunity for businesses to enhance their innovations.
- A chance to gain connectivity across the sector Agri-Tech showcase events.

## Which businesses can apply?

**Tip:** Please contact the Knowledge Exchange Manager if you are uncertain whether your business is eligible

The business/service must fall under the Agri-Tech sector.

**Agricultural technology (Agri-Tech) can be defined as:** a technology within farming (agriculture, horticulture, forestry, and aquaculture) which aims to improve crop yields, profitability, sustainability, or efficiency. This could be in the form of products, services or processes which aim to improve the outcomes of the agricultural industry.

Examples of Agri-Tech include (but are not limited to):

- Drones
- Digitisation
- Artificial Intelligence
- Robotics
- Weather analysis
- Irrigation systems
- Light/heat control
- Types of biotechnology (e.g., for disease control, soil fertilisation and nutrient supplementation)

**E.g., Businesses that fall within one of the Agri-Tech sectors, could be (but are not limited to):**

- Manufacturing
- Production
- Information communication and technology
- Environmental technologies
- Irrigation systems
- Waste management

### Providing the SIC code of your business:

You are asked to provide the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Code for your business/service. This is to better our understanding of what parts of the sector need funding/support.

To find the SIC code of your business/service please visit: [Nature of business: Standard Industrial Classification \(SIC\) codes \(companieshouse.gov.uk\)](https://www.companieshouse.gov.uk/nature-of-business/standard-industrial-classification-sic-codes)

**It is expected that most applications will be under sections A, C, E and M of the Standard Industrial Classification codes.** However, businesses outside of these sections can be considered if they can demonstrate having a **significant** impact on the Agri-Tech sector. If you believe your business qualifies, then please confirm with the Knowledge Exchange Manager (details at the top of the page).

*The DATA project will support micro/small to medium sized businesses only.*

The table below shows what qualifies as a medium, small, or micro business.

Business size	Number of FTE employees		Annual turnover or balance sheet total
Medium	fewer than 250	and	Under £50m
Small	fewer than 50	and	Under £10m
Micro	fewer than 10	and	Under £2m

### **What is a 'full-time equivalent' (FTE) employee?**

Anyone who works a minimum of 30 hours per week counts as 1 FTE employee. A person working 30 hours a week for 3 months of the year would be 0.25 FTE employee.

FTEs include business partners and directors. If a business partner or director works more than 30 hours per week they still count as 1 FTE employee.

### **Is your business 'linked' to other businesses?**

If your business is linked to other businesses, this might mean you exceed the business size requirements and the funding limits.

The most common circumstances under which businesses are considered to be linked are:

- one business holds a majority of the shareholders' or members' voting rights in another business
- one business is entitled to appoint or remove a majority of the administrative, management or supervisory body of another
- a contract between the business, or a provision in the memorandum or articles of association of one of the businesses, enables one to exercise a dominant influence over the other
- one business is able, by agreement, to exercise sole control over a majority of shareholders' or members' voting rights in another

### **How much can you apply for?**

As explained earlier in this document, the project offers Revenue grants.

*You can apply for a minimum grant of £1,000 and a maximum grant of £15,000.*

- No more than 2 claims for projects over £2,000.
- And the last claim should represent at least 20% of the awarded grant.

### **The grant can ONLY support revenue expenditure.**

Specialist support in the context of this application can include (but is not limited to):

- Extra lab time.
- Specialist uses of equipment.
- Specialist advice.
- Grants for items (£4,999 or below inc. VAT) to support new and expanding services/innovations.
- Technical costs linked to new workspace or lab access.

### **Revenue or Capital?**

This voucher scheme can ONLY support revenue costs.

Sometimes it is difficult to determine whether costs are revenue or capital, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact the project team via [data@devon.gov.uk](mailto:data@devon.gov.uk).

## Costs which are not eligible for Funding:

The following are not eligible costs for DATA purposes. This list is not exhaustive.

- **Any costs incurred before the project start date proposed.**
- Capital costs.
- Contingency costs.
- The cost of getting any permissions or consents, such as planning permission.
- Any items which you have already had EU or other public funding for (or intend to get EU or other public funding for).
- Costs of arranging, financing, or securing additional grants and funding streams.
- Relocation costs – if the business needs to relocate in order to expand, it can only apply for funding for the cost of the expansion.
- Costs associated with the provision of housing.
- Proposals that are carried out only to meet a domestic legal requirement.
- Recoverable VAT.
- Existing fixed overheads of the business.
- Existing staff costs and salaries.
- Repairs and maintenance of existing buildings, equipment, and machinery.
- Like-for-like replacement of existing items (such as buildings, equipment, and machinery).
- Computers, software, and printers used in the general running of the business, like processing orders or accounts, not solely necessary to run the project.
- Bad debts.
- Advance payments to beneficiary.
- Insurance policy costs.
- Working capital.
- Financial charges, such as bank charges, fines, and interest.

## Paying for the project:

Grants are paid in stages and in arrears dependent on the timescale of your project. We expect you to make a maximum of 2 claims over the course of the project. (Except in exceptional circumstances where cashflow is an issue).

You must show that you have sufficient funds to pay for the project costs until you claim for and are paid the intervention Grant Payment.

Defrayal means that any agreed eligible costs must be paid in full. Items can only be declared as fully defrayed if evidence is provided that the payment for the item has left the purchaser's account. Please note that when credit cards are used to obtain items they are not fully defrayed until the payment has been made to the credit card issuer in full for the period that the item was purchased.

The voucher funding will be paid in arrears with proof of defrayal. Therefore, the ability to cash flow the expenditure is required. For this voucher scheme, we cannot pay advance. If you have any queries about this, please contact [data@devon.gov.uk](mailto:data@devon.gov.uk).

*We recommend that you do not use a credit card for purchases, unless you are able to clear the entire balance of the credit card and provide a credit card statement showing the cleared balance and a copy of your bank statement showing the payment to the credit card company.*

## Match funding:

**This is funding available at a 100% intervention rate up to £15,000.**

However, in the event that total project costs are more than the maximum grant intervention (£15,000), evidence is required to show that your business can cover these costs.

Enter the grant intervention rate you require in %. This will be calculated using total grant funding sought / total project value x 100. You must use a single intervention rate for all project items.

Please do not request the maximum intervention rate available to your project if you do not need it. This will enable us to make more effective use of limited public funding.

## Subsidy Control:

**Have you received any public money / grants / funding in the last 3 years?**

Grants from the DATA are awarded through the Small Amounts of Financial Assistance Allowance (SAFA). This is part of the UK's new Subsidy Control regime which replaces the EU State Aid rules. Under the new rules, you are allowed to receive up to £335,000 (subject to exchange rates) from public funds over any period of 3 years. It includes any subsidy previously received as *de minimis* aid or as Small Amounts of Financial Assistance under the EU-UK Trade and Co-operation Agreement (TCA) from any subsidy awarding body.

It is your organisation's responsibility to check that it is eligible, and by the very submission of an application you are declaring that, if awarded payment, you are complying with and will not exceed the SAFA threshold. If you have any doubt as to your position you must seek appropriate advice before applying.

Please complete the table in the application form to declare any subsidies that your organisation has already received. We will seek further information from you should our due diligence checks highlight that you have exceeded the Small Amounts of Financial Assistance Allowance of £335,000 (subject to exchange rates) over a period of three years

## Timescales:

*All Applicants must be able to complete the application in time to contract before 30th April 2022 and be able to spend the funding and send complete final claims, including defrayal evidence, before 15th June 2022.*

*All complete claims will be paid by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022.*

## Preparing an application:

The application process is a two-part process. The first being a diagnostic form where we collect all relevant information about your business. The second, is an opportunity for you to tell us about your project.

Before you write this application, you should think about the following:

- What will specialist support help you achieve?
- What kind of specialist support are you looking for?
- Why is your project important/ how will it improve the sector?
- What outcomes will your project meet?
- What would happen if you did not receive this voucher – would your project still go ahead?

**Do not start work, incur costs, or place an order before your grant agreement has been signed. This will potentially make your whole project ineligible.**

## The Application Process:

We are using an application form designed for grants between £1,000 and £15,000. We understand that the application process may appear to be lengthy for those only seeking a small amount of funding, however, the application detail should be proportionate to the size of the grant you are applying for. The most important consideration, and what your application will be assessed on, is the quality of the information, not quantity. Therefore, we expect the level of detail will be greater for larger project funding applications than smaller projects.

The DATA grant scheme has a two-stage application process:

### Stage 1. Communicating with the Knowledge exchange manager and the Diagnostic Form.

The knowledge exchange manager (KEM) is part of the University of Plymouth and is an expert in the Agri-Tech field. The role of the KEM is to support applicants with their applications and provide any necessary advice. The KEM will be able to answer any questions about your eligibility as well as giving advice in terms of where to spend the funding.

Contact details: [agritech@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:agritech@plymouth.ac.uk)

The KEM will assist you through the process of filling out a Diagnostic Form, which will help to determine your eligibility as well as provide us with everything we need to know about your business.

### Stage 2. Supplementary Application.

The Supplementary Application is a comprehensive application. This is your opportunity to tell us in detail about your project. If you have discussed your project, its eligibility and taken on board any advice given by the KEM, you can apply to this funding by sending your full application to: [data@devon.gov.uk](mailto:data@devon.gov.uk)

You are part of a group of projects that will be presented to the Decision-Making Board, therefore you need to 'sell' your project to us.

**Tip:** *Ensure you make the distinction between what your organisation delivers as a whole and what the discreet project is that you are requesting funding for – you must clearly define what the funding is going towards and what it will achieve.*

## Supporting Documents:

At this stage we will require your supporting documents including:

- Quotes for the work that will be procured with the voucher.
  - Quotes should: be dated; addressed to your business; have the suppliers address and contact details and a breakdown of all the costs.
- Business accounts for the last 2 years (if available)
- Bank statement showing funds available to cashflow the project.
- Any supporting documentation that demonstrates the need and demand, impact, value for money and deliverability of your project and how it will make a game-changing difference to your business and/or to the local Agri-Tech sector can be included in the application.



## Outputs, Milestones and Outcomes:

**TIP:** *Outputs are the measurable results which you will achieve as part of the project. Outputs are integral in the decision-making process; they help the appraiser determine the value for money that the project will achieve. If your application is successful, they will form part of the contract. Therefore, it is advisable to be realistic about the outputs your project will achieve.*

Here are some of the examples of outputs you might achieve:

- Number of Jobs Created.
- Number of People supported through new services
- New models of working with potential for replication or roll out.
- Increase in turnover.
- Number of diversifications or additional different offers from existing substantial business.
- Number of new innovative technologies adopted.
- Number of new innovative processes/models of working developed.
- Number of farm businesses able to be supported.
- Improving the profitability, sustainability, or productivity of Devon's agricultural land.
- Enhancing the Agri-Tech sector within Devon.

Milestones are they keys steps in your project, these are normally the timescales in which you hope to achieve progress.

Outcomes are benefits from the projects that are not as measurable as outputs. For example: staff morale; client satisfaction; potential for roll out; potential benefits to commissioners, other businesses etc.

### **Before you submit your application, please check you have included:**

1. Diagnostic Form fully completed.
2. Supplementary Form fully completed.
3. Copies of one quote for **each item of specialist support** or, if these cannot be provided, a detailed explanation
4. Letters of support or expressions of interest from stakeholders/other supporting documentation – optional.

*The application form must be signed electronically and sent as a PDF (preferred) or Word document.*

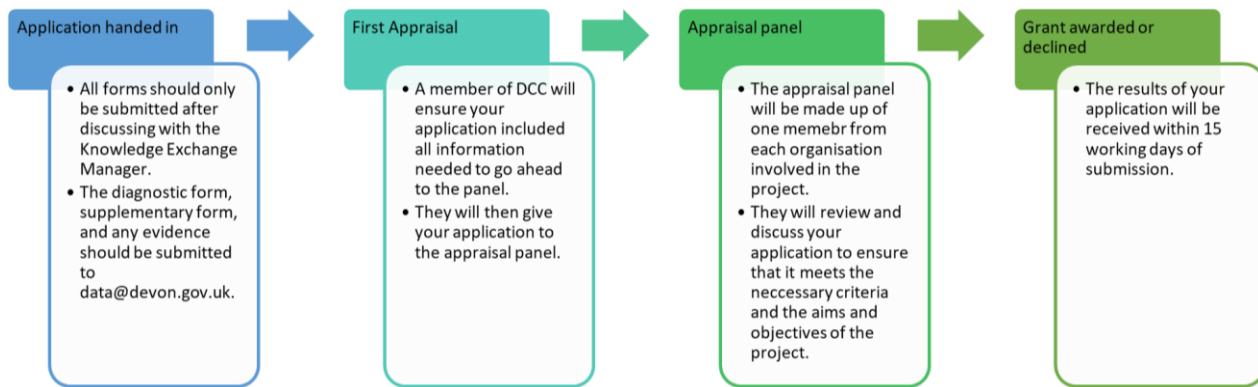
### **How to submit your Full application:**

If you believe that you have an eligible project idea and have discussed with the Knowledge Exchange Manager, you can submit your full application by emailing the [data@devon.gov.uk](mailto:data@devon.gov.uk) mailbox with your completed form.

We will acknowledge receipt within 2 days.

We will inform you of the outcome within 15 days (this may vary slightly for more complex projects).

## What happens after Submission of a Full Application?



The project team will check your application for completeness in the first appraisal; if there are any documents missing or we require further information the team will request this from you and give you 5 working days to submit it. There are short timescales between submission and the Decision-Making Panel meeting date, therefore we would advise you to submit this information as soon as possible.

All applications will be independently appraised. The appraiser may ask you clarifying questions, therefore try and ensure you are available between the period of processing and decision making in case the funder has any queries – or provide an alternative contact where you cannot avoid being unavailable

### Please note that you will not automatically get a grant.

The DATA team will assess your application. We are looking for evidence of a sound business case and for projects that meet our priorities for funding.

DATA funding is limited and will be prioritised to applications that contribute the most to the project's aim, as set out in the Introduction/Background.

This means that even those who submit a quality application may not be funded, as this scheme aims to support a range of projects, to cover a variety of needs, geographies, and demographics. Devon County Council reserves the right not to make any awards if it is considered that the proposals are not sufficiently innovative, are not scalable or practical.

### Decision:

The decision on whether to award funding will be made by the Decision-Making Board (DMB), which is made up of representatives from Devon County Council, University of Plymouth, Duchy College and Business Information Point.

There are four possible outcomes from a Decision-Making Board meeting:

- **Approved** – the project is awarded the funding without any additional conditions
- **Approved with conditions** – the project is awarded the funding subject to meeting additional conditions.
- **Deferred** – the project decision is deferred; you will be provided with details of the reasons and what you must provide to enable the DMB to make a decision.
- **Rejected** – The application is rejected, and you are provided detailed reasons for the decision. You will also be informed if you can reapply.

## **Appeals Process:**

Whilst we appreciate a rejection will be disappointing, this decision will not have been taken lightly, therefore appeals are only accepted if you believe we have:

- made a mistake;
- made a processing error or;
- made an error in law.

Appeals cannot be made because you are unhappy with the outcome.

All appeals should be submitted in writing to the [data@devon.gov.uk](mailto:data@devon.gov.uk) mailbox within 10 working days; they will be independently reviewed.

The outcome will be sent to you within 10 working days of receipt of your appeal; this decision will be final.