

**DAERA Directed Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) Research Work Programme 2016/17 (Supplementary A)**



# Background

The Evidence and Innovation Strategy updated for 2015-17 (EIS)1 sets out the overarching framework for research and development to underpin evidence-based policy and delivery, and to promote innovation in agri-food, fishing, forestry and other rural businesses. It provides the framework for funding DARD policy-relevant and industry-relevant research and innovation during the period prior to the establishment of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), and for a period of 1 year following the establishment and bedding-in of the new Department. A new strategy will be developed to succeed the 2015-17 EIS, and will meet the Evidence and Innovation needs of the new Department and is likely to see longer-term programmes of research in selected areas with linkages to evidence based projects as appropriate.

Whilst the 2015-17 EIS sets out a framework for research, the detailed evidence and innovation activities are co-ordinated through four Programme Management Boards (PMBs), which align broadly to the EIS Strategic Goals.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **EIS Goal** |  | **PMB** |
| **Goal 1:** To help the Agri-Food Industry Prepare for Future Market Opportunities and Economic Challenges | **PMB1:** Performance in the Marketplace |
| **Goal 2:** To Improve the Lives of Farmers and Other Rural Dwellers, Targeting Resources where they are most needed | **PMB2:** Informing Policy and Improving the Lives of Farmers and Other Rural Dwellers |
| **Goal 3:** To enhance Animal Fish and Plant Health and Animal Welfare on an all Ireland basis | **PMB3**: Animal and Plant Health and Animal Welfare |
| **Goal 4:** To Help Deliver Improved Sustainable Environmental Outcomes | **PMB4:** Sustainable Environment |

1 See<https://www.dardni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dard/evidence-and-innovation-strategy-2015-17final.pdf>

# Programme development

One of the major roles and responsibilities of each PMB is to review, identify and prioritise investment in evidence gathering or innovation support activity in light of policy needs and/or evidence gaps. Evidence and innovation needs are identified by DAERA on an ongoing basis, informed by both informal and formal engagement with stakeholders.

This process ensures the development of an evidence and innovation programme that is appropriately aligned to policy needs, provides a robust evidence base for future policy development, implementation and review and/or supports industry innovation within the scope of DAERA’s policy interests.

An overarching Evidence and Innovation Priorities Group (**EIPG**), to which the PMBs report, is responsible for making the final decisions on the overall priority assigned to evidence and innovation requirements and, ultimately, the activities that will be funded in any particular year. EIPG is seeking to achieve a balanced research programme.

This supplementary DAERA Directed Agri-Food Biosciences Institute (AFBI) Research Work Programme has been developed as a result of this process and proposals approved through it form part of the annual work programme[[1]](#footnote-1) delivered by AFBI for DAERA.

**Liaison with DAERA Policy**

* Further information on each priority need can be obtained from the nominated DAERA Policy Lead. AFBI Project Leaders with an interest in responding to an Evidence and Innovation Need are encouraged to contact the nominated DAERA Policy Lead at an early stage. Contact details are listed at **Annex B**;
* To facilitate early discussion, outline proposal(s) may be submitted by the AFBI Project Leader to the DAERA Policy Lead using the Concept Note (CN) pro-forma which is available on the DAERA website. This step is not mandatory;
* A FFP should be completed for each proposed submission.The template form can be obtained from the DAERA website. There are some minor changes to the FFP from previous years and Project Leads should ensure that the latest version is completed. The AFBI Project Leader should work closely with the DAERA Policy Lead to ensure that the proposal is the correct fit for the Evidence and Innovation Need identified. It should be noted that the FFP forms the Economic Appraisal for the proposal.

**Co-Funding Opportunities**

* DAERA will seek to identify and liaise with potential co-funders. If AFBI project leader(s) wish to pursue potential co-funding, they should inform SEIPD (contact details below) who will co-ordinate co-funding arrangements with DAERA.

**Closing Date**

* The proposal window closes on **2nd September** **2016** and all FFP(s) received up to this date will be scrutinised by PMB 2;
* RCNs will not be accepted as a substitute for FFPs; and
* All completed forms should be submitted to:-

[Gillian.Doherty@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Gillian.Doherty@daera-ni.gov.uk)

or

Gillian Doherty

Science, Evidence and Innovation Policy Division, DAERA

Room 356, Dundonald House

Ballymiscaw

Upper Newtownards Road

Belfast BT4 3SB

**Assessment and Approval Process**

* All FFPs will be scrutinised and, where appropriate, challenged by DAERA Policy Leads, and DAERA Science Advisory Branch. AFBI should answer any queries promptly;
* FFPs will be selected at random for assessment by DAERA Research Economics Branch. AFBI should answer any queries promptly;
* All FFPs will be assessed, scored and ranked by PMBs;
* EIPG will provide final approval for proposals. Approval will be subject to a satisfactory economic appraisal (mostly within the FFP) and proposals must have a sound scientific basis;
* EIPG will seek to achieve a balance across all PMBs and preference will be given to proposals that demonstrate a holistic, inter-disciplinary approach to addressing the priority need(s) and/or attract co-funding from another source;
* **Work cannot start until EIPG signs off the proposal; and**
* **The outcome of this process is referred to as the DAERA directed AFBI research work programme 2016/17. Publicity or marketing of any of the proposals must acknowledge DAERA as the core funder.**

# Priority Needs

**PMB 2 – INFORMING POLICY AND IMPROVING THE LIVES OF FARMERS AND OTHER RURAL DWELLERS**

A key objective of PMB 2 is to build the evidence base to inform the Department’s broad rural policy agenda. In particular, it is seeking to use research to develop a more robust and sophisticated understanding of the social and economic characteristics of rural areas, with a particular focus on identifying the specific needs of disadvantaged groups and what this means for the development and equitable delivery of government policy for both the farming and non-farm sector. A second key objective of PMB 2 is to commission cross-cutting economic research that will provide a deeper insight into the impact of policy options right across the Department’s remit and inform future policy development on agri-food industry competitiveness, animal health and welfare and environmental sustainability.

PMB 2 aims to achieve this objective through the delivery of evidence and innovation projects in 10 themed areas as outlined in the Evidence and Innovation Strategy updated for 2015-2017 (EIS 2015-2017):

Evidence and Innovation Research Needs Areas:

#### Understanding and evaluating socio-economic challenges, needs and potential of traditional land and marine-based industries and appropriate policy responses;

#### Identifying the particular challenges, needs and potential of rural and fishing communities and appropriate policy responses;

1. Using economic modelling frameworks to develop and test policy interventions and to assess their impacts;
2. Evaluating the costs and benefits to the economy of animal and plant disease prevention and control;
3. Understanding the economic value of improving environmental footprint in land and marine-based industries;
4. Understanding how best to effect behavioural changes within the agri-food, forestry and fishing sectors;
5. Understanding how best to maximise the returns from education and technology transfer;
6. Understanding how best to embed economic sustainability into rural policy interventions, including the role of innovative solutions, new technologies and social enterprise;
7. Evaluating the potential of innovation and new technologies (ICT) to deliver better social and economic outcomes in rural areas; and
8. Responding to climate change – adaptation and mitigation.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PMB 2 Evidence and Innovation Needs** | **Guideline annual project Cost** | **Guideline duration** | **DAERA Policy Lead** |
| **Design and implementation of an evaluation framework for Business Development Groups.**  There is a need to develop an evaluation framework for BDGs which considers impact; economic performance; lesson learned; and value for money. This will include:   * Impact of knowledge transfer on the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of the participants, including qualifications obtained; * Ongoing impact of knowledge transfer on the performance (both physical and financial) of participants and to compare with the performance of a control group(s); * The views of participants on the benefits of knowledge transfer; * The effect of barrier payments on participation in and effectiveness of Business Development Groups; * The persistence of Business Development Groups beyond the end of the project; * Opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of knowledge transfer; and * Consideration should be given to how the approach could also be used for the evaluation needs of other RDP schemes. This is to avoid the need for duplication and repeated farmer engagement. | N/A | 12 months | Joy Alexander |

**Annex A**

1. **Timetable**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Activity** |
| **15st August 2016** | Supplementary proposal window opens |
| **2nd September 2016** | Latest date for FFP(s) submission |
| **23rd September 2016** | FFP(s) assessed & scored by DAERA Policy Lead and Science Advisory Branch |
| **7th October 2016** | EIPG makes final decision on approval of project(s) |
| **From 17th October 2016** | Approved projects commence |

1. **Evaluation criteria**

# PMB 2 will provide a final scoring for each proposal received, based on the following criteria (not in order of importance).

* Ability of objectives to meet policy needs;
* Scientific quality;
* Evidence of collaboration with other scientific groups / industry;
* Provision of additional information to that already known in this area;
* Appropriate project management including risk management;
* Appropriate milestones and deliverables;
* Clear strategy for knowledge exchange;
* Potential for co-funding from other sources and
* Value for Money.
  1. **Additional information**
* FFP forms should be completed in **Arial font size 12.**
  1. **Feedback**
     + Feedback on unsuccessful proposals will be coordinated by DAERA Science, Evidence and Innovation Policy Division and passed to a central contact in AFBI. DAERA Policy leads will not provide feedback to AFBI Project Leaders directly.

**Annex B DAERA Contact Details**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **DAERA Contact** | **Division/Branch** | **Tel. No** | **E mail** |
| Gillian Doherty | Research Policy Branch (SEIPD) | 02890524250 | gillian.doherty@daera-ni.gov.uk |
| Joy Alexander | Food Technology Development- CAFRE | 02886768132 | joy.alexander@daera-ni.gov.uk |
| Patrick Murphy | Science Advisory Branch (SEIPD) | 02890524178 | patrickmurphy2@daera-ni.gov.uk |

1. See <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2004/3327/article/6/made> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)