Eastern Agri-Tech Growth Initiative

Eastern Agri-Tech Programme Board

Terms of Reference

Background

1. The Eastern Agri-Tech Growth Initiative brings together leading agriculture, research, science and technology assets in the East of England to strengthen a nationally significant, vibrant cluster that brings a truly global reach and impetus to the emerging UK Agri-tech sector. The (grant) funding provides a significant boost to the food, drink and horticulture sector by supporting businesses looking to invest in specialist equipment, new market and supply chain development, ways to improve productivity and efficiency, and the application and commercialisation of Research and Development.

2. The Eastern Agri-Tech Growth Initiative operates across both the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA)/Business Board (BB) and New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) areas and is run by the CPCA. It is promoted both directly to businesses across the food, drink & horticulture sector as well as working through key intermediaries including banks; accountants and sector specific consultants.

3. The Eastern Agri-Tech Growth Initiative has two main funds:

   - An **Agri-Tech Growth Fund** which provides grants of between £10,000 and £150,000 to enhance business and jobs growth, and support product development. The Fund is aimed at supporting improvements in agricultural productivity through the introduction of new products or processes and encourage improvements to existing product/ processes and energy efficiency. The Growth funds supports the creation of new jobs and the protecting existing jobs.

   - An **R&D and Prototyping Fund** which provides financial assistance to attract innovative and novel technologies. Planned research critical to the development of new products or processes within the Agri-Tech sector can be supported with

grants of between £10,000 and £60,000 to cover the costs of research and development.

4. The Programme Board has been given the delegated authority to undertake this role, on behalf of the BB and NALEP Boards. Both the BB and NALEP are represented on the Programme Board and will receive regular updates on the operation of the programme. A representative of the BB will Chair the Programme Board.

5. The CPCA is responsible for delivering the Agri-Tech scheme across the two geographical areas. A CPCA representative chairs the Programme Board. Martin Lutman, Agri-Tech Programme Manager CPCA, manages the scheme across the two geographical areas and acts as the Secretariat to the Programme Board. The CPCA is the Accountable Body for the programme.

6. The Programme Board meetings are not classified as public meetings and therefore not open to the public or media representatives.

Key Tasks

7. The Programme Board's main task is to consider and take decisions on applications for grant support. The Programme Board should only see and consider an application once an application is deemed eligible and has been assessed by one of the independent team of assessors.   Martin Lutman is responsible for ensuring that the assessors deliver quality assessments, undertake the necessary due diligence and in a timely way.

8. The Programme Board will have access to the agenda and supporting documents about each project proposal at least 5 days before meetings. This includes a report on each application which contains a suggested recommendation to approve or decline the application and, if approved, whether there should be any conditions to be placed on the project and/or applicant. For each meeting, the Programme Manager will record the decisions taken by the Programme Board on each application.

9. All applicants are invited to the meeting where their particular project will be considered. Each applicant will have the opportunity to give a short presentation and take questions from/provide clarification to the Programme Board. The Programme Board will judge each application fairly and on its own merits. The final decision about each application rests with Programme Board, unless the application is deemed ineligible during the assessment process in which case the Programme Manager will

notify the applicant. The Programme Manager will notify all applicants of the deciosns taken by the Programme Board.

10. The assessors will, if possible, attend the relevant meeting to introduce the projects for which they have assessed.

11. The Programme Board will receive regular updates from the Programme Manager on the progress of the Agri-tech programme, which will include the overall take up of the funding and the numbers of jobs created and protected.

Membership

12. Membership of the Programme Board will include experts with experience and knowledge of agriculture and the food, drink and horticulture industry, including research, farming and food processing.   Cambridgeshire and Norfolk County Councils will each have a seat on the Programme Board. Should there be a change of circumstances, it will be left for each Council to decide who should represent their interests. Membership of the Programme Board will be kept under review.

William Haire (Chair)	CPCA Business Board & East of England Agricultural Society
Dr Jonathan Clarke	John Innes Centre
Cllr Ian Bates*/Cllr Mathew Shuter	Cambridgeshire County Council
Dr Belinda Clarke	Agri-Tech East
Mike Burrows	New Anglia LEP
Dr Dave Hughes	Syngenta UK
Dr Lydia Smith	National Institute for Agricultural Botany
Cllr Beverley Spratt	Norfolk County Council

In attendance will be:

Martin Lutman	CPCA Agri-Tech Programme Manager & Secretariat to the Board
Andy Thorpe	Norfolk County Council
Julie West	New Anglia LEP

*agreed substitute when required

12. A quorum shall be four Programme Board members. The Programme Board shall meet at appropriate intervals, ideally monthly, provided a quorum is available and there are enough applications ready for the Programme Board to consider.

13. If a Programme Board member cannot attend a meeting, they can send written comments using the assessment sheets on an application(s) to the Programme Manager who will ensure they form part of the discussion and decision taken.

14.   If the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, providing that the meeting is quorate, those Board Members attending the meeting can agree a substitute chair at the beginning of the meeting.

15.   When a quorum is unavailable and project decisions cannot be held over until the next available meeting, a "Virtual Meeting" can be called. In these circumstances, the Programme Manger will provide Programme Board Members with access to the project papers and invite and co-ordinate comments. The Programme Manager will provide the Chair, with a summary of the comments received and a recommendation based on these comments. The Programme Manager will then provide Programme Board Members with written confirmation of the Board's decision whether to support or decline the application(s) in question.

Conflicts of Interest

16.   Once an application passes the assessment and is deemed ready for the Programme Board's consideration, the Programme Manager provides the applicant(s) with the names of all Programme Board Members, in writing, and asks each applicant to confirm if any Programme Board Member is conflicted. If so, those Programme Board Members do not have access to the relevant project papers.

17.   Similarly, and in the event that the applicants have not recognised that a Board Member(s) is conflicted, a Programme Board Member must declare at each meeting if a conflict of interest arises, especially where an application is received from a competitor business or from a Programme Board Member's own organisation. In either of these circumstances, the Programme Board Member(s) will not be asked for their views about the application in question and must abstain from commenting on that particular application. It must be left to the other Programme Board Members to take the appropriate decision.

Confidentiality

18.   All the information provided by the applicants will be treated in confidence and protected accordingly.

Equal Opportunities

19.   The members of the Programme Board shall at all times take into consideration the principles of equal opportunity irrespective of age, gender, race, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or disability.

MARTIN LUTMAN
Agri-Tech Specialist & Programme Manager
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority
Updated June 2019