



PLACE BASED INNOVATION WITH NATIONAL IMPACT

www.growingkentandmedway.co.uk

Simon Barnes, Programme Director, simon.barnes@niab.com

FOOD SYSTEM

INNOVATION

CASE STUDIES

NEWS & REPORTS



Transforming the
**FOOD
SYSTEM**

Through Innovation
& Collaboration

What is Innovation?

UKRI definition of innovation, based on the OECD's Oslo Manual 2018, encompasses various activities that occur during the survey period. These include:

- The introduction of a new or improved product (goods or services)
- Business processes used to produce or supply all goods or services introduced, regardless of their origin
- Engagement in innovation projects that are not yet complete or abandoned
- Investment activities in areas such as internal research and development, training, and
- acquisition of external knowledge or machinery linked to innovation activities

What is changing in innovation?

The UK Industrial Strategy – no good and agri – but – digital and technology, advanced manufacturing, energy efficiency and foundation industries (transport)

Change to regional funding – are you in a devolved authority – do you know your local growth plan – what are the key regional sectors, in Kent and Medway they are:

- Food and agri
- Digital technology
- Transport and logistics
- Energy

Far more emphasis in **later Technology Readiness Level** – see next slide

Technology Readiness Levels

Technology Readiness Levels

1
Basic
Observations

2
Technology
Conceptualised

3
Proof-of-Concept
Validation

4
Partial-Scale
Prototype & Modelling

5
Partial-Scale
Prototype Validation

6
Full-Scale Prototype
Field Demonstration

7
Full-Scale Prototype in
Commercial Conditions

8
Final Commercial
Product Certification

9
Final Commercial Product
is Bank-Financeable

Local Innovation Partnership Fund

From Ground to Growth

Turning strategies into economic results, using £20m of funding to leverage £40m of investment

De-risking innovation, encouraging scaling, changing perceptions of new systems and technologies

A Business-driven and matched model for co-investment in a place-based food system

Commercialisation & Investment for all

Process: Coordinated commercialisation, acceleration and investment mechanisms that convert innovation into scalable businesses, exports
Outcome: derisking investment, scaling of investment, identifying successful opportunities early and supporting, new companies, diverse activities

4 projects - Size £30m

Digital & Technology for all

Projects: establishing a digital test bed, wider availability of data sharing and information
Outcomes: Easier product, technology and system access with less risk. Coordinated digital activities

2 projects - Size £8m

Agri-resilience farmers and growers

Projects: developing new plant breeding to increase pest and disease reduction, increased harvest, less water use, soil remediation
Outcomes: IP from plant science, increased resilience to disease and pest, lower resource inputs for greater productivity

2 projects - Size £8m

Advanced manufacturing process packaging and products

Projects: process automation, precision processing and shared production infrastructure, symbiotic stewardship
Outcomes: New products, scaling, productivity, cost and resource management

3 projects - Size £7m

Biobased solutions farmers and growers and manufacturers

Projects: Resource re-use, alternative protein, nutritional supplements
Outcomes: New materials resources, higher value commodities for increased incomes

2 projects - Size £8m

Health and Nutrition retail and consumption

Projects: Linking health and nutrition through new products, better information and consumer change
Outcomes: Better overall health, awareness of personalised messaging, long term change

2 projects - Size £2m

Energy & Resource Efficiency for all

Process: Adoption of new technology and systems at scale through trial and sharing
Outcome: Lower energy cost, greater energy efficiency less grid reliance, agri-symbiosis and low-carbon production systems

2 projects - Size £4m

Shared Delivery for all – these topics will be built into project management and gateways

Testbeds & demonstrators: to derisk and demonstrate innovation, try before you buy, on farm and in-situ innovation, knowledge sharing, communications and engagement

Digital platform & data: a thread throughout all activities, projects and the programme, building capacity and capability in this critical area

Skills & capability: a critical part of each project and programme overview, collaboration with colleges and universities to develop courses and capability, new apprenticeship strategy

Trade & Market Access: access to Europe and London and major markets, ease of international trade to deliver greater productivity and lower cost

System outcomes:

Biobased processes replacing chemical and carbon processes, higher environmental standards, faster regulatory response

Functional food Innovation and higher consumption of fresh and plant-based produce delivering improved health outcomes

Smart, secure and resilient food systems with a reduced waste and resources driven by new technology and systems with wider faster adoption

Productive supply chains: food security, food availability and affordability

KENT AND MEDWAY

FROM  GROUND TO  GROWTH

Application for Expression of Interest – 12th February

Result – April 2026

Co-creation May to August 2026

Late 2026, early 2027 programme start