



AFN Network+ Recruitment Year Three Champions FAQs

Can more than one person apply from the same organisation?

Yes, there is no limit on how many people can apply from the same organisation. Each application will be assessed on its own merit.

Is this a contract of employment?

No, this is a UKRI research-grant funded role. The usual contractual status is a collaborative agreement with an organisation. However, it is possible for consultants, freelancers, and people with self-employed status to apply.

Champions continue their employment status under the current terms and conditions of their employing organisation.

Is there an expected time commitment or work pattern?

We expect Champions to be able to contribute a substantial proportion of their time to the role of at least 0.6 FTE, up to a maximum 1.0 FTE. You will need to declare how much time you will give to the role and make the case about the level of knowledge and experience you bring, and how the time commitment you can make would represent good value for money. There is no fixed work pattern but there are AFN Network+ meetings that you would be expected to attend, both regular online, and at core AFN Network+ events, in-person, throughout the year. You will also be expected to organise and run several of your own events and workshops throughout the contract period.

How much match is required?

The total grant of £90k is paid at 80% (due to research council funding rules) and so your organisation will cover the remaining 20% ie £18k of costs to cover your time spent on AFN activities.

What can the £90k funding be used for?

The grant of £90k (£72k + 20%) is to **cover the time commitment** of the Champion to lead the theme, run events, expand the community of practice, identify research gaps, attend meetings etc. In the application, you need to state how much FTE (full time equivalent) you would be able to commit to the role eg 0.8 or 0.6 or 1.0 FTE etc. The costing can include provision for organisational overheads.

Some of the grant can be used for other costs eg Research Assistant support if required but we expect the time commitment for the Champion to form the greater proportion of the staff time requested. The focus is very much on what the Champion will bring to the role and the activities you envision implementing. If the grant is to be used for covering support roles, please provide details in your application eg Champion 0.6 FTE, Research Assistant 0.4 FTE. Only salary/fees/overhead costs should be included. £90k is the maximum you can apply for.



Are travel and subsistence costs included in the £90k?

There is an additional budget, over and above the £90k, to be used for Champions to run events and pay for their own, and participants', travel and subsistence to attend. There will be an agreed minimum number of events to be organised by each Champion in each thematic area during 2024/2025.

Will all travel and subsistence be covered by the additional budget, or is it restricted in any way?

The institutional commitment of 20% of the salary cost also includes a commitment of the same percentage for the Champions' own travel, plus any travel that participants may make to attend workshops and events ie project activities. There are maximum amounts for these items and the costs are in line with the expenditure made by our Year One and Year Two Champions. These costs do not need to be included in the application and will be discussed during the contracting process.

Can part of the £90k be used to commission other activities eg, literature reviews?

Yes, it is possible to commission certain tasks to add value to the work of the Champion. These should be transparent, and a clear explanation provided of their benefit. However, most of the application should be focused on the knowledge, skills and experience that the Champion will bring and the activities they will lead in their theme.

Are we allowed to recruit a postdoc to help with the activities planned?

Yes, you can pay for a postdoc from the £90k grant within a support role but the majority of the time is for the Champion to bring their expertise and knowledge to the role. Any allocated payment for a postdoc must be balanced and appropriate within the overall £90k budget (paid at 80%).

What types of 'research costs' can we cost for? For example, can the Champion cost for mini-projects commissioned out to ECR-industry partnered projects?

The main research cost is the Champion's time spent on undertaking the role. Commissioning of mini-projects would not be an appropriate part of the role, although there is scope to make a participation fee for those who take part in any focus groups etc.

How detailed do the costings need to be for any research assistance or commissioning of activities e.g. ball-park estimates? quotations?

The best option for such costings would be an informed estimate eg for a postdoc, an indication on time spent and approx. grade cost (plus any overheads) would suffice. These costings should be itemised in your application, as they would form part of the £90k expenditure. Again, detailed costings will be discussed during the contracting process.



Should I show a breakdown of the salary costs on the application form?

If the block grant of a maximum £90k is for more than one person ie a support role or job share, please show the separate costs in *Q4 the amount of time you can commit to the role*. We do not need a further breakdown at this stage. Do not include costs for activities and events as these will be covered by separate budgets and discussed during the contracting process, if successful.

If resources need to be produced or there is a need for items such as catering and room hire, will this additional pot also cover things like printing and catering, too?

There is a separate budget line for event costs which covers venue hire and catering, and are reimbursed at 100%. Printed materials would also be included but a sustainable approach to events is strongly encouraged. Travel and events costs do not need to be itemised in the application but potential events should be included within activities. Consumables are also an eligible cost.

Are we allowed to subcontract any workshop activities to expert facilitators?

We would anticipate that the Champion would have the appropriate level of skills and expertise to run their own workshop activities. If a facilitator brought a particular skill then a strong case would need to be made for doing this in your application. The cost would come out of the £90k budget.

What type of activities can we cost for? I would like to host workshops and roundtables.

Yes, these are the kind of activities we would expect in order for the Champion to engage with the network/beyond the network to collect data, share knowledge and identify future research needs. There is a separate budget for events costs (for venue hire and catering) but your time preparing for and running the workshops would again come from the £90k budget.

Do you need to have a particular level of qualification?

There are no qualification requirements, but each Champion should be able to offer considerable experience and knowledge of their theme to fulfil the role. We are hoping to attract a diverse range of applicants, including from industry and the third sector, as well as from Higher Education.

Are applicants based outside of the UK eligible to apply?

Applicants based outside the UK are welcome to apply, but need to highlight how their work is relevant and suitable for the position and contributes towards UK agri-food systems reaching net-zero. All Champion activities (workshops and similar) will need to take place in the UK. In addition, there is a limited budget to cover Champion travel costs, and we cannot reimburse any costs incurred outside of the UK.

