



New Zealand
Agricultural
Greenhouse Gas
Research Centre



SECOND 2026 INNOVATION INVESTMENT ROUND

Both the Ag Emissions Centre (AgEC) and AgriZero^{NZ} are working to provide New Zealand farmers with a suite of fit for purpose, practical and cost-effective tools to reduce agricultural greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. During 2026, the AgEC and AgriZero^{NZ} are partnering to run a second competitive round to identify and support innovative ideas and opportunities.

FOCUS FOR 2026

The AgEC and AgriZero^{NZ} invite Expressions of Interest (Eoi) from innovators worldwide to develop transformative agricultural greenhouse gas mitigation solutions or substantially advance emerging technologies with the potential to deliver practical, farm-level outcomes for New Zealand farmers and growers. Preference will be given to proposals that explore novel concepts, mechanisms, or technologies beyond well-established research areas and demonstrate a credible pathway to emissions reduction, adoption, and deployment at scale within a commercially relevant timeframe.

As part of this round, ideas are welcomed that specifically address the following research challenges:

- 1) the development of biological and soil-management technologies that reduce N₂O emissions by both enhancing N₂O consumption (reduction of N₂O to dinitrogen, N₂) and preventing the accumulation of nitrite (NO₂⁻), a key precursor of N₂O formation. Technologies must be able to be applied at scale and suitable for NZ pastoral systems i.e., nitrous oxide emissions from urine patches.
- 2) the development of robust, routine *in situ* approaches for quantifying the key intermediaries and processes governing N₂O emissions under urine patch conditions. This includes accurate measurement of N₂ production and/or nitrous oxide reductase (nosZ) activity, as well as nitrite formation, pool sizes, and concentration dynamics.

If your idea doesn't fit into one of the above challenges, we are still interested in submissions if they address:

- 3) Novel approaches to reducing nitrous oxide emissions from ruminant animal deposited urine and/or methane emissions from enteric fermentation that can rapidly bring about a step-change in emissions at scale in grazing ruminants, and where investment could accelerate or unblock barriers to commercialisation. Please note preference will be given to projects that investigate new mechanisms, systems, or approaches, rather than incremental improvements to existing mitigation technologies. In particular, we encourage proposals outside well-established research areas such as chemical inhibitors, vaccines, feed-based interventions,

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and other relatively mature mitigation approaches. Note that a scoring criterion for “innovation” will be applied.

What do we mean by innovation?

Innovation is a primary objective of this funding round. Applications that seek to optimise, validate, adapt, field-test, or extend existing mitigation technologies are unlikely to be competitive unless they clearly demonstrate a novel mechanism, capability, or application pathway that has not been previously investigated.

The Technical Assessment Panel will assess innovation based on the novelty of the underlying concept, mechanism, technology, or system. Preference will be given to proposals that are substantially different from current research pathways.

Applicants should clearly describe:

- What is genuinely new about the proposed idea.
- How the proposed approach differs from existing domestic and international research.
- Why the proposed approach has the potential to deliver a step-change in emissions reduction, measurement capability, or mitigation deployment.
- The key technical uncertainty or scientific question being addressed.

A project will not be considered innovative solely because:

- it is the first time the work has been undertaken in New Zealand;
- it applies an existing technology to a new farming system;
- it expands testing to additional environments or animal classes; or
- it generates additional data for an existing mitigation approach.

FEATURES OF THE SECOND 2026 INNOVATION INVESTMENT ROUND

For this round, we have a new way of attracting ideas. If you have an idea, but don't have a full team together, you can submit a shorter 'R&D Idea' proposal (see below).

R&D FULL PROPOSALS

- NZ\$2 million is available for this round. The funding may not be evenly split across the research challenges. The funding split will be determined by the quality of applications.
- Applications are invited from both New Zealand and international organisations and individuals. Collaborations are encouraged.
- The applicant must have a research team in place which is able to conduct the project once contracting has been completed.
- Individual projects have a maximum duration of two years.
- **Two stage process:**
 - **Stage 1** – applicant submission of Eols, minimum eligibility check by the AgEC, and short-listing by an independent Technical Assessment Panel.
 - **Stage 2** – AgEC / AgriZero^{NZ} staff work with short-listed applicants to develop contract-ready research applications for Technical Assessment Panel re-assessment and approval by the AgEC and AgriZero^{NZ} Executives. The Executives will make the final decision on which projects are successful, taking into account the recommendations of the Technical Assessment Panel, the existing funding portfolios and the broader New Zealand funding landscape.
- Research projects should be conducted in a manner that ensures the widest possible benefit to New Zealand, including accelerating the delivery of tools to market.
- If an Eol is not successful via this process but deemed to have scientific merit relevant to the AgEC and/or AgriZero^{NZ} portfolios, the AgEC and/or AgriZero^{NZ} reserve the right to contact the applicant to discuss alternative support options.
- If an Eol is directly relevant to AgriZero^{NZ} and is nearer to commercialisation, AgriZero^{NZ} is able to consider fully funding this proposal in order to accelerate product development and/or discuss directly with the applicant(s) options to directly support their work.
- To support the acceleration of tools to market, it is anticipated that all new Project IP (PIP) developed during the course of the project will be owned by AgriZero^{NZ}. However, other IP arrangements may be considered where Background IP (BIP) is involved or another commercialisation structure is deemed more suitable to achieve the benefits.
- Any BIP will be retained by the respective owner(s) but the AgEC or AgriZero^{NZ} may request a royalty-free licence to use BIP if deemed necessary to utilise the PIP.

R&D IDEA PROPOSALS

- Up to NZ\$50k per project is available for this round (through the AgEC only). Up to four projects will be funded in this round, determined by the quality of applications.
- Applications are invited from both New Zealand and international organisations and individuals.
- The applicant can submit an idea without a full team in place.
- Individual projects have a maximum duration of six months.
- The purpose of this funding is to progress and develop ideas to determine feasibility. This could be in the form of access to scientific expertise, building skills and capability, trial design etc. It is

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envisaged that these projects, if successful, will allow applicants to potentially prepare proposals for additional R&D funding.

- **Two stage process:**
 - **Stage 1** – applicant submission of Eols, minimum eligibility check by the AgEC, and short-listing by an independent Technical Assessment Panel.
 - **Stage 2** – AgEC staff work with short-listed applicants to develop contract-ready applications for approval by the AgEC Executive Director.
- For this case, any Background IP (BIP) contained in the application will be retained by the respective owner(s). In the event of any anticipated new Project IP (PIP) creation, ownership will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis taking into account potential commercialisation opportunities, respective contributions to the project, and the applicant's experience and expertise.

ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING

‘R&D Full’ projects: New Zealand and international research providers, organisations and companies or persons with the ability to undertake research in their own right are eligible.

‘R&D Idea’ projects: New Zealand and international research providers, organisations and companies or persons with the ability to enter into a New Zealand contract in their own right are eligible.

Co-funding is strongly encouraged for all applications.

There is no specified limit on the number of Eols any single organisation can submit. However, organisations are strongly encouraged to undertake a realistic approach to the number of individual Eols they submit. We strongly encourage an internal review and coordination process before submitting a limited number of Eols that represent the best science from that organisation.

MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications must satisfy all of the following eligibility requirements to proceed to Technical Assessment Panel review:

- The proposal directly addresses one or more of the identified research challenges or is clearly aligned with the objectives of this funding round.
- The proposed innovation has a credible pathway to application within New Zealand farming or growing systems.
- New Zealand is expected to be a priority market, deployment environment, or beneficiary of the outcomes generated through the research.
- The Eol is complete and all required sections have been submitted by the closing date.

Applications will be considered ineligible if they:

- Focus primarily on routine optimisation, adaptation, or validation of existing mitigation technologies without demonstrating substantial innovation.
- Primarily involve field testing, local validation, or deployment of technologies already under development or commercialisation.
- Relate to areas specifically excluded from this round.
- Do not provide sufficient evidence that the proposed work could contribute to emissions reduction, emissions measurement, or mitigation deployment in New Zealand agricultural systems.

Defining "step-change":

For the purposes of this funding round, a *step-change* refers to an advance that has the potential to materially alter the emissions reduction landscape through:

- substantially greater abatement potential
- significantly improved measurement capability over currently available methods
- lower deployment costs
- broader applicability across farming systems, or
- the creation of entirely new mitigation pathways

A proposal does not need to demonstrate a proven solution, but it must clearly articulate how it could deliver a meaningful advance or acceleration beyond current approaches if successful.

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TIMELINE

APPLICATION GUIDELINES
NO LATE ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED

29 September 2026
ROUND OPENS

18 November 2026, 2 PM (NZDT)
Round CLOSES
Eols must be submitted to
innovation@ag-emissions.nz

05 February 2027 (indicative)
Successful and unsuccessful **STAGE 1** Eols notified

05 March 2027 (indicative)
STAGE 2 proposals submitted

01 April 2027 (indicative)
STAGE 2 proposals assessed and contract negotiations initiated

EVALUATION BY THE TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT PANEL

The Technical Assessment Panel will evaluate the applications using the following high-level assessment criteria:

1. Scientific innovation

- Does the project idea demonstrate a high level of innovation?

2. Scientific merit

- Does the project idea demonstrate a high level of scientific merit?
- Is the proposed methodology robust and are the anticipated outcomes realistic within the proposed time frame?

3. Ability to contribute to developing applied GHG mitigation solutions in a timely manner for New Zealand farmers and growers

- Will the proposed project contribute new knowledge that will significantly strengthen current research avenues and/or develop novel approaches that show major promise and for bringing practical, farm-level solutions closer to implementation in New Zealand by 2030 and/or 2040?
- If successful, what is the (i) abatement potential and (ii) breadth of impact for this solution?

4. Ability of the team to deliver high-quality outcomes

- Does the research team have the necessary expertise, experience and track record to successfully undertake the project and deliver the stated outcomes?
- Are there any significant gaps in the team that, if filled, would make the team more likely to succeed?

Scoring and Weighting

The Technical Assessment Panel will use the following scale to score each application against each of the four criteria:

Score	Score description
5 - Excellent	Application exceeds the requirements of the criteria in all areas
4 - Strong	Application satisfies the requirements of the criteria and is strong in some areas
3 - Acceptable	Application satisfies the requirements of the criteria to an adequate level
2 - Weak	Application satisfies some requirements of the criteria but demonstrates limitations/weakness in some areas
1 - Unacceptable	Application does not meet the requirements of the criteria

Scores will then be combined using the following weightings:

Criteria	Application Type	
	R&D Full Proposal	R&D Idea
Scientific innovation	30%	40%
Scientific merit	30%	40%
Ability to contribute to developing applied GHG mitigation solutions in a timely manner for New Zealand farmers and growers	20%	10%
Ability of the team to deliver high-quality outcomes	20%	10%

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For projects that rank highly following the Technical Assessment Panel's evaluation, the AgEC and AgriZero^{NZ} will also take into consideration the following:

- **Co-funding**

Co-funding is encouraged and may be taken into consideration for applications that are assessed as scientifically competitive. However, co-funding is not a scored assessment criterion and does not contribute to the formal Technical Assessment Panel score.

Applications will be ranked primarily on scientific innovation, scientific merit, potential contribution to greenhouse gas mitigation outcomes for New Zealand, and the ability of the team to deliver. Where applications are of similar overall quality, co-funding may be considered alongside portfolio balance, existing investments, and strategic fit when making final funding decisions.

- **Existing funding portfolios and the broader New Zealand funding landscape**

Please note that the AgEC/AgriZero^{NZ} reserves the right to request more information on any application submitted that does not meet one aspect of the criteria adequately but where the overall application demonstrates merit.

QUERIES

A list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about this investment round can be found on the website below.

If you have a query that has not already been answered in the FAQ list, please contact innovation@ag-emissions.nz.

To ensure that all applicants have access to all Q&A, the online FAQ list will be updated weekly.

<https://www.ag-emissions.nz/innovation>

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