



Invitation to tender

PROJECT BRIEF: *Message development and testing for a public campaign on Scotland's agricultural subsidy system*

1. Context

Scottish Environment LINK ('LINK') is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with over 40 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests and the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society.

The LINK Food and Farming Group brings together members working to achieve a vision of sustainable agricultural systems that produce supplies of safe healthy food, protect natural resources and enhance wildlife, habitats and cultural heritage, and provide jobs in rural areas, contributing to a diverse rural economy.

Members of the Food and Farming Group, along with some other LINK member organisations, are planning a campaign to mobilise public opinion behind our goal to reshape the Scottish government's £670 million agricultural subsidy so that it helps farmers and land managers to address the nature and climate crises, and supports the renewal Scotland's rural areas for the benefit of all of us. We also want to see a more equitable distribution of this funding, and an end to the current situation in which some farmers benefit disproportionately while others are left behind.

Farmers and crofters manage c.75 percent of the land in Scotland, and since land use is central to addressing the nature and climate crises, it will be largely down to farmers to deliver change. The [State of Nature report \(2019\)](#) demonstrates the impact of farming practices as one of the most significant pressures on biodiversity in Scotland. The [Biodiversity Intactness Index](#) (BII) places the UK at the bottom of the G7 and third from bottom amongst all European countries. The [Nature Positive 2030 report](#) from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and the four nations' nature agencies, including NatureScot, calls for changes to the current subsidy regimes across the UK. [The UK's Climate Change Committee](#) has also been clear that rural policy must be transformed in order for Scotland to meet net zero emissions by 2045.

For decades, farming practices and financial support to farmers have been shaped by the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The Scottish government's equivalent to CAP is in place until 2024, and the government is currently considering what future policy and payments will look like after 2024, with an Agriculture Bill expected in 2023/4. The outcome of these considerations will set the trajectory for the long term future of farming in Scotland.

The current agricultural subsidy regime in Scotland is flawed. The rules governing subsidies have a key role in shaping the industry, but they currently favour the more intensive, harmful farming systems. In addition, only a comparatively small pot of funding is allocated to environmental measures. As a result, farming practices that protect and enhance nature are currently chronically under-supported, and farmers and crofters who farm in more nature-friendly ways lose out.





The majority of the subsidy, which disproportionately benefits the most intensively farmed areas, has few conditions attached. This represents poor value for taxpayers' money and can also result in further public spending being required to mitigate the negative impacts of some farming practices. It also works against other Scottish Government priorities such as environment and climate targets. The budget exists, but it is using 20th Century policy to address 21st Century problems.

Our paper [‘Renewing Scotland’s Rural Areas’ Revisited](#) sets out in some detail our vision for sustainable land use and the changes we believe are needed to Scotland’s agricultural funding system in order to achieve this vision.

We will need to mobilise public opinion behind our goals, demonstrating that people and organisations across Scottish society want farmers to deliver nature restoration and climate action, and that support payments should be reshaped to enable them to do so.

Our experience and the research available indicate that among the general public there is little awareness that farmers receive public money, or that some farming practices are very bad for the environment, or that the current subsidy system does little to encourage better practices. However, experience and research also indicate that when these issues are set out for people in a way they can engage with and understand, they broadly agree with our vision and the changes we are calling for.

Therefore, we wish to commission an agency to develop and test public messaging for our campaign, so that the campaign has the best possible chance of success in mobilising public opinion and creating the political space required for the Scottish government to act.

This piece of work would contribute to the following objectives from [LINK’s Strategy 2020-2024](#):

- *A sustainable Scotland*
- *A strong voice*

Ownership of and copyright in the outputs delivered shall be vested in Scottish Environment LINK. Their purpose is for use in a variety of media in our public campaign on the future of Scotland’s agricultural subsidy system.

2. Task

- Develop potential public messaging for Scottish Environment LINK’s campaign on the future of Scotland’s agricultural subsidy system (taking note of existing research on public attitudes to farming by LINK members and the Scottish Government, which will be provided to the successful bidder). The campaign narrative must help people understand the problems with the current situation and the urgent need for change, communicate a vision of how we can do things better, and motivate people to take action in support of the campaign. The messaging will aim to bring as broad as possible a constituency on board, including farmers and farming organisations who are sympathetic to our aims. It should avoid appearing to blame either farmers in general, or farmers who benefit financially from and support the continuation of the current system.





- Develop different options for topline messaging. These could focus, for example, on the problems, the solutions or the vision for the future.
- Present draft messaging to the campaign steering group initially for feedback.
- Conduct market research to test the messaging developed. Report on how it is received by different audiences, taking into account different geographical areas of Scotland, and both rural and urban audiences.
- Identify through the research what messaging resonates with people and persuades them to share our concerns and agree with our call for change. Which aspects of the issue (e.g. nature, climate, use of public money, etc.), what level of detail, and what wording.
- Modify messaging proposal in the light of the market research, and recommend a messaging approach for LINK's campaign. This should include a range of specific messages, plus recommendations on language and angles to focus on or avoid, depending on how people responded to them during the market research.

Contract management: Key contact: Miriam Ross, LINK campaign coordinator, plus a campaign steering group.

3. Deliverables

- A range of key messages to be used in LINK's campaigning to communicate with members of the public
- Recommendations on language and angles to focus on or avoid
- Details of how messages were received by different audiences
- All of the above should be presented through both a verbal presentation and a written report. The report should include records of the research methodology used.

4. Approach

We would like prospective consultants to put forward suggestions/recommendations on the approach for the market research aspect of the task. We envisage that the approach would include the use of focus groups.

5. Ideal timescale

January - March 2022

Dates	Action
31 January 2022	Deadline for submission of tender proposals





1-11 February 2022	Selection process, including discussions with shortlisted bidders
14 February	Contract with successful bidder agreed
31 March 2022	Final report delivered

6. Selection criteria:

- *Understanding of campaign development and testing messages with different audiences*
- *Appropriate methodology*
- *Relevant experience*
- *Ability to meet deadline*
- *Value for money*

7. Budget:

Up to £20,000 (inc. VAT)

8. Payment

All payments will be made on satisfactory completion of work contracted.

9. Submission of tender proposal and deadline

Tender proposals should be emailed to Miriam Ross on miriam@scotlink.org by 10am on 31 January 2022.

