

£2MILLION BIOENERGY SCHEME OPENS TO APPLICATIONS


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PRESS NOTICE: 12/118

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Entrepreneurs across the nation are today being invited to bid for a share of £2million aimed at spurring on innovation in bioenergy.

As set out in the Government's 2012 bioenergy strategy, sustainably sourced bioenergy could contribute around 8-11% to the UK's total primary energy demand by 2020. More investment is however needed in research, development and demonstration projects to drive forward innovation and improve efficiency, from methods used to harvest plants for energy production to the systems used to generate power from these sources.


The Government's £2million scheme is aimed specifically at encouraging innovation in bioenergy production on wetlands. Wetland areas are currently maintained in several parts of Britain to provide a rich environment for wildlife such as wading birds, water voles and warblers and the harvested material from these sites can be used to produce energy. This new investment is aimed at inspiring innovation in harvesting and energy generation methods, using plants already being grown which would otherwise go to waste.

Energy and Climate Change Minister Greg Barker said:

"As well as providing a valuable habitat for a range of plants and wildlife, our wetland areas produce a diverse mix of clean green energy sources which in many cases are currently going to waste.

"Our new scheme will help spur on improvements in the way these plants are harvested and used to generate power, helping us cut carbon and meet our renewables targets, whilst maintaining and building on current conservation practices."

The scheme is split into three phases:

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Greg Barker

PHASE 1:

Applicants can apply for up to £50,000 to get pre-commercial design ideas off the drawing board and into more formalised project plans. There is only one window for applications, so anyone with an interest in bidding for support for bioenergy to biomass will need to submit an application at phase 1.

PHASE 2:

Applicants awarded money under phase 1 will need to produce a report on their ideas and analysis which will be assessed by a panel of experts. Organisations with successful designs will be invited to continue to develop their proposals at phase 2 and can bid for up to £1million to get trials of their chosen project idea up and running on the ground.

PHASE 3:

At the end of phase 2 organisations will need to produce a report on the outcome of their trials. The reports will then be judged by a panel of experts who will decide which projects to support through to a third phase. Successful organisations can apply for further money at this stage to improve their designs and carry out further trials following the initial testing.

Successful applicants at phase 1 will receive help and guidance from a group of wetland management experts in the Somerset Levels and Moors, and the Broads, Fens and Suffolk coast area to help get the most out of their designs. Proposals throughout this three phase competition will be judged by a panel of experts on a range of criteria including value for money, quality of project plans, consideration of conservation issues and the commercial potential of the plans put forward.

Applications for this scheme should be submitted to the Department of Energy and Climate Change online by noon 14 November 2012 and phase 1 winners will be announced in December this year.