

# Review of the Horticulture Innovation Partnership (HIP)

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## Executive Summary

1. A review was commissioned to determine the views of HIP stakeholders about the HIP's potential future value to the produce industry and how this might best be realised.
2. 106 respondents provided their views in response to a briefing document and questionnaire sent to 160 HIP stakeholders representing the whole supply chain for fresh produce, ornamentals and potatoes, and the major funders and providers of horticultural research and knowledge exchange services.
3. Broad collective support was expressed for a radically simplified and refocused HIP, of which the main functions would be to: (1) facilitate and contribute to the development of overarching industry and sector strategy and goals in the light of known barriers to supply chain innovation and growth; (2) facilitate better alignment of research funder programmes with industry strategy and goals; (3) facilitate better collaboration between R&D providers and provide advice on gaps in R&D capacity; (4) when supported by a majority of future HIP funders and stakeholders, provide strategic guidance to other bodies to do with education and training, participation in the Agri-Tech Innovation Centres, knowledge exchange between industry and the R&D community, and assessing the uptake and impact of new knowledge and technology.
4. To achieve this, a new operational approach is needed that: (1) utilises no employed or long-term contract staff; (2) relies primarily on the assets and business support services of partner organisations; (3) draws minimal but secure long-term core funding and in-kind support from the major public research funders including the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), the Government Department for Environment Food And Rural Affairs (Defra) and that for Business, Innovation and Science (DBIS); (4) maximises the flexible use of in-kind contributions from other HIP stakeholders including the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), the British Growers Association (BGA), the Horticultural Trades Association (HTA), the National Farmers' Union (NFU), the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), and the wider community of horticultural research and knowledge exchange organisations in addressing the HIP's strategic goals and priorities.
5. With the approval of the HIP Board and Steering Group, over the remainder of the 2015-16 financial year, a small working group led by the Acting Executive will: (1) devise an innovative new HIP business plan for 2015 to 2020; (2) seek financial commitments from target funding partners; (3) seek in-kind support from key stakeholders.
6. If the outcome is successful, a reformed HIP will be launched as soon as funding agreements have been signed.

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## Introduction

Since its creation in 2012, the HIP has worked in various ways to deliver its business plan and to engage with its many different stakeholders (Appendix 1).

In this time, there have been several major changes in the agri-food R&D landscape, all of which have potentially important implications for the HIP. These include: (1) publication of the UK Agri-Tech Strategy; (2) implementation of BBSRC's £7 million Horticulture And Potatoes Initiative (HAPI); (3) launch of the £70 million Agri-Tech Catalyst programme; (4) launch of the €3.7 billion EU Horizon 2020 programme on sustainable agriculture and issue of early calls; (5) consolidation of the Knowledge Transfer Networks (KTN's) into a single Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN); (6) re-launch of the Technology Strategy Board as Innovate UK; (7) approval and launch of the 2015-20 Rural Development Programme (RDP); (8) restructuring of AHDB as a strategic pre-competitive driver/facilitator of commercial and technological innovation; (9) establishment of UK Agri-Tech Innovation Centres.

In the light of these changes, a comprehensive review was commissioned in the summer of 2015 to seek the views of stakeholders about the HIP's impact on and value to the industry, industry's future needs, and the ways in which the HIP might help address them.

## Approach

A briefing document and questionnaire (Appendix 1) was sent to roughly 160 stakeholders representing the whole supply chain for fresh produce, ornamentals and potatoes and the funders and providers of horticultural research and knowledge exchange services. A total of 106 responses were received (Table 1).

**Table 1. Stakeholder Participation in HIP Review**

Stakeholder groups	Number of consultees with different exposure to the HIP		
	Involved	Aware	Unaware
Consultancies		6	
Government & agencies	3		1
Growers – Edibles	13	20	22
Growers - Ornamentals	3	1	
HIP Board/Executive	4		
Research funders	5	8	
Research providers	5	9	2
Supply chains	2	2	
<b>Aggregate</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>25</b>

The various views expressed in response to the questions posed in the questionnaire were analysed and categorised.

## Findings

Most respondents expressed support for at least some of the specified possible functions of the HIP (Table 2).

Facilitating the alignment of R&D funding with industry needs (function 1) and facilitating R&D collaboration and capacity building (function 2), were the two most strongly supported,

and were also seen by a large majority of respondents as unlikely to be deliverable by organisations other than a fully independent body like the HIP.

**Table 2. Stakeholder Support for Different Functions**

Possible future functions of the HIP	Expressions of support by different stakeholders				
	Growers & suppliers	R&D funders	R&D providers	Consultants & other	All
1. Facilitate alignment of R&D funding with industry needs	12	16	11	15	54
2. Facilitate R&D collaboration and capacity building	12	13	9	17	51
3. Identify/address barriers to innovation/growth	13	14	12	8	47
4. Devise industry & sector goals/strategy	11	15	10	9	45
5. Inform future education and training provision	11	13	13	7	44
6. Facilitate sector engagement in Innovation Centres	14	12	8	10	44
7. Facilitate knowledge exchange	10	9	8	8	35
8. Assess research activity/uptake/impact	6	13	8	7	34
9. Raise awareness of new opportunities/practices/technologies	4	8	8	5	25
10. Represent UK horticulture	1		1		2
11. Facilitate industry integration		1		1	2

Identifying and addressing barriers to innovation and growth (function 3) and devising industry and sector strategy and goals (function 4) were also strongly supported functions, but were seen by many respondents as ones not unique to the HIP, that should be shared with other organisations such as the AHDB.

Five other functions (functions 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9) were fairly solidly supported, but were seen by a clear majority of respondents as primarily the responsibility of other organisations such as the AHDB and the Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN).

Representing UK horticulture (function 10) and facilitating industry integration were suggested as possible additional functions by individual respondents.

The view that AHDB and other existing bodies should be responsible for most of the HIP's possible functions was strongly expressed by many industry respondents (Table 3), of whom many also expressed their opposition to the continued use of AHDB funding and contributions from industry membership bodies such as the NFU, to support the HIP.

Many respondents indicated as important potential challenges that would need to be overcome: the ability to secure adequate funding and resources from partners; confusion over the roles, responsibilities and strategic priorities of different organisations; the complexity of horticultural production systems, supply chains and the whole R&D landscape (Table 4).

**Table 3. Stakeholder Support for Different Delivery Options**

Stakeholder groups	Expressions of support for different institutional delivery mechanisms		
	HIP	AHDB/Other	Neutral
Consultancies	1	3	2
Government & agencies	3	2	
Growers – Edibles	9	38	8
Growers - Ornamentals	4	3	
HIP Board/Executive	3	4	
Research funders	13	5	4
Research providers	11	10	6
Supply chains	3	4	3
<b>Aggregate</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>23</b>

**Table 4. Stakeholder Recognition of Future Challenges**

Stakeholder groups	Stakeholder recognition of the challenges facing the institutions responsible for key functions			
	Funding	Resourcing	Authority	Complexity
Consultancies	4		4	4
Government & agencies				1
Growers – Edibles	23		8	16
Growers - Ornamentals	3	1	1	3
HIP Board/Executive	3	2		4
Research funders	10	2	11	14
Research providers	7	4	7	9
Supply chains	3	3	2	3
<b>Aggregate</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>54</b>

## Conclusions and recommendations

1. To remain relevant, the HIP's main purposes should be redefined as follows.
  - a. Facilitate and contribute to the development of overarching industry and sector strategy and goals in the light of known barriers to supply chain innovation and growth;
  - b. Facilitate better alignment of research funder programmes with industry strategy and goals.
  - c. Facilitate better collaboration between R&D providers and provide advice on gaps in R&D capacity;
  - d. When supported by a majority of future HIP funders and stakeholders, provide strategic guidance to other bodies on:
    - i. education and training of the horticulture industry's present and future workforce;
    - ii. participation in the Agri-Tech Innovation Centres;

- iii. knowledge exchange between industry, research organisations and technology developers;
  - iv. assessing the uptake and impact of new knowledge and technology on the UK horticulture industry.
2. To remain viable, a new funding and resourcing model for the HIP is required, which:
    - a. utilises no employed or long-term contract staff;
    - b. relies primarily on the assets and business support services provided by partner organisations;
    - c. draws minimal but secure long-term core funding and in-kind support from the major public research funders including BBSRC/UKRC, Defra and DBIS;
    - d. maximises the flexible use of in-kind contributions from other HIP stakeholders including AHDB, BGA, HTA, NFU, RHS, and the wider community of horticultural research and knowledge exchange organisations in addressing HIP strategic goals and priorities.
  3. With the approval of the HIP Board and Steering Group, a small working group led by the Acting Executive (Steve Tones) is being set up with the following remit.
    - a. To devise an innovative new business plan for 2015-2020 by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015.
    - b. To negotiate financial commitments from target core funding partners by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.
    - c. To negotiate commitments of in-kind support from key stakeholders by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.
  4. If this is successful, the aim is to launch the reformed HIP as soon as funding agreements have been signed early in the new financial year.

# Appendix 1.

## Stakeholder Briefing & Questionnaire

### Introduction

#### HIP origin

The Horticulture Innovation Partnership (HIP) was formed in 2012 as the outcome of a series of round table discussions chaired by Sir John Beddington, then Government Chief Scientist.

The remit of the HIP encompasses all fresh and prepared produce, including ornamentals and potatoes as well as all outdoor and protected edible horticultural crops.

The HIP is an independent company limited by guarantee. There is a Board of Directors and Steering Group which meet regularly, and other stakeholder consultation groups, e.g. Funders and Communications, which meet as needed.

#### HIP funding

Core funding for the HIP has been provided by the AHDB, the East Malling Trust, the HTA, the RHS, and the NFU, with important additional contributions from Defra and various horticultural research and knowledge exchange organisations.

#### HIP purpose

The original purposes of the HIP agreed by its stakeholders were as follows.

- (1) To develop a clear vision for produce industry innovation, prioritise research needs and improve alignment of research funder strategies, priorities and programmes.
- (2) To publicise national and international research funding opportunities with the aim of securing a greater proportion of those funds for the UK produce industry.
- (3) In partnership with other bodies, to help inform industry about new technologies and their potential applications.
- (4) In consultation with supply chain businesses in all sectors, to identify critical barriers to industry innovation and growth and explore how these might be overcome.
- (5) To monitor progress and share outcomes and experience with all key stakeholder communities.

#### Agri-innovation landscape

Since the HIP was established, the agri-innovation landscape has changed dramatically as Government and its partners have sought new ways to stimulate industry innovation and economic growth, of which the following are notable examples.

- (1) £7 million BBSRC HAPI programme (2012) launched.
- (2) UK Agri-Tech Strategy (2013) published.
- (3) £70 million Agri-Tech Catalyst programme (2013) launched.
- (4) Agri-Tech Innovation Centres (£90 million government capital funding) (2015 – procurement in progress) procured (in progress).
- (5) Thematic Knowledge Transfer Networks (KTN's) combined into one KTN (2014).
- (6) AHDB restructured into functional divisions (in progress).

## HIP achievements

Notable achievements of the HIP include the following.

- (1) Developing a produce industry vision for innovation and facilitating the alignment of funder strategies and priorities with it.
  - a. Series of funder meetings about strategic research priorities (2013-15).
  - b. Research provider meetings about institutional capabilities and capacity and associated needs/priorities for investment and collaboration (2014).
  - c. Contract secured by competitive tendering to be Horticulture Coordinator for BBSRC, providing support and management of the Horticulture and Potatoes Initiative (HAPI). Delivered successfully (2013-16).
  - d. Associated appointment of three Knowledge Exchange Fellows to facilitate greater industry engagement with BBSRC and NERC researchers and programmes.
  - e. Series of stakeholder consultation meetings (2013-14) to determine support for, and define the needs and outline specifications of, a proposed Agri-Tech Fresh and Prepared Produce Innovation Centre. Key provisions have since been subsumed by the two crop-related innovation centre consortia (Crop Health and Protection; Engineering and Precision Engineering) taken forward as preferred bidders (2014-15).
  - f. Participation in Defra-led ornamentals Round Table (2014-15).
  - g. Production of HIP Ornamentals Research Strategy (In draft) (2014-15).
- (2) Publicising research funding opportunities to the UK produce industry.
  - a. The BBSRC HAPI programme was widely publicised throughout the research community and to industry. The resulting £7m HAPI programme has funded projects on a range of horticultural crops addressing key research priorities of the produce industry.
  - b. Various stakeholder consultation meetings were held, and associated correspondence exchanged with, produce industry stakeholders to raise awareness and understanding of the call for Agri-Tech Innovation Centre proposals (2014-15).
  - c. Other funding opportunities (e.g. Horizon 2020, the TSB/Innovate UK Sustainable Agri-Food Innovation Platform and the Agri-Tech Catalyst programme) have also been widely publicised to research organisations and potential industry co-funding partners.
- (3) Identifying and addressing barriers to industry innovation and growth.
  - a. Supply chain discussions of industry needs and priorities.
  - b. UK supply chain analysis (2014-15).
  - c. Structured discussion of barriers to innovation and growth included in stakeholder consultations (2014) about a proposed Agri-Tech Fresh and Prepared Produce Innovation Centre.
  - d. Discussion with specialised IT service provider about the feasibility and potential scope of a Knowledge Exchange Hub for the produce sector.
- (4) Informing industry of new technologies and their potential applications.
  - a. Co-organiser of a Precision Engineering Workshop (KTN) (2013).
  - b. Co-organiser of a HAPI consortia building workshop (2014).
  - c. Co-organiser of Collaborative Research Opportunities Workshops (2014-15).
- (5) Monitoring and reporting progress.
  - a. An integral part of most activities detailed above.
  - b. On-going one-to-one discussions with key stakeholders.
  - c. HIP website (www...).
  - d. HIP Annual Reports.
  - e. HIP mailshots and newsletters (facilitated by AHDB and BGA).
  - f. Other occasional documentary output from HIP events and activities.

This questionnaire has been sent to a selection of leading thinkers and influencers in the produce industry, including growers, supply chain businesses, research funders, research, technology and knowledge providers and key government officials. The responses received, together with the findings of a series of parallel consultation interviews, will be used to shape the possible options for the HIP's future development.

If you are willing to participate, please complete and return it by email to me [stevetones@hip.org.uk](mailto:stevetones@hip.org.uk) within five working days by the date agreed (see covering email).

All personal and business information you provide will be treated as confidential. If you would prefer any of the other information you provide also to be treated confidentially, please annotate it clearly to this effect. If you would prefer to discuss things in person for any reason, please contact me directly by email or phone (0247 647 8667 / 07501 476 981).

## 1. Personal and business information

Name:	
Position:	
Name of business:	
Nature of business:	
Involvement with HIP:	

## 2. Your aspirations and vision

Please say what you think would be the key features of a successful UK produce industry ten years and fifty years from now. Please think as creatively as possible and say how you hope things might be in the best possible world, not how you fear they might be in the worst.

Stratum	2025	2065
Your business	•	•
Your supply chain	•	•
Your sector	•	•
The UK produce industry	•	•

## 3. HIP purposes and functions

Please say what you think the future purpose(s) of HIP should and should not be and give your reasons. For any purpose you think the HIP should have, please say what you think the HIP's particular role(s) or function(s) should and should not be. Please note any potential overlaps with other organisations and say how you think these should be managed.

Purpose	Agree or disagree	Your reasons and suggested HIP functions
Lead/facilitate industry goal-setting and strategy development to provide a coherent cross-sector research agenda for innovation and growth.		•
Monitor/analyse research		•

activity/output, KE activity, and the uptake of new practices/technologies by industry.		
Identify and analyse the political, economic, regulatory, structural and technological barriers to innovation and growth.		•
Facilitate/contribute to discussions between key stakeholders (retailers, food manufacturers and service providers, supply chain businesses, primary producers and government policy makers) about how barriers to innovation and growth could be overcome.		•
Facilitate and contribute to discussions between major public and private research funders to seek better alignment of R&D programmes with industry needs/priorities.		•
Continue to help raise industry awareness of new practices and technologies in collaboration with others.		•
Facilitate/contribute to discussions between key research providers to improve collaboration and identify and address gaps in capability, capacity and facilities.		•
Facilitate/contribute to discussions between key knowledge exchange and consultancy providers to identify and seek ways of improving effectiveness and impact.		•
Contribute to discussions led by others about future education and training provision for the produce sector.		•
Engage with/represent the interests of the produce sector in the Agri-Tech Innovation Centres.		•
Report activities and		•

outcomes to stakeholders.		
Other (please specify)		•

## 4. HIP features

Please say how you think the HIP should be organised, governed, and funded, who should be involved in it, how it should operate, how it should engage with you, and how you would hope to engage with it, and anything else you think is important.

<b>Features</b>	<b>Your thoughts and suggestions</b>
Organisation	•
Governance	•
Funding	•
Stakeholders	•
Operation	•
Engagement	•
Other (please specify)	•

## 5. Other

Please provide any other thoughts or suggestions that you think might be helpful, which have not been covered in the preceding sections.

<b>Other thoughts and suggestions</b>
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