



## **Agri-Food for Net Zero (AFN) Network+ Year 3 Champions Call**

*Please ensure you read all 8 pages.*

We are recruiting six Champions to drive forward the work of the [AFN Network+](#) in its third and final year, starting in the period between 1 October 2024 and 1 January to a contract end date of 30 September 2025. The contract will be a minimum 6 months to maximum 12 month period.

The mission of the AFN Network+ is to identify and shape the research, innovation and policy development required to deliver a net zero agri-food system for the UK. We build collaborative relationships between key actors in the agri-food system, from researchers to stakeholders and back, to combine systems-level expertise with comprehensive coverage of all key specialisms, allowing us to:

- *envision plausible futures for a net zero agri-food system;*
- *analyse the environmental, economic, social and technological implications of each of these scenarios; and*
- *define practical pathways to achieving the most optimal of these net zero agri-food futures.*

AFN Champions bring their expertise from industry, academia, public or third sector, and from any point in the agri-food system: primary production (agriculture, horticulture, and aquaculture) and food processing (food and drink manufacture) to food retail, consumption, and waste management.

### **AFN Champions will be expected to drive progress by:**

- *Building an inclusive community of practice across their theme and the wider AFN project;*
- *Synthesising ideas and thinking from across their networks to ensure inclusive input into the scenarios and plausible futures work, and the pathways and roadmapping phases of the project; and*
- *Mapping the research and innovation landscape in their own and adjacent thematic areas and, crucially, identifying critical knowledge and activity gaps to be addressed.*

See The [Net Zero and the UK Agri-Food System: Priorities for Research and Policy](#) report and [What Could the Agri-Food System Look Like in 2050?](#)

Champions are the Ambassadors for the Network who are experts in the practice, knowledge, and know-how across agri-food systems. As a Champion, you will lead one of six themes and run a series of engagement activities while creating a network of people committed to achieving a net zero food system by 2050.

The themes are:

- 1) **Policy Champion**
- 2) **Industry and Supply Chain Champion**



- 3) **Artificial Intelligence and Data Champion**
- 4) **Bioeconomy Champion**
- 5) **Carbon Financing Champion**
- 6) **Just Transition and Citizen Engagement Champion.**

Descriptions of each theme are detailed below.

Champions are encouraged to look for synergies across the themes and will be expected to work together. This will be our third year of Champions for the Network. Champions are highly motivated and well connected and are committed to the strategic objectives of the AFN Network+.

We particularly encourage Early Career Researchers<sup>1</sup> and people working outside academia to apply, although applications from practitioners or academic researchers at any career stage are also welcome. We have a commitment to increase the diversity of our community, and particularly encourage applications from, but not limited to, Black, Asian, people who belong to a minority ethnic community; people who identify as LGBT+; and disabled people. Candidates will always be selected based on merit and ability.

Closing date for Applications is **12:00 on Monday 19 August 2024**. [Please complete this application form](#) and email it to [c.pickerden@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:c.pickerden@leeds.ac.uk).

The selection criteria are based on:

- 1) fit to the terms of reference; and
- 2) increasing the diversity of the team.

This is a key project, funded by UKRI, and involves a substantial list of committed partners – both at an organisational and individual level. [Find out more about who is currently working with the AFN Network+](#).

The Terms of Reference for the role should be referred to when making your application.

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<sup>1</sup> An early career researcher (ECR) is someone who is either:

- within eight years of their PhD award (this is from the time of the PhD 'viva' oral test), or equivalent professional training
- within six years of their first academic appointment (the first full or part-time paid employment contract that lists research or teaching as the primary function).

These periods exclude any career breaks, for example due to family care, health reasons and are pro-rata for any periods of part-time work.



## **Terms of Reference for Agri-Food Network+ (AFN) Champions 2024/2025:**

- Champions will be well-connected knowledgeable sector experts and/or future research leaders in their own community within their theme.
- Champions will drive engagement and impact activities with stakeholders relevant to their theme in order to build an active and committed community – this will take the form of running workshops, attending key sectoral events, etc. Some activities will require and benefit from coordination with other Champions. A separate budget for arranging and hosting events is available.
- Champions will attend and contribute to the running of key AFN Network+ events, including leading discussion groups and sessions as requested by the AFN Executive Team.
- Champions' activities will help inform the Network's work on mapping the research and innovation landscape, and the development of plausible pathways to a net zero UK agri-food system.
- Champions will act as enthusiastic ambassadors for the AFN in all situations and may be invited to represent the AFN at external meetings.
- Champions will meet regularly with each other at a bi-weekly online meeting, chaired by Professor Stefan Kepinski, Champion Lead for the AFN Network+.
- Champions will be paired with a member of the AFN Team in order to agree priorities and the direction of activities, and to provide further support and guidance within the role.
- Champions will be impartial across the broad scope of their remit.
- Champions will strive to be selfless and will be highly motivated in their service to the strategic objectives of the AFN.
- Champions are expected to engage with each other to look for synergies and new ways of working.
- Champions will be part of the Community of Practice, including agreeing to abide by the [AFN Network+ Code of Conduct](#).



## **Contractual Details**

Appointment is for a minimum 6-month to a maximum 12-month period from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025.

The Champion will receive a block grant of up to a maximum £90k, funded at 80%, for time spent on Champion activities. The remaining 20% contribution is a cost absorbed by your host organisation. No monetary payment to the AFN project is required.

We anticipate that each Champion will make a substantive contribution of their time to the role, of at least 0.6 FTE, up to a maximum 1.0 FTE, which should be set out clearly in the application form. Financial reward will be linked to normal salary level given current career stage, and time commitment made, up to a maximum £90k for the contract period.

Travel to AFN meetings for Champions will be reimbursed by the AFN at 80% of the total costs through a central pot of money, subject to approval by the AFN Executive.

The AFN Executive has a duty to administer UKRI funds responsibly and ensure effective progress over the life of the award. In the event a Champion is not able to deliver on the above commitment, either as assessed by the Champion or the AFN Executive, an informal discussion may be followed by a decision by the Co-Investigators on whether the appointment is to be continued.

This final round of Champions will build on the work and research themes as undertaken by years 1 and 2 of AFN Network+ activities.

Interviews for this role will take place on Monday 9 and Tuesday 10 September 2024. If you have any questions about the Champions' Recruitment, please email Claire Pickerden, AFN Network+ Project Manager, University of Leeds, [c.pickerden@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:c.pickerden@leeds.ac.uk).

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[Application form](#)

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## **Year Three Champion Themes**

### **Introduction**

Year 3 Champions will review the work of the AFN Network+, including that of the Year 1 and Year 2 Champions and the two rounds of commissioned Scoping Studies, to help develop and increase traction around key insights and priorities for research, policy and practice. Champions will focus on helping convert insights and outputs from Network activities into clear messages and tangible impact.

#### **1. Policy Champion**

This Champion will work to support discussions with key policy-making bodies (government departments across the UK; other public agencies; commercial and industry bodies; key non-governmental organisations; and other major research initiatives such as, for example, the LUNZ Hub) about the principal policy insights emerging from the work of the AFN Network+. This Champion will have some experience of working in an advocacy or policy-making role.

#### **2. Industry and Supply Chain Champion**

This Champion will work to support interactions with key agri-food industry bodies, including food processors, retailers and industry representative organisations to promote the insights from the Network activities and help develop pre-competitive collaborative spaces for interaction between commercial organisations. This Champion will be able to draw on previous experience working with, or within, the food industry.

#### **3. Artificial Intelligence and Data Champion**

This Champion will use recent developments in artificial intelligence research, combined with open data, to turn the key insights and priorities for future research into action to support the net zero transition in the UK agri-food system. The work will include supporting modelling work within the Network to explore agri-food system trade-offs and options for pathways to a net zero UK by 2050.

#### **4. Bioeconomy Champion**

This Champion will scan recent developments in innovation for circular bioeconomies in agri-food, including the valorisation of agricultural, supply chain and household waste for energy, fertiliser and alternative protein production, nutrient recovery and slurry management in order to reduce net emissions, and continue to develop AFN policy and research priorities on this theme.

#### **5. Carbon Financing Champion**

This Champion will support the Network's work in producing research and policy recommendations around the frameworks for public and private financing of carbon sequestration through land management and for the development of carbon pricing in the context of agri-food. They will explore how carbon pricing instruments can reduce emissions and how carbon price costs can be shared across the agri-food system, from producers, to processors, retailers and ultimately consumers.

#### **6. Just Transition and Citizen Engagement Champion**

This Champion will support the Network's work on social justice and questions of equality and access to healthy and sustainable food through the agri-food system transition to a net zero UK by 2050. The Champion will develop means for embedding the voices of those with lived experience in the



policy-making process. This Champion will also help increase public support of the Network's recommendations both (i) by better understanding citizens' opinions and (ii) by increasing awareness of the reasoning behind the recommendations. This may include supporting citizens' assemblies, understanding voter demographics relevant to decision-makers (e.g. MPs) and contributing to educational resources.

## **For Information:**

### **Year One Champion themes**

- 1) New Approaches in Production
- 2) Systems Interactions in Production
- 3) Behaviour Change in Production
- 4) New approaches to Supply Chains and Consumption
- 5) Systems Interactions in Supply Chains and Consumption
- 6) Behaviour Change in Supply Chains and Consumption
- 7) New Approaches to Sequestration
- 8) Systems Interactions in Sequestration
- 9) Behaviour Change in Sequestration

### **Year Two Champion themes**

- 1) Healthy and sustainable diets
- 2) Land productivity
- 3) Food security and trade
- 4) Land use and land management
- 5) Circular food systems
- 6) Behaviour change



## Guidance for completing the Application Form

In each of the answers, consider and refer to the Terms of Reference and use specific examples to illustrate your knowledge, expertise and experience. Frame your response in terms of the Research Priority Theme you are applying to champion.

Q1 Outline the experience and qualities that would make you a good Champion

Think about:

- Why do you want to be a Champion?
- Why have you chosen to champion this particular theme?
- What would you hope to achieve as a Champion?
- How will your work leading your theme help AFN Network+ reach its objective of achieving net zero through the agri-food system by 2050? eg linking practice and research
- What existing networks do you already have and how would you engage them in joining and working with the AFN Network+?
- How will your experience of working with different types of stakeholders shape your work as a Champion?

Q2 What type of activities do you intend to undertake, and what value would you bring to the AFN Network+ through these activities?

Think about:

- Ensuring that the outputs reflect the learning and knowledge of the theme and are both informative and useful for the AFN Network+ to reach its objectives.
- Embedding the 'paid hours' as a Champion into your other areas of work – what is the reach and scope of the work? e.g. influence over other networks, spheres of influence, carrying the AFN Network+ goals with you.
- Ensuring the outputs produced by the work of the theme reflect the expenditure made to achieve them i.e. reflect quality levels.
- Managing the spending of your budget so that costs aren't excessive or expenditure wasted.
- Ensuring that any expenditure reaches beyond the 'usual suspects' and increases the diversity of your network (see question on inclusion)

Q3 Summarise how you might approach enhancing the diversity and inclusion of participants within your theme

Think about:

- How you would seek engagement with under-represented groups in the agri-food system?
- How would you ensure your communications and marketing is inclusive?
- How would you encourage equity of contribution and voice?

Q4 Institutional approval of 20% contribution



No monetary payment to the AFN project is required but we do need approval from your organisation that the 20% contribution is agreed.

[Frequently asked questions](#)

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