

Farm Facilitator Forum 2025 Report: Executive Summary

Facilitated farmer groups have emerged as one of the UK's most effective mechanisms for delivering landscape-scale nature recovery. By coordinating habitat creation, soil and water improvements, emissions reduction, and access to natural capital markets, they translate national environmental ambitions into practical, farm-led action. However, this report found that facilitators feel limited by underfunding, administrative fragmentation and insufficient recognition of their role (the workforce that enables all collaboration and delivery). Several key themes were consistently raised:

1. **The need for long-term funding.**
2. **The need for professional recognition of the role of facilitators.**
3. **The need for informed coordination and management of metrics and data.**
4. **The need for integrated policy and finance frameworks** that empower farmers to lead nature recovery.
5. **The life cycle maturity of different groups**, which have different needs.
6. The prospect for farmers and communities to **secure investment that aligns with social and cultural needs** for climate adaptation.

It is possible to unlock significant environmental and economic returns by government, industry and funders working together to strengthen the foundations of this system:

- **Provide long-term facilitation funding** (5–7 years) to secure continuity, build trust, and enable farmer groups to plan and deliver landscape-scale outcomes, and provide space to scope out economic beneficiaries that could contribute to them becoming self-sustaining.
- **Professionalise the facilitator workforce** through a national competency framework, accredited training, and clear career pathways that work at the appropriate level of localisation.
- **Create regional and national coordination structures** to share learning, reduce duplication, and support cooperative delivery.
- **Enable blended finance models** with seed funding for governance, data, and market readiness, unlocking private and community investment.
- **Simplify policy, legal, and governance frameworks** to reduce administrative burdens and improve confidence in public and private schemes.
- **Establish a central resource and data hub** to provide mapping, monitoring, templates and training.
- **Strengthen Monitoring, Evaluation, and Outcome Reporting** to standardise national metrics, support participatory reporting and communicate outcomes.
- **Promote Inclusive, Farmer-Centric Engagement** including consideration of tenant farmers, and engaging the local community to support rural economic renewal.
- **Provide a mechanism for facilitators to share information / knowledge** to build their own capacity – where more mature groups can share with newer groups/facilitators.

If government, industry and funders work together to invest strategically in facilitation, governance, data, and coordination, nature recovery can be accelerated, rural economies can be strengthened, and a resilient, farmer-led environmental delivery system across the UK can be created.