

Farm Advisor

Job Description Farm Advisor

Reports to:	Specialist Lead - Water Resilience
Responsible for:	Delivering farm engagement and advisory activity to support SERT's Water Resilience programme, including Holistic Water for Horticulture delivery and future pipeline development. Hybrid working, split between home working and on-site/farm visits across the SERT area, with a focus in the East of our area initially. In addition, there is an expectation to spend a minimum of two days a month at our office based in Leatherhead and/or our hub in the East (currently in Headcorn).
Location:	

The role

This position would suit a positive, proactive and approachable individual, with knowledge of the South East agriculture and horticulture sector and the resilience challenges it faces.

The purpose of the role is to act as the face of our on-the-ground farm engagement and advisory support, working with farmers, growers and landowners to identify and implement practical land and water management improvements that support more resilient farming systems, healthier catchments and sustainable supply chains. This will include raising awareness of key issues such as water scarcity, abstraction reform, flood risk, soil and water management, and the role of nature-based solutions in supporting farm resilience and environmental outcomes. It also requires some knowledge of the different funding pathways and opportunities to develop and deliver projects, such as Environmental Land Management Schemes to Biodiversity Net Gain

The role will play a key part in delivering the Holistic Water for Horticulture (HWH) project and wider water resilience objectives, while also supporting broader catchment priorities including biodiversity, water quality and natural flood management.

This is an exciting opportunity to become part of the Water Resilience specialist team, working alongside catchment, NFM and river restoration specialists. Initially focused on engagement, partnership development and project scoping, the role will support the delivery of water resilience measures while contributing to SERT's evolving approach to water resilience and water resource management.

Whilst this role is based in the East of our area of operation, you will provide support to colleagues and partners to inform project development, prioritisation and delivery across our wider operational area.

Key duties and responsibilities

1. Farmer engagement and advisory work

- Build trusted relationships with farmers, growers and landowners to support the delivery of practical land and water management improvements.
- Support mapping and targeting work (e.g. land use, water-use / abstraction reductions hotspots, nature recovery work).
- Undertake targeted farm visits, walkovers and assessments to support farmers and land managers to identify opportunities that improve farm resilience.
- Provide advice and guidance on water resources, water efficiency, nature-based solutions and diffuse pollution reduction
- Prepare farm plans, reports and recommendations based on site walkovers and scoping work.
- Develop and embed consistent approaches to farm engagement, surveying and reporting.
- Facilitate meetings, engagement events and knowledge-sharing activities with the agriculture and horticulture sector.

2. Project development and delivery

- Identify, scope and help develop practical on-farm interventions and projects, working closely with colleagues and partners. This may contribute to the development of project pipelines and priorities.
- Advise farmers, growers and land managers on funding opportunities and support access to grants, private finance and emerging nature market mechanisms (e.g. Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality) to enable the delivery of water resilience or environmental improvements.
- Contribute to the development of funding proposals, business cases and project pipelines aligned with catchment and organisational priorities.
- Support monitoring, reporting and the collection of evidence to demonstrate impact and inform future delivery.
- Support identification of emerging opportunities (e.g. expansion of viticulture, high water-use sectors).

3. Partnership working

- Work collaboratively with other specialist teams across SERT to support integrated catchment delivery.
- Engage with key external stakeholders in the agricultural/horticultural sector as well as regulators, water companies, farmer groups, environmental organisations and research organisations.
- Represent SERT at meetings, events and workshops, helping to strengthen relationships and raise awareness of catchment and water resilience issues.
- Support collaborative approaches that align farm business needs with wider catchment objectives.

4. General and admin responsibilities

- Ensure all work is delivered in line with organisational policies and funding requirements.

- Maintain accurate records and documentation of work undertaken.
- Support wider team objectives and organisational priorities where required.
- Undertake other responsibilities appropriate to the role as agreed with the line manager.
- Any further duties where appropriate and consistent with the role's levels of responsibility, competence and risk profile.

Person Specification

Requirements	Essential	Desirable
Training & Experience		
Degree, qualification or equivalent experience in agriculture, horticulture, environmental management, geography, rural land management or a related field.	✓	
Demonstrable experience of working with farmers, growers, landowners or rural businesses to provide advice and support on land, water or environmental management.	✓	
Experience developing and maintaining effective stakeholder relationships and partnerships.	✓	
Experience supporting the development and delivery of projects, including planning, reporting and engagement.	✓	
Experience producing farm plans, reports or technical assessments.	✓	
Experience working in the agriculture and/or horticulture sector.		✓
Experience supporting access to agri-environment schemes, grants, private finance or nature market opportunities.		✓
Knowledge & Understanding		
Good understanding of farming and horticultural businesses, and the land and water management challenges affecting the sector.	✓	
Understanding of catchment-based approaches and how land management influences river health, water resources and environmental outcomes.	✓	
Understanding of nature-based solutions and their role in improving farm resilience, water management and biodiversity.	✓	
Knowledge of agricultural policy, environmental land management schemes and rural funding mechanisms.	✓	
Knowledge of water resource management, abstraction reform and on-farm water resilience measures.		✓
Understanding of nature finance mechanisms and private investment		✓

Requirements	Essential	Desirable
drivers, including Biodiversity Net Gain, Nutrient Neutrality, ESG and other emerging environmental markets.		
Skills & Personal Attributes		
Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to build trusted relationships and influence a range of audiences.	✓	
Strong organisational skills with the ability to manage multiple priorities and deliver high-quality outputs.	✓	
Good analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to identify practical opportunities and solutions.	✓	
Proactive and self-motivated with the ability to work independently and collaboratively within a multidisciplinary team.	✓	
Experience facilitating workshops, meetings or farmer discussion groups.		✓
Experience using GIS, mapping tools or spatial data to support project development and decision-making.		✓
Miscellaneous		
Commitment to equality of opportunity.	✓	
Full UK driving licence and vehicle which can be used for work purposes.	✓	
Ability to work occasional evenings and weekend if required.	✓	
Suitable, safe home working environment.	✓	