

FARM IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME 2025 - 2026

Application Handbook

Falkland Islands Government
2025



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INTRODUCING THE FARM IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

Goals of the Farm Improvement Programme

The Farm Improvement Programme (FIP) exists to support the sustainable development of farming in the Falkland Islands. The core goals of FIP are aligned to those of the Department of Agriculture's forthcoming Strategic Plan and the Islands Plan 2022-2026:

1. **Enhancing the Agricultural Economy:** projects that assist in the maintenance and enhancement of the quality and productivity of the Falkland Islands' wool clip. This could include flock genetic improvements through AI, pregnancy scanning to understand lambing outcomes, equipment to enhance the efficiency of livestock operations, mineral or feed supplements and product certification and accreditation costs (e.g. RWS, Organic, QFW).
2. **Resilient Land and Grazing Systems:** projects that seek to enhance the resilience of farms to a changing climate through sustainable land-use practices such as sustainable grazing management, pasture improvement, stabilisation and reclamation of degraded areas, production of native plants for restoration works, habitat creation, environmental monitoring and water resource enhancement.
3. **Food Security:** FIP will support farmers to deliver a consistent and high-quality supply of locally-produced meat, fruit, vegetables, etc. The scheme encourages projects that will enhance the productivity and profitability of the beef industry (e.g. equipment to facilitate animal handling, pasture or cropping projects for finishing stock). FIP also seeks to support proposals that contribute to increasing the supply of horticultural crops, eggs and other locally-produced food products which would reduce our reliance on food imports.
4. **Cross-cutting applications** that support farmers in one or more of the following areas:
 - *Monitoring, Adaptation and Innovation:* projects that seek to use on-farm trials and monitoring to facilitate adaptation to changing environmental conditions and economic circumstances. Projects should seek to trial new tools and technology and establish best practices and precision approaches to pasture, grazing, livestock and farm business management.
 - *Capital and Infrastructure Improvement:* investments that improve, enhance or add to farm infrastructure including farm equipment, buildings and fencing. Applications under this scheme must demonstrate how the project will enhance farm incomes through improved farm productivity.
 - *New Farm Business Support:* FIP will provide enhanced support to new entrants to farming and applications that seek to develop new registered farm businesses.

Long-term projects that request on-going funding over a period of 2-5 years will be considered. These must be accompanied by a detailed monitoring and evaluation plan developed with the assistance of the relevant Agricultural Advisor. Enquiries about such applications must be made no later than one month prior to the funding request deadline.

Scope and eligibility

A commercial agricultural business is defined as any commercial business involved in the production and sale of wool, meat, eggs, fruits and vegetables, live plants or livestock feed (e.g. hay and silage).

The Farm Improvement Programme is open to all commercial agricultural businesses who meet the following criteria:

- Have submitted an Agricultural Return (Parts A and B) for the previous financial year
- Can provide evidence of secure tenure (ownership or lease) of the land on which the business operates

AND who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Have a current total stock of 2,000 DSE or more

- Can provide evidence for the commercial sale of more than £1,000 of agricultural products in the previous financial year
- Have previously been considered eligible for, and received, FIP payments in the last three years

Potentially eligible applicants who have not previously completed an Agricultural Return should notify the DoA and can submit one with their FIP application

Application requirements

All applicants to FIP must:

1. **Contact a relevant Agricultural Advisor** for a preliminary discussion (see below)
2. **Submit a complete application packet** consisting of the following:
 - a. Application form including all the following sections:
 - Project goals (max. 50 words)
 - Project plan and schedule (max. 100 words)
 - Assessing project completion (max. 50 words)
 - Follow-up and feedback methods (max. 50 words)
 - b. Budget request including
 - Budget spreadsheet
 - Budget justification (included on application form)
 - c. Letter of support
 - A letter or email from a relevant agricultural advisor indicating they have been consulted and will provide support in delivery of the project

Further guidance on completing these requirements is provided with the relevant application forms and by liaising with the relevant Agricultural Advisor.

Submissions with incomplete application forms, or where one or more of the required elements above are missing, will not be considered.

Developing your budget

The DoA agricultural advising team are happy to assist applicants in the development of their budget requests.

How much can I request? FIP does not have an upper limit for applications, but applicants are advised that, over the last five years, the average amount requested was £12,000 and the average amount allocated was £6,500. Requests above the latter amount are likely to result in the award of partial funding.

Advice on costings

- Purchase of large items of equipment (single items costing in excess of £5,000) must be accompanied by a quote. Large projects, for example the construction of a drafting facility, may involve many smaller components but will be considered a single item. Seek guidance from the relevant Agricultural Advisor before submitting your budget.
- For fencing materials applicants may budget for individual required components (e.g. posts, wire, droppers, etc.) or use the current DoA rate of £2,900 / mile (£1,800 / km).
- Use of contractors or consultants must be accompanied by a quote and detail of work.

Budget spreadsheets

- Budgets must be submitted on the standard template that can be downloaded from the DoA Farm Improvement Programme website: <https://www.falklands.gov.fk/agriculture/doa/services/farm-improvement-programme>
- Assistance in completing budget spreadsheets can be provided by the advising team.

- Examples of a completed application for and a budget spreadsheet, can be found on the DoA website

Matched funding policy

Most activities and costs funded through FIP require applicants to provide matched funding. A funding rate of 75 % means that 25 % (one quarter) of the cost must be matched by the applicant.

- Full details of allowable expenses and their associated funding rates are provided in Appendix 2.

Matched funding can be provided in one of two ways:

- **Cash match** where the applicant pays directly for a proportion of the overall project costs.
- **In-kind match** where the applicant will contribute to the project through the provision of their own time/labour, machinery or existing materials. In-kind matched funding may contribute up to 50% of the total required match for an application.

Box 1: Example of in-kind match calculation

An applicant requests a total of £4,000 for a project to enhance soil quality and productivity on an existing re-seed pasture.

- The seed and fertiliser they request is funded by FIP at a rate of 75%.
- The applicant contribution must be 25% - equivalent to at least £1,000
- 50% of the applicant contribution (£500) can be made through in-kind matched funding
- The applicant will provide the following
 - 16 hours of their own labour ($16 \times £15 = £240$)
 - 10 hours use of their own machinery ($10 \times £20 = £200$)
 - 3 nights accommodation for a labour assistant ($3 \times £20 = £60$)
 - Total in-kind match = £500
 - Cash match of £500

Matched funding requirements are reduced for new farm business applications. New farm businesses are defined as those within the first 5 years of the business starting up. Applications under this category must be discussed with the relevant Agricultural Advisor prior to submitting the application

Labour policy

Additional labour essential to the completion of a project may be included in the budget.

Labour may be provided through the hiring of contractors to complete all or part of the project, or the employment of seasonal supplemental labour such as is necessary.

- For contracted labour, applicants must provide a quote for completion of the work.
- For supplemental labour, applicants must budget at least the FIG minimum wage of £9.19/hr.
- If accommodation is provided to the employee this may be included at a rate of £20/night.
- Additional labour costs may not account for more than 25 % of the total project request.

Note: Where labour costs are requested or matched as part of the application the budget, justification must clearly explain why the total labour is appropriate given the scope of the work.

Equipment policy

Use of the applicant's own vehicles and machinery may be included as matched funding and budgeted at a rate of £20/hr. All matched equipment costs must be fully described in the application and should only include use directly associated with the completion of the project. Equipment use may not account for more than 50% of the total matched funding.

Funding allocation and payments

All applications will be reviewed by the DoA agricultural advising team and funding will be allocated on a case-by-case basis. Applications will be assessed based on their fit to the DoA's strategic goals and their potential to enhance the economic and/or environmental resilience of the farming operation. The DoA reserves the right to offer partial funding depending on the fit of the application and the total demand on the programme.

- Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application no later than three weeks following the submission deadline.
- Funds will be reimbursed as follows:
 1. Businesses complete a claim form and submit it along with a paid invoice to the Department of Agriculture for processing. Funds will then be deposited into the nominated bank account
 2. Matched funding provided by applicants' own labour and equipment must be accompanied by a log of the dates and hours worked. This must be signed-off by the supporting Agricultural Advisor following a check that project goals are being reached.
 3. For services provided by the Department of Agriculture (e.g. laboratory tests, artificial insemination, etc.) the business will be invoiced for their share of the total cost.
- Funds may not be rolled over from one financial year to the next unless the applicant requests this in writing, no later than two months prior to the end of the financial year.
- All allocated funds must be spent by the FIG end of financial year. All invoices and receipts must be submitted to the relevant Agricultural Advisor by mid-June.
- Any projected underspends must be reported to the Department of Agriculture as soon as practicable.

Reallocation of funding: Approval may be granted to reallocate funds within the farming business in exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances may include unforeseen logistical difficulties, extreme seasonal conditions and similar circumstances. The Head of Agriculture should be advised of such circumstances as soon as they are known to allow sufficient time for reallocation of funds if deemed appropriate. Where reallocation is requested the DoA reserves the right to request an updated or new proposal. Ordering goods late, unavailability of goods or lack of access to labour or contract services will not be acceptable grounds for reallocation.

Follow-up and feedback

- All applicants must participate in a follow-up meeting either via phone or a farm visit. Follow-up requests will be made at the 6-month and end-of-project time-points.
- All applications must include a method for providing a brief final update describing the outcomes or results of the project. Potential options could, for example, include:
 - a short written final project update
 - photographs or video of the completed project
 - an article for the Wool Press
 - a short talk at Farmers Week.
- The DoA agricultural advising team can assist in selecting an appropriate and manageable feedback plan given the nature of the project.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

Funding priorities have been selected to align with the Department of Agriculture's forthcoming Strategic Plan. The DoA welcome enquiries about projects that fall outside these areas but reserve the right to concentrate funding on core strategic priorities.

1. Enhancing the Agricultural Economy

1.1 Breeding, selection and genetic improvement

FIP will support projects that improve wool quality, including wool testing (i.e. mid-side samples), and the importation of new sheep genetics. Applications should clearly explain how any selected genetics will enhance the quality and productivity of the farm business and the resilience of animals to environmental conditions in the Falklands.

- **Note on the National Stud Flock Ram Sale:** FIP funds cannot be used to purchase NSF animals during the Helmsman Auction. Funds can be used to purchase animals tendered post sale and for the purchase of any privately-owned rams offered for sale.
- **Note on other livestock:** Applications for the genetic improvement of other livestock will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be discussed with an Agricultural Advisor as early as possible. Beef breeding is covered under Priority 3.1

Contact = Lucy Ellis

1.2 Flock management and health

Efficient management of livestock and maintenance of flock/herd health and welfare are critical to farm profitability. FIP will support projects that enhance the efficiency of on-farm animal handling and management activities including, for example, the purchase of raceways, handling crates and drafters, electronic ear tags and associated equipment. Funds can also be used to purchase necessary supplements (e.g. cobalt and/or selenium) or for supplemental feed to, for example, improve ewe condition prior to joining. Support is also available for pregnancy scanning and laboratory testing of feed, animal tissue and intestinal worm burdens.

Contact = Lucy Ellis

1.3 Farm certification and accreditation

Farm certifications and accreditations (e.g. Responsible Wool Standard, Organic status, Quality Falklands Wool) provide customers with guarantees of the quality, traceability and sustainability of the associated production practices. Certifications and accreditations have the potential to play a role in enhancing farm profitability by maintaining and enhancing market access. FIP will support applications that offset the costs associated with joining or participating in certification and accreditation schemes. Such costs could include membership or costs associated with addressing infrastructure, equipment or training needs identified during internal or external audits.

Contact = Kerry Dann

2. Sustainable Land and Grazing Systems

2.1 Pasture and forage management

FIP supports the management of current, long-term perennial pastures and fodder crops that maintain ground cover, reduce erosion and improve productivity. Applications must explain how funding will enhance the economic and environmental resilience of the farm. Consideration should be given to the sustainable management of pasture establishment, production and grazing to ensure long-term resilience.

- Funding is not available for cultivating new (i.e. currently naturally vegetated) ground. This is due to the significant risks of soil erosion, carbon loss and land-degradation in a changing climate. Focus should be placed on maintaining and enhancing existing cropping areas and improved pastures.

- All projects must include provision for soil testing and an explanation of how test results will inform subsequent management. Assistance with interpreting soil test results can be provided by the relevant Agricultural Advisor.

Contact = Olivia Woodiwiss

2.2 Water resource management

Water is a critical resource for farming operations and its availability can impose significant constraints on farming operations. FIP will fund projects that seek to enhance the availability and resilience of water supplies for farming systems. This can include the creation of water holes and troughs for livestock, as well as enhancement of soil and land water holding capacity (e.g. ditch blocking, bunding, re-meandering, pond and wetland creation). FIP will only fund plans that are sympathetic to the natural water course. Opportunities to enhance ponding and lateral sub-surface flow are encouraged.

- All applications must include a topographical map and a diagrammatic representation of the planned works.
- All applications seeking to manage ditches for livestock safety must explain how they will also enhance the retention of water in the landscape (e.g. through use of check-dams, meandering, bunding etc.)
- Applications that could result in ditches being significantly widened or straightened will not be considered due to their potential adverse impacts on catchment hydrology and land-condition. Assistance with designing appropriate water resources management options can be provided by the relevant Agricultural Advisor.

Contact = Matt Davies

2.3 Invasive species management

Invasive species represent a significant threat to the environment. Applications will be considered for proposals that seek to control or eliminate invasive plant, animal or invertebrate pests impacting agricultural production. Applications should prioritise an Integrated Pest Management approach that considers both the control of the invasive species and any factors (e.g. over-grazing, soil disturbance, pasture fertility) which facilitate further establishment and competitive ability. Plans for subsequent, post-funding maintenance of control (i.e. follow-up control) must be included in all relevant applications.

Contact = Erica Berntsen

2.4 Land recovery and restoration

Enhancing the resilience of farming and environmental systems to climate change and recovering from the impacts of historic land-degradation, are critical challenges for farming in the Falklands. FIP will prioritise projects that seek to address environmental degradation and that enhance the environmental condition and agricultural productivity of degraded areas. Projects considered include those focused on hydrology restoration (e.g. ditch blocking), stabilisation of erosion areas (e.g. using non-native species such as marram or sandgrass), assisting the recovery of areas impacted by plant mortality (e.g. diddle-dee dieback) and fencing to protect degraded or vulnerable areas.

Contact = Erica Berntsen

3. Food Security

3.1 Beef production

The Falklands' beef industry plays a critical role in national food security and enhances incomes across several farms. FIP will support projects that seek to enhance the quality and quantity of beef supplies and will equally support the production of weaners, finishing operations and combined enterprises. Funding may be requested to purchase feed and supplements, improve animal handling and rearing facilities, grazing systems, and for breeding

of beef herds. Consultancy services such as pregnancy scanning will also be supported. Support is available for laboratory testing of feed, animal tissue and intestinal worm burdens.
Contact = Olivia Woodiwiss

3.2 Horticulture

FIP will support the improvement or updating of current field-based and protected (e.g. polytunnel, hydroponics) cropping for the purposes of commercial supply of fresh fruit and vegetables to the people of the Falklands. Opportunities also exist to increase the supply of local produce to the tourist industry (e.g. restaurants and cruise ships).

- All proposals must explain how risks of soil erosion in any open field crops will be mitigated.
- All proposals must include provision for soil testing.
- Large scale developments will generally not be supported through FIP without an application for long-term funding and an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Contact = Olivia Woodiwiss

3.3 Food import substitution

The Falklands is currently reliant on significant volumes of imported food including several critical products such as pork, chicken, eggs and dairy. Proposals that seek to enhance on-farm production of primary or value-added products will be supported. Such proposals could include costs associated with necessary equipment and infrastructure for new production systems, as well as investment in genetic improvements to enhance product quality. Proposals that seek to introduce new species or breeds into the Falklands must clearly state how any risks will be averted (e.g. due to escaped livestock, etc.) and may be subject to regulatory approval.

Contact = Matt Davies

4. Capital and Infrastructure Improvements

4.1 Fencing

Fencing is a significant capital investment for a farming business. It can facilitate improved grazing management, yielding benefits to both livestock production and environmental sustainability. It can also improve farm labour efficiency through improved gathering operations.

- FIP funding will prioritise the establishment of new fencing to enhance farmers' ability to develop rotational grazing systems.
- One-off repairs to existing fencing (including boundary fences) will also be considered, where they will improve farm operations.
- All applications must be submitted with a map indicating where the proposed fencing will occur.

Contacts: New = Olivia Woodiwiss; Existing (including boundary fences) = Matt Davies

4.2 Infrastructure improvement

Maintenance of agricultural farm buildings, infrastructure and equipment can be a significant cost for farmers. FIP will support one-off building, equipment and infrastructure improvements where a clear explanation can be provided for their current condition and how any such investment will be maintained in the future.

- **Note:** FIP may not be used for expenditures on domestic residences or self-catering facilities. The DoA is happy to connect those interested with relevant funding sources available through, for example, FIDC and the Tourist Board.

Contact = Lucy Ellis

4.3 Waste management

Farms in the Falklands face challenges with the safe and efficient disposal of both current and legacy farm waste materials and equipment. FIP will support applications that facilitate the

safe and appropriate disposal and management of waste on or off farm. Applications are encouraged where they will reduce the exposure of farm workers, visitors and livestock to risks from waste materials. Applications that enhance the aesthetic appearance of farms by addressing legacy waste issues will also be considered.

Contact = Erica Berntsen

5. Monitoring, Innovation and Adaptation

5.1 Environmental and livestock monitoring systems

Resilient farming systems practice Adaptive Management that emphasises the importance of monitoring, learning-by-doing and evidence-based planning of agricultural activities. FIP will support applications that enhance farmers' ability to collect data on their farms and production systems. This could include, for example: weather stations, soil moisture loggers, electronic ear-tags and associated equipment, GPS ear-tags or collars and fenceless grazing systems. FIP will also fund the use of agricultural or environmental consultants to provide advice on the development or enhancement of farm operations.

Contact = Erica Berntsen

5.2 Farmer-led research

The Department of Agriculture is keen to collaborate with farmers interested in trialling new technologies or management approaches that could enhance the environmental and economic sustainability of farming systems. The DoA agricultural advisor team will provide support on the design and analysis of trials and will collaborate with farmers on data collection and report preparation. Farms participating in farmer-led research projects will receive enhanced funding support for such projects in recognition of their strategic importance and the labour required for the management and monitoring. Priority research topics for 2025-2026 include:

1. Effects of grazing pressure on native and/or re-seed pasture productivity
2. Costs and benefits of lime application on re-seeded pasture productivity
3. Influence of vegetation structure and grazing management on soil moisture dynamics
4. Seasonal and diurnal variation in wildfire risk
5. Influence of RWS or other farm certification schemes on wool sale prices
6. Long-term trends in wool quality and sale prices

Proposals on other topics are also welcome. Please consult with a relevant Agricultural Advisor if you wish to participate in, or develop, a research project.

Contact = Matt Davies

5.3 New farm business support

The DoA encourages new entrants to farming and the development of new registered business ventures on existing farms. New entrants to farming may submit applications across any of the funding priorities and will receive funding with a reduced (10%) match requirement. Such funding is available for a maximum of five years from the point the applicant took possession or tenure of their first farm. Existing farms wanting to launch new business ventures should contact the relevant Agricultural Advisor for a discussion and may be connected with other relevant funding sources (e.g. FIDC, FITB) where those are a better fit to the applicant's business goals.

Contact = Matt Davies

APPENDIX I – APPLICATION CONTACTS

Name	E-mail	Phone	Responsibilities
Erica Berntsen	eberntsen@naturalresources.gov.fk	27355	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental and livestock monitoring (5.1) • Invasive species management (2.3) • Land recovery and restoration (2.4) • Waste management (4.3)
Matt Davies	mdavies@naturalresources.gov.fk	27355	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmer led research (5.2) • Fencing (repair/replacement) (4.1) • Food import substitution (3.3) • New farm business support (5.3) • Water resource management (2.2)
Kerry Dann	kdann@naturalresources.gov.fk	27355	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm certification and accreditation (1.3)
Lucy Ellis	lellis@naturalresources.gov.fk	27355	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breeding selection and genetic improvement (1.1) • Flock management and health (1.2) • Infrastructure improvement (4.2)
Olivia Woodiwiss	owoodiwiss@naturalresources.gov.fk	27355	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beef production (3.1) • Fencing (new) (4.1) • Horticulture (3.2) • Pasture and forage management (2.1)
Katrina Stephenson	kstephenson@naturalresources.gov.fk	27355	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application requirements • Budget guidance • General enquiries • Invoicing • Payments

APPENDIX II – FUNDING RATE TABLE

The table below provides funding rates for all permitted activities and expenses. Other costs may be charged to FIP as part of an application but these must be approved by a member of the DoA agricultural advising team prior to submission

Category	Expenditure	Rate	Notes
Breeding	AI semen and embryos of approved breeds and species	75%	
	AI / ET training and technicians	75%	
	Live animal genetics and fertilised eggs	75%	
Capital expenditure	Existing building, infrastructure and equipment repairs	50%	
	New buildings, infrastructure and equipment	75%	
Certification	Certification and audit fees (e.g. RWS, organic)	100%	
Consultancy	Approved consultancy fees	75%	
	Approved technician fees	75%	
Consumables	Agricultural chemicals (incl. lime, fertiliser, pesticides, etc.)	75%	
	Erosion control materials	75%	
	Fuel	75%	Only vehicle/machinery fuel associated with their use for a project may be included
Equipment	Equipment - hire	75 %	
	Equipment - own	50 %	May not exceed 50 % of in-kind matched funding Must be budgeted at max. £20 / hour
Farmer led research	Labour - own or temporary	100%	
	Materials, equipment and consumables	100%	
Fencing	Clearing fence lines	75 %	
	Gates for new and existing fences	75 %	
	Existing - repair and/or replacement (incl. boundaries)	50%	Fencing materials may be budgeted using the standard overall rate of £1,800/km
	New - all materials	75%	

Appendix II – Funding Rate Table (cont.)

Category	Expenditure	Rate	Notes
Labour	Contractor hire	75%	Must be accompanied by a quote
	Direct family member	75%	May not exceed 10 % of total request or 50 % of in-kind matched funding Must be budgeted at max. £9.19 / hour
	Own	N/A	May be included as in-kind matched funding
	Temporary employee - labour	75%	May not exceed 25% of total request. Payment rate must be at least £9.19 / hour
	Temporary employee - accommodation	75%	May not exceed 25% of total request Must be budgeted at max. £20 / night
Monitoring	Data collection and management software	75%	
	Environmental (e.g. weather stations, soil moisture probes)	75%	
	External data services (e.g. Sheep Genetics)	75%	
	Livestock (e.g. EIDS, barcode readers, weigh heads)	75%	
New Farm Business	All expenses	90%	
Plants	Live - native	75%	
	Live - non native trees and shrubs	75%	
Seed	Approved non native species	75%	
	Native plants	75%	
	Pasture and forage cropping	75%	
Testing	Blood and animal tissue	100%	
	Faecal egg counts (FEC)	100%	
	Forage and feed quality	100%	
	Mid side samples (wool)	75%	
	Soil quality	100%	
Other	Other approved costs	75%	Approval must be noted in letter of support Costs must be fully described in budget justification

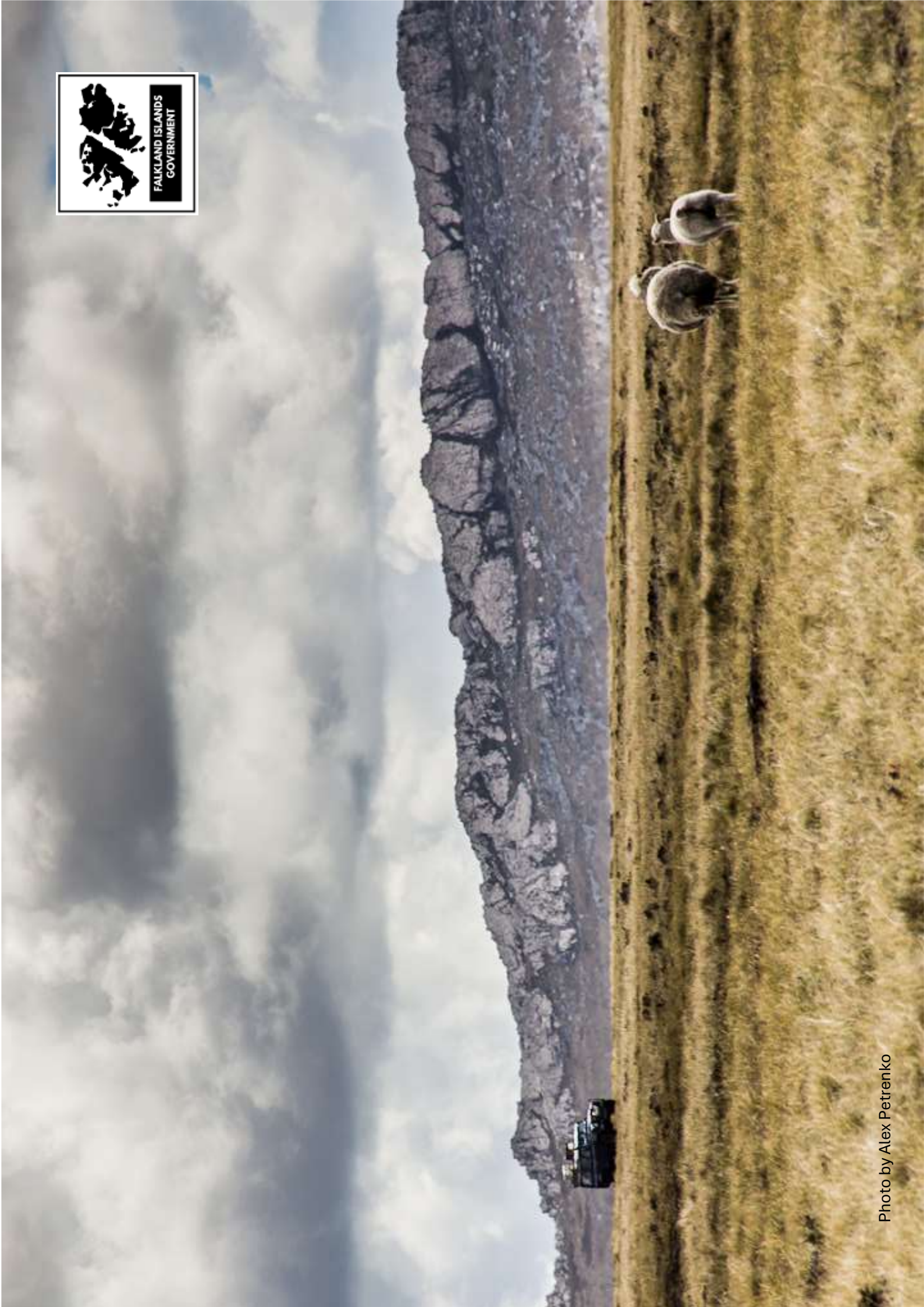


Photo by Alex Petrenko