


# Innovate UK Business Connect: Reasonable Adjustments Hybrid Model Pilot.

## Invitation to Tender & Statement of Works

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## Background

Innovate UK is the UK's innovation agency and we support the innovation journey for many thousands of businesses each year. These are businesses at all stages, across all technology sectors and throughout the entire UK.

Our purpose is to drive economic growth and productivity through empowering UK businesses to leverage innovation for sustainable success.

Through strategic investments, targeted focus, and collaborative partnerships between public and private organisations, we enable businesses to develop and commercialise game-changing innovations, creating new opportunities to start and scale, and increasing productivity across the UK.

We are at the heart of the UK innovation ecosystem, continuously refining our offer and approach to maximise impact, strengthen partnerships, and drive progress across diverse industries and communities.

We believe in the importance of innovation to support our economy and society and deliver a full range of products and services to support UK business. Everything from grant and loan funding to support and advice on skills, exporting, raising money and starting up a business. In 2022/23 alone, Innovate UK had more than 20,000 applications for our innovation products and services, and this figure is rising.

We are committed to an inclusive system open to all, where successful innovation knows no limits. As such, we support reasonable adjustments for applicants to provide innovators with the best possible access to our support.

Over the last 6 months, we have been delivering our Reasonable Adjustments service in-house as a pilot, and are now looking for a partner to co-develop and provide elements of a hybrid model.

The service provides 1-2-1 support to disabled and neurodivergent innovators to submit their applications to us.

The service currently covers: time management, organisation and planning, proofreading, editing, scribing, and note-taking; interpreting the application information and support with numeracy, as well as signposting to assistive technology and programmes. In addition, Innovate UK Business Connect provides access to specialist knowledge transfer managers with deep expertise to advise and support technical aspects.

We are seeking to co-develop a hybrid model, where assessment of needs may be covered in-house and the actual support is provided by a supplier.

Since reasonable adjustments is an emerging field of practice, sessions will be recorded for training purposes and we are seeking a supplier that can develop and share insights with us.

You will also be working closely with Innovate UK's Competitions and Operations teams.

The chosen supplier will need to be highly responsive, proactive, and work to tight deadlines.

### **Future Hybrid model**

This arrangement would run for 6 months from the date we procure a supplier until the end of 2024.

This ITT has been prepared by Innovate UK Business Connect for the purposes of inviting proposals from candidates for the provision of a range of reasonable adjustments services (listed below) through a hybrid model.

## **Deliverables Required**

- This tender is to procure an initial 6-month service provision.
- The Innovate UK Business Connect internal team triages and determines the scope of support within agreed definitions / constraints to the supplier.
- Volume of requests will come in peaks and troughs, we estimate 30 -50 applicants may need support over this 6 month period but the need for support would fluctuate during busy periods. Busy periods are impacted by certain Innovate UK competitions that may run for 4-6 weeks, fluctuations can happen near the closing dates of these competitions.
- The supplier will provide applicants with up to 6 hours\* of 1-2-1 reasonable adjustments support in soft skills areas such as time management, organisation and planning, proofreading, editing, scribing, note-taking, interpreting the application information and support with numeracy. This could be in the form of video calls or via email (in cases where proofreading support is required).
- This service is providing a conduit for applicants to get support not only with their adjustments, but also with their applications from our in-house sector experts – Knowledge Transfer Managers (KTM). The supplier is not expected to have this level of expertise but may on various occasions have a KTM present in 1-2-1 sessions to help facilitate application support for that area of innovation.
- Metrics, analysis and insights must be provided, and we are seeking a supplier who can work with us to develop world-class best practices that can be shared more

widely with other public funders and innovation providers across the UK eco-system and beyond.

- This service would be regularly evaluated based on feedback from the users and we would expect to maintain positive service level indicators from this evaluation.

\*6 hours is the standard allocation, we may increase this should an individual need more support.

## Technical Considerations

- Specialist experience in the fields of disability, accessibility, and neurodiversity inclusion with a deep understanding of the different models of disability i.e. social model etc.
- A user-centric approach to developing 1-2-1 reasonable adjustment services.
- Good knowledge of assistive technology tools and how to navigate using them. This includes good understanding of WCAG rules and new developments in assistive technology.
- Experience of providing 1-2-1 support to individuals to help and empower them to overcome the barriers they are facing. This includes developing strategies that will help an applicant through the grant writing process.
- A good understanding of mental health and well-being needs.
- Experience of working with people with different learning needs and styles.
- Robust understanding of reasonable adjustments principles under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Innovate UK Business Connect requires its suppliers to meet industry recognised security practices and as such it is expected that they hold ISO certifications (ISO27001 or higher)
- Ability to record and quality manage their time with applicants.
- Innovate UK Business Connect may require successful submissions to be subject to non-disclosure agreements.

## Desirable

- Experience of being a qualified coach or mentor (within any field)
- British Sign Language (BSL)

We understand that potential suppliers may only be able to provide part of the service rather than all. Collaborations are welcome. We welcome proposals from anyone who believes they meet the brief, even if only partially.

### **Current systems used by Innovate UK Business Connect:**

- Zoom
- Microsoft Office including Microsoft Teams

## **Quote for Services**

### **Innovate UK Business Connect requires a quote for services including, but not limited to:**

Up to 6 hours of 1-2-1 applicant support for approximately 50 applicants (applicants may request more than 6 hours, but this will be decided on a case-by-case basis) relating to soft skills:

- Time management.
- Organisation and planning.
- Proofreading.
- Note-taking/scribing.
- Interpreting the application information.
- Support with numeracy.

**Budget: Up to £35,000 + VAT**

## **Term and Expiry Date**

1<sup>st</sup> July 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

## **Submission**

**In response to this Statement of Works, please provide the information listed below.**

- Short narrative describing how you would approach the pilot and what reasonable adjustments (based on the soft skills highlighted) service you can provide i.e., your approach, suppliers/partners/associates you may have to collaborate with to deliver etc.
- Two or more examples of where you have provided reasonable adjustments support previously.
- Initial schedule of costs. Recognising that this would be subject to change and within the constraints of the overall budget, suppliers are asked to submit a timeline of estimated costs for the duration of the pilot.
- A completed copy of the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire.
- Additional Information. Innovate UK Business Connect invite suppliers to provide any additional information in the form of video content, imagery, or links, which provide supporting evidence that suppliers recognise and work in

accordance with Innovate UK Business Connects values as an organisation. Suppliers might include evidence of social aims and social responsibility and diversity and inclusion policy and practices.

- Legal information i.e. Your standard T&Cs.
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Please provide the information requested above to **mollie.stevens@iuk.ktn-uk.org** by **20<sup>th</sup> June** at the latest. Submissions will be assessed on an ongoing basis until this date. IR35 will be assessed before the awarding of a successful contract.

## Principle Contact

Please direct any questions or communications on this Invitation to Quote to:  
**mollie.stevens@iuk.ktn-uk.org.uk**

## Selection Process and Scoring

Submissions will be scored equally against the following five areas; understanding of the innovation landscape; previous experience and sample work; approach to working relationship; value for money; alignment with Innovate UK Business Connect values.

Submissions will be subject to IR35 checks prior to award date.

The successful supplier will be contacted from week commencing **1<sup>st</sup> July 2024**

## Terms and Conditions

Any contract offered will be subject to “Innovate UK Business Connects Consultancy Terms and Conditions” which can be made available on request.

Please note that Innovate UK Business Connect reserves the right to not select any supplier if we feel none meet our requirements and budget.

Further References:

Innovate UK Business Connect Website: <https://iuk.ktn-uk.org/>

UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) / Innovate UK Branding Guidelines:

<https://ukri.frontify.com/d/zgfuBB2r7aAg/brand-basics#/brand-guidelines/full-brand-guidelines>