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**SPECIFICATION**

**INVITATION TO TENDER itt\_30132**

**Improving Numeracy 30-901**

**South East LEP**

**DATE: June 2016**

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| **ESF Employees Support in Skills itt\_30132** |
| BACKGROUND |
| **General**  The contracting authority is the Secretary of State for Business Innovation and Skills acting through the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), an executive agency of the Department for Business Innovation and Skills exercising functions to fund adult education and skills.  The SFA, acting as an Opt-In Organisation for the European Social Fund (ESF), is procuring education and training services to meet priorities identified by Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area European Structural and Investment Funds Sub–Committees. As an Opt-In Organisation the SFA provides match funding at Priority Axis level utilising sources of public funding as match for ESF funded activity.  This Invitation to Tender (ITT) is for Priority Axis 2 and for Investment Priority (IP) 2.1, enhancing equal access to lifelong learning. Where the need has been identified both in the LEP area and European Structural and Investment Fund Strategies.  The IP 2.1 supports equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences. Resources are being focused through this IP on people in the workforce who lack basic skills or qualifications needed for their career progression and for business growth and innovation in the knowledge economy.  The strands in 2.1 are:   * Skills Support for the Workforce, Improving Numeracy provision   The SFA is looking to procure an organisation to deliver education and training that best support the needs of local employers and employees in the LEP area set out below.  **South East Local Enterprise Partnership Background**  30.4% of the working age population across the SE LEP lack level 2 qualifications, and around two fifths of 16 year-olds fail to reach level 2 thus undermining their ability to reach level 3 by the age of 19. 8.8% of the resident population aged 16-64 have no qualifications whatsoever. This makes people less employable and unlikely to progress in employment. It also hinders economic growth across the region.  Current Numeracy provision only addresses a fraction of the need – in 2012/13 there were just 2,800 adult enrolments on numeracy courses delivered in Essex (South East LEP Data Cube). Clearly existing provision is not enticing adult learners to take up numeracy qualifications in the numbers needed therefore SE LEP requires a new approach to delivery. |
| **DEFINITION OF TERMS** |
| **At risk of Redundancy:** means Employees identified by the employer as at risk or redundancy and/or commenced formal consultation with staff representatives on the need to make redundancies  **Candidate:** means an organisation who has been invited to take part in this restricted procurement procedure  **Disability**: A person who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.  **Eligibility:** Only people who are eligible to work in UK are eligible for this EU programme.  **Employed**: People are employees if they perform work for pay, profit or family gain. People are self-employed if they work in his/her own business for the purpose of earning a profit, even if they are not making a profit or are just setting up.  **Micro Businesses:** This relates to organisations employing less than 10 Employees.  **Qualifications:** Qualification means a formal outcome assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards. Regulated qualifications/aims are those listed in the Learning Aims Reference Service as being regulated. Non-regulated aims are those listed in the Learning Aims Reference Service as being non-regulated.  Regulated and non-regulated aims must be planned to be delivered within budget.  Qualification rates are based on the published LARS rates at the start of the contract.  **Services:** The provision of education, training or support delivered to individuals.  **Small and Medium sized Enterprises**: This applies to organisations employing less than 250 employees.  **Start Date:** Employment status and age are determined on the date of starting on the Services.  **Survey**: Where applicable, long term sustained outcomes over 6 months will be monitored separately. Some ESF indicators will be collected by survey by the ESF Managing Authority directly from the participants.  **Unemployed:** Unemployed are persons usually without work, available for work and actively seeking work. Persons considered registered unemployed would be included. Full time students are considered as inactive but not eligible for this provision as they are not available for work. Long term unemployment is greater than 6 months for under 25 years old and greater than 12 months for 25 years old or more. |
| **SERVICE REQUIREMENTS** |
| **General Service Requirements**  All activities must complement and avoid duplication with other provision, thereby adding value to Department for Work and Pensions/Big Lottery, Education Funding Agency, Skills Funding Agency, local authority, National Careers Service and the new Careers Enterprise Company funded provision. Successful candidates will be required to ensure that ESF provision will clearly add value and not duplicate any provision that can be arranged locally through existing mainstream institutions.  ***Capacity and readiness to deliver***  Candidates must have:   * The resources to offer locally tailored solutions and flexible delivery to meet the skills and Apprenticeship priorities of employers and employees in the defined geographical area of delivery. If the LEP area also has a ‘transitional’ area defined in addition to the ‘more developed’ area, delivery locations will have to be available *in each locality* * The capacity to deliver provision immediately upon commencement of the contract and that delivery should not be delayed in any way by any recruitment processes or other processes or relationships that need to be established. * Candidates must be able to demonstrate the ability to undertake robust initial assessment of eligible individuals. Vocational training delivered must be regulated units and qualifications on the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework and be able to support individuals into higher levels of training and workplace progression   ***Track record***  The ability to deliver the required activity, based on a track record in the successful delivery and management of this type and size of programme  ***Information, Advice and Guidance***  Where the activity requires effective Information, Advice and Guidance successful  applicants and/or subcontractors delivering this element will either hold or be  working towards the Matrix standard.  ***Management and quality assurance***  Candidates will need to have effective management arrangements in place to ensure all of the requirements of this specification are fulfilled. The Services must be delivered to a high quality and successful tenderers will need to have in place quality assurance and improvement processes.  The Service needs to be flexible and responsive to the changing economic and political landscape and take into consideration that the approach and associated processes may change during the life of this contract. Therefore Candidates will be expected to be able to change the delivery of the Services accordingly.  ***Partnership working***  Candidates will be required to work in partnership with other organisations delivering education and training in the area to ensure the Service is complementary to and not in competition with other funded provision.  The Service must be able to respond to changing local needs and opportunities, as well as policy changes.  Candidates will be required to establish linkages with and have an understanding of, local stakeholder needs and develop strong links with the key stakeholders.  Candidates will be required to work with employers to identify the skills gaps and needs to drive employer growth.  Where the Service works with Jobcentre Plus clients the Candidates will be required to co-operate effectively with Jobcentre Plus making them aware of candidates who fail to attend training and notifying them of any instances where individuals leave training due to starting work. Candidates will be required to establish links with Jobcentre Plus and visits to public or private sector employers should be made in conjunction with Jobcentre Plus and National Careers Service wherever possible to ensure a smooth, efficient, and joined up approach to arranging benefit claims, offering new employment opportunities and training for all eligible individuals.  ***Market intelligence and local knowledge***  The delivery of the Services must take into account the current and future social and economic indicators including labour market intelligence. Candidates must be able to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the current employment market and the current and future social and economic indicators including labour market intelligence for the geographical area being supported. Candidates must also have an understanding of local skills shortages and gaps and any existing skills support structures within the LEP area.  ***Management information and reporting***  Candidates will develop management information systems to enable it to submit data to the Skills Funding Agency via the Individual Learner Record (ILR) and put in place robust arrangements for ensuring that the evidence required to support payments is collected and retained.  Candidates will be required to share with LEPs and the Skills Funding Agency ongoing performance management data as well as additional intelligence to improve the effectiveness of Skills Support projects in the LEP area in the future.  **Specific Service Requirements**  The aim of the Services is to support sustainable employment of employed individuals with low skills through the delivery of Numeracy skills. The Services should raise the level of attainment achieved by these individuals. The Services should is to increase numbers of individuals with numeracy at level 2 and above.  Innovative methods should be employed to deliver the Services to attract and engage greater numbers of working aged adults, providing informal learning that aids progression and then to deliver formal qualifications at times and in environments best suited for the participant group in question.  The Services must be delivered in conjunction with local Employment and Skills boards and key local partners and a range of education providers, and with local employers to drive greater numbers of numeracy enrolments across the SE LEP region. Such relationships will ensure a flow to existing numeracy provision and innovative ESF programmes, and from it, into further learning or employment.  The Services must not duplicate what already exists and should be delivered alongside initiatives such as the National Numeracy Challenge to boost interest and take up.  The Services should utilise new and innovative means of delivery. Service delivery should take account of industry sectors (those referenced in the Strategic Economic Plan) and link delivery accordingly. Learning must be contextualise learning within the workplace to motivate potential participants.  The Services should target particular priority groups.  The Services must provide, advice and guidance, personal development planning, skills development and learning and mentoring on an individual basis which encourages individuals to continue to improve their qualification levels, or to use their new-found skills in the workplace.  The Services must deliver solutions to meet the identified skills gaps/needs, and will focus on the provision of Numeracy to allow career progression, and to drive employer growth. The Services must work with employers to develop opportunities for individuals to include a core set of employability skills including basic skills, in particular Maths entry level, level 1 or level 2.  The Services must provide support to sustain individuals in work and to enable them to continue to acquire the skills for progression. This support should include mentoring and follow up support for individuals in learning and specific vocational short courses and bite sized learning to help individuals to continue to progress.  The Services should be delivered in the workplace or at a suitable location with the agreement of the employer and must ensure maximum innovation and flexibility.  The successful Candidate must conduct exit interviews with employers to assess the impact of the activity. |
| ELIGIBILITY |
| **General**  General eligibility requirements are set out in : the European Social Fund Programme for England 2014-2020 National Eligibility Rules which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-structural-and-investment-funds-programme-guidance>  LEP Specific Eligibility  Age: 16+  Employment Status: Employed.  Please note LEP Specific requirements are subject to the National Eligibility Rules detailed above.  In delivering the Services, the successful Candidate must take into account and support the targets for the following groups where this is consistent with the other Services requirements for addressing the needs of groups identified as priority and meeting the Services deliverables.  Over 50s min 20%  Ethnic groups                          min 18%  Female                                    min 49%  Disability/health issues            min 8%  Lone parents                           min 5%  No basic skills                         min 50% |
| **GEOGRAPHY / AREA OF DELIVERY** |
| **LEP Specific**  The Services will be delivered within the South East Local Enterprise Partnership area.  The breakdown of population across the LEP is detailed in the table below. While there can be some flexibility to meet needs across the LEP, delivery must take place in all areas.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | Population | % of LEP | | Kent and Medway | 1,764,600 | 43.55 | | East Sussex | 534,400 | 13.19 | | South Essex (Southend and Thurrock) | 687,500 | 16.97 | | Rest of Essex | 1,065,500 | 26.30 | | Total | 4,052,000 | 100.00 | |  |  |  | |
| **FUNDING AND DELIVERABLES** |
| **LEP Specific**  Currently £2,160,000 will be available for the period from September 2016 to March 2018. This may be increased if additional funding becomes available.  The table below shows the initial planned outcomes, but performance management may change the volumes and mix during the life of the contract.  From the funding available on the regulated and non-regulated lines, the provider must plan to deliver the appropriate education & training for each participant to enable them to progress.  The minimum service deliverables, values and volumes for which evidence must be provided are as follows.   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Description** | **Volumes** | **Unit Cost Total Value Average per Intervention** | **£** | | ST01 Learner Assessment and Plan | 2620 | £50 | £131,000 | | RQ01 Regulated Learning |  |  | £1,734,000 | | NR01 Non Regulated Activity |  |  | £295,000 | | Total |  |  | £2,160,000 | |