

**Supported by the European Regional Development Fund 2014 – 2020
Innovation Vouchers, Project reference: 50R17P01834**

**Request for support with “business engagement for the Innovation Vouchers
ERDF project”**

A tender opportunity has arisen to provide consultancy services to the project Innovation Vouchers - 'helping businesses grow' at Aston University.

About the project

The project promotes external knowledge sharing in business; it provides start ups, small or medium-sized enterprises with the opportunity to collaborate with external experts to gain new knowledge to help their business innovate, develop and grow. The overall project aim is to deliver 190 innovation vouchers to SMEs from within the Greater Birmingham and Solihull, Black Country and The Marches region of the UK, and to assist 80 enterprises which is done via workshops. The breakdown of the 190 innovation vouchers is as follows:

- to support 100 businesses within Greater Birmingham and Solihull across the following priority sectors: Advanced Manufacturing including Automotive and Aerospace, Low Carbon, ICT, Digital and Creative and Life Science. The business would need to meet the ERDF eligibility criteria for a small and medium sized enterprise (SME).
- to support 60 business within the Black Country across the following priority sectors: Transport Technologies, Building Technologies/Construction, Advanced Manufacturing, Environmental Technologies and Business Services.
- to support 30 business within the Marches across the following priority sectors: Defence & Securities, Advanced Engineering, Environmental Technologies & Services, Renewable Energy, Water Technology and Food & Drink.

Overall objective of the consultancy services

To seek and engage with SME's within the project specific areas who fit the eligibility criteria, to support businesses to complete the Innovation Voucher Grant Application form, considering their business modelling and strategy, to ensure the business submits the completed application form to the key contact at Aston University and finally to support the business with the claim procedure to ensure they receive the grant and undertake the innovation.

This opportunity is open to 2 business engagement advisors. We require the two business engagement advisors to each support 15 businesses to complete the above objective, so that is a total of 30 businesses. Each consultant will be required to work in all 3 geographical areas, the ideal specifics are listed below:

Geographical Area	No. of completed applications
Marches More Developed	1
Marches Transitional	5
Black Country	4
Greater Birmingham & Solihull More Developed	3
Greater Birmingham & Solihull Transitional	2

For SMEs to be eligible they must employ less than 250 people and have an annual turnover less than €50m or a balance sheet total less than €43m; more information can be found here. You will be required to work in all project LEP areas: Greater Birmingham & Solihull, The Black Country and The Marches in both transitional and more developed areas.

Time frame: from March 2018 to June 2018

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Your quote

Your quote should address the following:

- a) How you would obtain the contact data for SMEs in the specified LEP regions, if necessary please include a cost breakdown of any new data/databases
- b) How you would ensure that SMEs were eligible
- c) How you would support and mentor the SME to complete the application and to ensure that the application fits the approval criteria
- d) The key personnel within your organisation involved in the delivering this contract
- e) Show previous experience of business engagement for ERDF projects
- f) A breakdown of costs to complete 15 innovation voucher grant applications (stating VAT where applicable) – or as a per application basis
- g) We will award the contract(s) on a ‘payment by results’ model and we will require a statement to state that you would be willing to adhere to this model throughout the contract. In essence, we will pay for each eligible application that is submitted
- h) The contract would need to commence immediately after selection, please indicate your availability

All tender responses should be submitted in writing electronically to: Kavita Jeerh at k.jeerh@aston.ac.uk - no later than close of business Monday 5th March 2018. You will be notified of the outcome of the tender review process no later than close of business **Wednesday 7th March 2018**.

Terms of Reference are included at the end of this tender notice.

In order to work with us you must accept [Aston University's procurement terms and conditions](#).

This project is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund under the European Structural Investment Fund of 2014 to 2020.

This tender is being offered under the Innovation Vouchers project.

Tender threshold

The value of the full contract will not exceed £13,000 including VAT.

Questions relating to the Tender

Any questions regarding the tender must be sent by e-mail to k.jeerh@aston.ac.uk – all responses will be shared with other interested parties.

Scoring

Tenders will be judged on:

- a) Price: 30% weighting
- b) Track-record of delivering similar business engagement: 50% weighting
- c) Willingness to operate on a ‘payment on results’ basis: 20% weighting

Payment Conditions

Payment will be made on [Aston University's Terms and Conditions](#).

Important: All invoices must include a Purchase Order number, obtained from Kavita Jeerh (contact emails above, before being considered for payment.