

**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 target for Greater Birmingham and Solihull is to financially support 100 businesses across several 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).

Timeframe: from October 2017 to Jan 2018.

Overall objective of the consultancy services

To seek and engage with SME's within the GBS LEP area that fit the eligibility criteria, to support businesses to complete the Innovation Voucher Grant Application form, 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.

This opportunity is open to 6 business engagement advisors. We require one business engagement advisor to support 20 businesses to complete the above objective, and another 5 business engagement advisors to each support 5 businesses to complete the above.

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 GBSLEP area and/or in other LEP areas (The Black Country and The Marches) in both transitional and more developed areas.

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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 region, 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 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 either 20 or 5 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 **Tuesday 10th October**. You will be notified of the outcome of the tender review process no later than close of business **13th October 2017**.

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 £20,000.00 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.