

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

Invitation to Tender: To complete the project Evaluation (Summative Assessment)

A tender opportunity has arisen to provide consultancy services to the project Innovation Vouchers - 'helping businesses grow' at Aston University (www.innovation-vouchers.com).

About the project

The project promotes external knowledge sharing in business; it provides small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) with the opportunity to collaborate with external experts to gain new knowledge to help enterprises to innovate, develop and grow. The overall project aims to deliver 190 innovation vouchers (of either £1500 or £2500) to SMEs from within the Greater Birmingham and Solihull, Black Country and The Marches region of the UK. The breakdown of the 190 innovation vouchers is as follows:

- to support 100 businesses within Greater Birmingham and Solihull (of which 10 are from the transitional area) 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 (of which 7 are from the more developed area) across the following priority sectors: Defence & Securities, Advanced Engineering, Environmental Technologies & Services, Renewable Energy, Water Technology and Food & Drink.

The project also aims to assist enterprises to improve their innovation processes via workshops that provide innovation advice. The project aimed to support a minimum of 62 businesses through the provision of workshops across all three target geographies.

Overall objective of the consultancy services

Key aspects of the evaluation includes consideration of efficiency, effectiveness and value for money as well as insights into which interventions work. The evaluator must ensure that the research considers the following themes:

- The relevance and consistency of the project in light of any changes in policy or economic circumstances during the delivery period.
- Progress of the project against contractual targets, including reasons for under or over performance along with the expected lifetime results.
- The experience of implementing and managing the project and any lessons which have emerged from this.
- Assessing value for money - the evaluation must analyse the cost-effectiveness of the project in light of its intended and unintended outcomes and impacts. The economic impact attributable to the project, including both the intended and actual outcomes and impact. Table 1 lists the Outputs and Impacts included in the original Summative Assessment Logic model. We would expect the evaluation to consider these and any other outcomes and impacts generated by the project.
- Lessons for the future - the evaluator needs to consider whether any changes are required to deliver the Innovation Vouchers project successfully in the future.

Table 1: Outcomes and Impacts projected for the Innovation Vouchers listed in the Summative Assessment Logic Model

Intended Impacts	Intended Outcomes
Behaviour Change - to improve management of Innovation in the business	Knowledge from project workshops put into practice
Improved quality and efficiency of products and services	Implementation of the Innovation Project plan
Improve existing business and manufacturing processes	Did the business develop an innovation strategy plan and was this implemented?
Business Growth	
Gross GVA	

The evaluator will be expected to use both qualitative and quantitative research methods to collate the research data required for the evaluation.

Timescale

A draft to be completed 30th April 2019 and the final evaluation to be completed by 24th May 2019.

Tender Specification

To be considered for this tender opportunity, we require you to submit a quote to demonstrate how you will deliver services against the points listed below. We do not expect to receive quotes in excess of 6-pages of A4. The primary aspect in the tender is that you demonstrate that you are able to complete a project evaluation. Of key significance, the ERDF Summative Assessment evaluation approach needs to be considered in your methodology.

Your Quote

Please describe/provide;

- 1) The methodology that you will use to achieve the research objectives as listed above. Please detail in particular:
 - How you will make contact with the SME's to engage them in the research. Please discuss this in relation to both the Innovation Voucher and workshop beneficiaries.
 - How you will analyse the data for SMEs in the specified LEP regions for both the innovation vouchers and the workshops
 - How you are going to generate information and feedback from the project team and partner universities
- 2) Show previous experience of engaging with SME's to obtain research data/information.
- 3) Demonstrate knowledge of ERDF and previous experience of completing evaluations for ERDF projects
- 4) Include a breakdown of costs (stating VAT where applicable). Where you are conducting direct research with beneficiaries please indicate your costs on a unit (per company) basis.
- 5) You will be paid one third on commissioning, a third on completion of the draft report and a third on satisfactory completion of the final report.
- 6) 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 by 5pm on Monday 17th December 2018. You will be notified of the outcome of the tender review process no later than close of business Wednesday 9th January 2019.

Terms of Reference

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 (European Structural and Investment Funds 2014 to 2020).

Tender threshold

The value of the full contract will not exceed £24,000 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) Quality of methodology proposed: 40%
- c) Knowledge of ERDF and track-record of delivering project evaluations: 30% weighting

Payment Conditions

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

Important: All invoices must include a Purchase Order number to be considered for payment.