

UK Freeports Evaluation

Description:

We are looking for monitoring and evaluation specialists to design and carry out the evaluation of the UK Freeports Programme. This will involve, but not be limited to, the feasibility study, developing a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework/associated products, carrying out baseline studies prior to Freeports becoming operational, and carrying out the evaluation. As part of this contract, we also expect an on-going policy learning and uptake element to be embedded from the onset and throughout the evaluation. Suppliers should pay particular attention to this aspect and may want to consider potential consortium partners to fulfil this requirement.

The supplier will provide M&E support to Freeports and be expected to work closely with the Cities and Local Growth Unit's (CLGU) Funding Delivery Directorate and other Government Departments to ensure a rigorous and robust evaluation of the programme.

As Freeports is a highly novel, flagship Government policy, robust monitoring and evaluation will be key to fully evaluate and evidence the impact of the policy. It will also be key in addressing common criticisms of the policy. As the Government has learnt from other programmes, it is crucial that programme level M&E is built into the delivery of Freeports from the outset to ensure a strong evaluation. As outlined in the [Bidding Prospectus](#), the UK Freeport model aims to achieve three objectives:

- Objective 1: Establish Freeports as national hubs for global trade and investment across the UK
- Objective 2: Promote regeneration and job creation – our lead policy objective
- Objective 3: Create hotbeds for innovation

Thus, the M&E of Freeports must consider these objectives in full and use them as the basis for any evaluation design. The supplier must ensure M&E of the Freeports is in line with the Magenta Book 2020 and include a combination of Process, Impact and Value of Money Evaluation. We have developed an overarching approach for the potential supplier to focus on:

- KPIs and data sources that allow us to track progress against the policy and objectives.
- A holistic and rigorous evaluation of Freeports impacts (Impact Evaluation) will evaluate to what extent are the outcomes attributed to Freeports genuinely additional, while also assessing whether each objective has been achieved.
- A theory-based evaluation to help us understand how and why the policy had the impacts it did (including the role of different levers). This could enable statistical methods to be used to understand specific impacts for future policy

The initial contract is for one year. A contract continuation is dependent on future funding being sought at the Spending Review. If funding is secured, it is expected the contract will continue for up to 4-5 years. Work in year 1 of the contract will primarily focus on the following key deliverables: Developing the M&E framework and Evaluation Design; M&E guidance to Freeports; conducting baseline studies; providing M&E support to Freeports and HMG; proactive learning and engagement activities. Future years, we would expect the supplier to carry out on-going M&E data collection; conduct interim/ outcome/ final evaluations; annual reviews and lessons learnt exercises; continuation of M&E support to Freeports and HMG as well as, further policy learning and engagement activities.

Background:

- *In the 2021 Budget, the UK Government announced the development of 8 Freeports across England. These are: East Midlands Airport, Felixstowe and Harwich (Freeport East), Humber, Liverpool City, Plymouth, Solent, Thames and Teesside. The UK Government remains committed to establishing at least one Freeport in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales as soon as possible.*
- *The UK's new bespoke, flexible Freeports model elevates the traditional Freeports model seen in the EU, and in the UK prior to 2012, by implementing a wide variety of policy levers including; tax reliefs, zero stamp duty, full rebates for construction and machinery investment, five years of zero business rates, and lower tariffs and customs obligations. Freeports will be able to take advantage of the government's longer-term planning reforms to support redevelopment and regeneration. They will also have access to tailored trade and investment support, innovation measures and seed capital funding. Further information on the policy levers can be found in the Bidding Prospectus, published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).*
- *The Government is actively working the Freeports to support the delivery of the policy. The 8 English Freeports are likely to be operational in different stages from Autumn 2021.*