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REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

FOR

SO17327

**EVALUATION OF THE ENGLAND 2014-2020 EUROPEAN
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (ERDF)**

FOR

**THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ('DCLG')**



**Request for Information
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1. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) SCOPE

- 1.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government or 'DCLG' (from here on referred to as "The Authority") seeks to offer and receive information in preparation for the potential procurement of one or more Suppliers (from here on referred to as "Potential Providers") to provide services in relation to the evaluation of the England European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) 2014-2020.
- 1.2 The current intention is to run two separate competitive tender processes - one for a scoping study and one for a national evaluation. The Authority intends to procure the first competitive tender exercise in June 2016. It is intended that the National Evaluation would be commissioned early in 2017/18.
- 1.3 The purpose of this RFI is to:
- 1.3.1 Provide advance notice of the high level requirements for a scoping study and a national evaluation for consideration by the market;
 - 1.3.2 Help define the requirement(s), and their duration;
 - 1.3.3 Help provide a better understanding of the feasibility of the requirement(s);
 - 1.3.4 Understand the inter-dependencies between the scoping study and the national evaluation and how to manage them;
 - 1.3.5 Understand the capacity of the market to deliver the requirement(s) and possible risks involved;
 - 1.3.6 Inform the timetable and budget(s);
 - 1.3.7 Set out the proposed procurement route(s), anticipated conditions for participation and indicative key dates;
 - 1.3.8 Understand the initial level of interest within the market; and
 - 1.3.9 Provide the market with an opportunity to ask questions, raise queries and any issues to be addressed at an early stage.
- 1.4 The Authority is seeking written feedback on the areas specified in sections 4 to 6 by asking Potential Providers to respond to the questions asked in section 8 in the timescales specified in section 9. The Authority will also be holding a Supplier Day on 10th May 15:00-17:00 with some opportunity for 1-2-1 sessions from 17:00-18:00. Due to space constraints, the Authority may need to limit this to 2 people per organisation (This will be offered on a first come first served basis). Potential Providers are required to confirm whether they would be interested in attending the Supplier Day and whether they require a 1-2-1 session. This should be done by emailing Frances Dickson at Niche@crowncommercial.gov.uk by 16:00 on Wednesday 4th May.
- 1.5 Potential Providers are asked to advise if they would be interested in bidding for these potential opportunities as part of their response to this RFI. If Potential Providers are not interested, it is requested that a reason be submitted as this is valuable feedback for the Authority to consider.



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1.6 The Authority has not specified a format for the detailed response as this can limit creativity and make it difficult to understand. Potential Providers are therefore freely available to present information in their desired format.

2. BACKGROUND TO ERDF MONITORING AND EVALUATION

2.1 The Authority is the Managing Authority (MA) for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programme in England. The England ERDF Operational Programme (OP) 2014-2020 is described in Annex 1 of this RFI.

2.2 There will be three elements to the monitoring and evaluation of the OP:

2.2.1 The ERDF indicators as a measure of performance and for monitoring the ERDF fund spend and implementation;

2.2.2 Summative Assessments, conducted by the projects themselves according to a format prescribed by the MA. These will feed into the central process and impact evaluations and help validate the indicators; and

2.2.3 An independent, centrally conducted, national process and impact evaluation.

2.3 The Authority is required by the European Commission (EC) Regulations to carry out evaluations during the programming period to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the England 2014-2020 OP. This is described in the Common Provision Regulations (EU) No 1303/2013.¹

2.4 The Authority is required to conduct an independent evaluation of the OP at the end of the funding period when impacts should be realised. The proposed evaluation of the England ERDF 2014-2020 OP aims to understand:

2.4.1 The process of implementation and delivery of the projects and programmes funded through the ERDF programme;

2.4.2 If and how this has directly resulted in outcomes and impact; and

2.4.3 Whether this has delivered value for money.

2.5 The National Evaluation will contribute to the EC's synthesis report outlining the main conclusions of the ex-post evaluations from all member states. The requirement does not include the ex-ante evaluation of the OP for the next programming period.

2.6 Monitoring and evaluation will also inform the Annual Implementation Reports which the Authority must submit to the EC.

2.7 High level examples of questions for the National Evaluation include:

2.7.1 Is there a difference in outcomes on each of the ERDF priorities before and after implementation of the ERDF programme?

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32013R1303>



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- 2.7.2 Did the OP achieve its stated Specific Objectives?
- 2.7.3 Which aspects of the programme (from process evaluation) seem to have led to an observed outcome?
- 2.7.4 Where sufficient levels of data are available, did any changes in outcomes vary across different individuals, partners, sections of society (sub-groups), Local Enterprise Partnerships and, if so, how did they compare with what was anticipated?
- 2.7.5 Did any outcomes occur which were not originally intended, and if so, what and how significant were they?
- 2.8 Evaluations of the programme level business processes could be conducted at an early stage to establish if the processes can be improved in the second part of the programme. A second review towards the end of the programme would inform the next round of ERDF.
- 3. BACKGROUND TO THE REQUIREMENT(S)**
- 3.1 The Authority is intending to undertake two competitive tender exercises for evaluation of the England ERDF Operational Programme (OP) 2014-2020. This RFI sets out the anticipated key requirements and logistics for these potential forthcoming competitive tender exercises. A more detailed specification(s) will be issued on commencement of the competitive tender exercise(s), as part of the invitation(s) to tender (ITT). The Authority reserves the right to amend the route to market as described in this RFI, adjust the stated timetables or remove the requirement(s) completely.
- 3.2 Subject to confirmation following pre-market engagement, it is envisaged that the requirement will be procured via two separate competitive tender exercises.
- 3.3 This first competitive tender exercise will comprise the Scoping Study and Summative Assessment Support. This will scope the National Evaluation, including design of the Summative Assessments over the programme period, and provide support for Summative Assessments.
- 3.4 The aim of this first tender is to avoid delays to projects in setting out effective logic models and recording suitable baselines, while allowing the Authority time to properly scope the National Evaluation.
- 3.5 It is envisaged that the outcomes from this first competitive tender exercise would be used to inform the specification for the second competitive tender exercise to procure the National Evaluation.
- 3.6 The requirements for the first competitive tender exercise are presented in the following sections: the Scoping Study (section 4), the element of the Scoping Study that is concerned with design of Summative Assessments (section 5), and support for Summative Assessments (section 6).



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4. SCOPING STUDY

- 4.1 Before the Authority commissions the National Evaluation, there is a need to identify cost-effective and feasible options for the design of this evaluation. Although the Authority has set out an initial evaluation plan, outlining a range of methods which might be used depending upon their feasibility and cost, the Scoping Study will identify costed and timetabled options, with specific requirements. This will support the Authority in setting out the requirements for the ITT for the National Evaluation to be commissioned early in 2017/2018.
- 4.2 The Scoping Study will need to explore the pros and cons of different approaches, and take account of:
- 4.2.1 The diversity of projects;
 - 4.2.2 The need to inform delivery of the programme early in the period, demonstrate results/impact towards the end of the period, and inform the focus and delivery of ERDF in the next programme period;
 - 4.2.3 The requirement to evaluate each of 9 priority axes, horizontal principles of sustainability and equal opportunities, and territorial dimensions including findings at LEP level (see Annex 2 of this RFI);
 - 4.2.4 The potentially rich evidence that could be collected through project Summative Assessments; and
 - 4.2.5 The feasibility, value and costs of potential methods for process and impact evaluation. This might include: data linkage using a range of data sets/business registers and longitudinal analysis; case studies; interviews; and surveys of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.
- 4.3 SMART objectives are attached in Annex 2 of this RFI. The Authority also seeks innovation in evaluation design or methods; ambition in meeting the complex evaluation requirements; expertise in research related to ERDF objectives; and to develop the capacity to understand the contribution of ERDF beyond the programme period or in combination with related government interventions. In scoping the National Evaluation, the Successful Provider will need to focus on each of the priority axes and specific objectives under these, drawing on expertise as required.
- 4.4 The Successful Provider will be required to explore the potential to use business registers including the ONS Business Structures Database (from the IDBR), and to develop approaches for impact evaluation with suitable counterfactuals. It is anticipated that the Scoping Study will include hands-on investigation of databases to explore their suitability and potential. The Scoping Study should also explore the feasibility, costs and potential benefits of matching the ERDF data to programme data held within other departments including BIS, DECC and Defra, and analysis of the interaction between ERDF and other programmes. While the purpose of this work is to scope the National Evaluation of ERDF during the programme period, the Authority will also be interested in the feasibility, costs and benefits of measuring long term outcomes using such registers.



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4.5 The Scoping Study will include design of the Summative Assessments which ERDF-funded projects are required to complete over the programme period, and setting the expectations of projects of what will be required. It is intended that the Successful Provider will liaise with the Authority and its Growth Delivery Teams (GDTs)² in the design of the framework and methodology for Summative Assessments.

5. DESIGN OF SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

5.1 Each ERDF funded project will have agreed to undertake a summative assessment of their project according to a common framework and methodology which will be provided by the Authority.

5.2 Each ERDF project is required to spend 1 per cent of its funding on summative assessment, up to a maximum of £100k. This represents a considerable source of evidence on the outcomes and impacts achieved by these projects which can inform the National Evaluation. The amount being spent by projects on summative assessment would therefore be £5k for the smallest projects, averaging £15k per project and up to a maximum of £100k for the largest projects of over £10m.

5.3 The Authority envisages the Scoping Study will set out the design of the Summative Assessment common framework and methodology. An early output will be documents which communicate to projects and GDTs what will be required of project summative assessments over the Programme period. This will allow projects to meet the immediate and short-term requirements and plan for the longer-term needs. Further details could be developed over the programme period as part of the National Evaluation.

5.4 The Scoping Study will determine the indicators to be collected through Summative Assessment. By way of context, the Authority will produce reports on at least a quarterly basis – at national, GDT and LEP area level - on progress against the Operational Programme output targets to demonstrate the extent to which the specific investment objectives of the Priority Axes have been met. (These indicators have been selected by the Managing Authority from the Common Set provided by the European Commission with additional Programme-specific indicators where appropriate.) At project level progress against these output targets will sit alongside their requests for reimbursement of expenditure (“claims”). It is for projects to decide when they make these claims but it is usually on a quarterly basis.

5.5 In addition to these output targets, the Scoping Study will identify sets of additional indicators which projects need to report on as part of their Summative Assessment. It will also set out what details of supported businesses will be needed to support the National Evaluation. (Many ERDF-funded projects will support businesses directly, though some will focus on infrastructure.)

5.6 The Authority seeks indicators which can be reported consistently to allow evaluation of projects in line with the SMART objectives outlined in Annex 2 of this RFI. Where

² The local growth delivery teams are responsible for managing delivery of ERDF in their respective areas. This work includes developing calls for projects, assessing applications, approving grant funding agreements and monitoring projects that are receiving funding.



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possible, the Authority also seeks indicators at the level of the supported businesses that align with the Results Targets in the OP. The Summative Assessment will be one of the means of collecting such data on projects and their supported businesses.

- 5.7 The Scoping Study will specify the project-level indicators for each Priority Axis and Specific Objective that must be collected through the Summative Assessments. This is expected to be a wide set of indicators to provide information on the success or otherwise of these diverse interventions, and would include indicators at project level and also for supported businesses. The Successful Provider should explore the potential for the National Evaluation to derive counterfactual evidence using these indicators, and set out the means to do so.

6. SUPPORT FOR SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 There is also a requirement to support projects that have already signed Grant Funding Agreements (GFAs) in undertaking the initial stages of their summative assessment. Projects will continue to come on stream over 2016 but by the end of the year approximately 300-400 projects will have signed contracts.
- 6.2 It is likely that the support to projects will be delivered by the GDTs, and the Successful Provider will be required to build the capacity of the GDTs to deliver this, and to provide training and guidance as required. The number of staff involved is approximately 100 and there are six teams located in a number of offices across England.
- 6.3 In 2016/17 the support which would be required is expected to comprise the following, which is detailed further below:
- 6.3.1 Support to GDTs to help projects in setting out their logic models;
 - 6.3.2 Implementing requirements arising from the Scoping Study for projects to collect suitable baseline data against which the Authority will be measuring project outcomes; and
 - 6.3.3 Supporting projects, via GDTs, to deliver quality baseline data for use in the National Evaluation.
- 6.4 It is proposed that the requirement for projects to produce logic models be embedded into the appraisal process³. This process is led by the GDTs working with the projects before Grant Funding Agreements are signed. The Successful Provider would be required to work with the Authority to establish whether and how best to embed logic models within the existing work of GDTs in project appraisal, and to provide appropriate guidance.
- 6.5 On completion of the contract for the Scoping Study and Summative Assessment Support, the expectation is that ongoing direction and support for projects' Summative Assessments over the remainder of the programme period would be provided under

³ Project appraisal being the assessment the GDT carries out on a project's full application; it is the stage before the Grant Funding Agreement is signed.



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the separate requirement for the National Evaluation – again, working through the GDTs.

Specific requirements of Summative Assessment Support

- 6.6 From summer 2016 until the commencement of the Scoping Study, the first stage of the framework for Summative Assessment will be issued by the Authority. Projects that have signed a Grant Funding Agreement will be asked to take timely steps to set out a logic model, and identify potentially relevant indicators against which their success will be measured at the end of the period. The guidance for this requirement is being piloted with a view to the guidance being fully rolled out in early July.
- 6.7 Projects will record their logic model and suggestions for potential indicators. A data application is not yet in place and initial returns will be in Excel spread sheets. (This is discussed further in the subsection on the Summative Assessments database.)
- 6.8 At this stage, indicators are not being finalised and there is no requirement at present on projects to collect baseline measures. Projects will put forward their own proposals for indicators of their own performance. The Successful Provider will review these as part of the Scoping Study: sense checking/assessing feasibility of gathering common sets of indicators, and standardising as far as possible any project-specific indicators proposed (see further details on this below). The Successful Provider will then – as part of Summative Assessment Support – communicate the requirement for projects to collect baselines for the common and project-specific indicators. This communication would require development of guidance and, depending on the process established for supporting projects, providing training to GDT colleagues.
- 6.9 Subsequent stages of the summative assessment design and support will be led and conducted by the Successful Provider. Within the period of this contract, the Authority anticipates the following requirements:
- 6.9.1 Continue to issue guidance produced by the Authority on the first stage of the framework (including logic models), revising guidance to reflect the needs of projects and of the Growth Delivery Teams which work with them;
 - 6.9.2 Sense check the indicators proposed by projects against Scoping Study proposals for project-level indicators for each Priority Axis and Specific Objective;
 - 6.9.3 Identify requirements for collecting details of supported businesses in line with other existing ERDF processes;
 - 6.9.4 Design the framework and methodology for Summative Assessment over the whole Programme period – although this will be subject to further detailed development in stages, this must be sufficiently complete to allow projects to plan their evaluation resources and activity and commission professional evaluation services if desired. The framework and methodology must be coherent with Scoping Study options for the National Evaluation.
 - 6.9.5 Inform projects of the requirement for the Programme period;



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- 6.9.6 Issuing requirements for indicators as part of the framework, and requesting baseline data;
 - 6.9.7 Build the capacity of Growth Delivery Teams to ensure the Summative Assessment framework can be successfully implemented, including effective communication of, and consultation on, the requirement.
 - 6.9.8 Provide training and support to Growth Delivery Teams so they can support projects in producing logic models or proposing indicators, and can assess the logic models submitted by projects for robustness. This could test whether projects have set out a clear pathway to achieving the anticipated results in the programme period following ERDF funding and have anticipated the risks to this. The extent of checking and nature of any interventions is to be determined;
 - 6.9.9 Embed the requirement for a project logic model into the GDT's Appraisal process;
 - 6.9.10 Design and implement interventions to improve compliance and quality of logic models or of baseline data if needed;
 - 6.9.11 Establish a short-term means to gather and store summative assessment data. The data must be fit for integration into the department's (developing) in-house application. (See below)
 - 6.9.12 Make recommendations for ongoing support or further development of the framework to inform the role of the Growth Delivery Teams and requirement for the National Evaluation;
 - 6.9.13 Handover to the Successful Provider for the National Evaluation.
- 6.10 The volume of work in the period of this contract will reflect the numbers of projects signing their funding agreements, and the speed with which they return their logic models and indicator proposals. Projects will continue to come on stream over 2016 but by the end of the year approximately 300-400 projects will have signed contracts. Projects will be given 4 weeks within which to provide their logic model, which will in part reflect a concise summary of their application for funding. Estimates of the spread of projects coming online over the full programming period is set out at Annex 3 of this RFI. It should be noted that projects last 3 years on average and as such final Summative Assessments are unlikely to start being produced until 2018/19.
- 6.11 There are further ways in which the Authority envisages the details collected from the Summative Assessments can contribute to the delivery of the OP and the subsequent National Evaluation (process and impact evaluations) and these should be explored during the Scoping Study:
- 6.11.1 Checking and/or supporting projects to check they are on course to deliver;
 - 6.11.2 Compliance checks that activities are being delivered.



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- 6.11.3 Gather early feedback as part of the process evaluation, to improve delivery of the OP;
- 6.11.4 Identifying case studies for process and impact evaluation; and
- 6.11.5 Identifying final beneficiaries of ERDF projects for process and impact evaluation.

The Summative Assessments database

- 6.12 The Authority proposes to develop an IT application in-house which will capture information over the programme period on each of the approximately 1,600 recipients of ERDF funding from their Summative Assessments. This would capture the logic models, suggested indicators, baseline outcome data, and further information over the Programme period at the project and supported business level. Each project will submit the information using an online application. The ambition is this will become part of an integrated application which includes the in-house system used for all monitoring, payments and reporting for ERDF.
- 6.13 However before the development of this system, a short-term approach may be required from the Successful Provider to support the first tranche of projects that have signed their Grant Funding Agreements. Data will then be migrated to the in-house application. The Authority seeks advice on a short-term, simple solution to capturing data that could be readily integrated into the new system when that is available. As stated earlier, returns from the first tranche of projects will initially be in Excel spread sheets, but the Successful Provider could allow for on-line submission by projects.

7. THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS

Tendering Process

- 7.1 The Authority is considering procuring the requirement for the Scoping Study and Summative Assessment Support via the UKSBS Research & Evaluation Framework Provider Matrix: against *either* Lot 3 Programme and Pilot Evaluation or Lot 4 Comparative Evaluation (<http://ccs-agreements.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/contracts/rm1086-mr130001>), and in accordance with the Procurement Contract Regulations. However, this request for information is going out to the wider market to help inform this decision. The National Evaluation may also be procured using the UKSBS Research & Evaluation Framework Provider Matrix: Lot 3 Programme and Pilot Evaluation. The Authority reserves the right to amend the considered approach if required.
- 7.2 The ITT will be issued via the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) eSourcing suite, which can be found at <https://gpsesourcing.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sso/jsp/login.jsp>. Potential Providers should ensure they are registered on the portal as soon as possible, and any Potential Providers already registered will need to ensure their profile is up to date.
- 7.3 The basis on which tenders will be evaluated and the terms that will apply will be set out in the ITT(s). A contract will ultimately be awarded on the basis of the most



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economically advantageous tender with regards to quality and cost. The Authority reserves the right to amend, or not proceed to procurement.

Duration and Anticipated Tendering Dates

- 7.4 The duration of the contract for the Scoping Study and Summative Assessment Support is expected to be 8-9 months, starting by August 2016.
- 7.5 Delivery of milestones for the Scoping Study will be expected to be completed in 4-5 months from contract commencement. The summative assessment support is expected to be for 8-9 months, starting in August 2016 until the contract for the National Evaluation is in place.
- 7.6 It is anticipated that the National Evaluation would be tendered in February 2017 for appointment early in 2017/18 and would run until 2022/23.
- 7.7 The intended timetable for the Scoping Study and Summative Assessment Support is as follows:

DATE	ACTIVITY
June 2016	Issue of ITT
July 2016 (3 weeks)	Deadline for submission of tenders
August 2016	Contract award decision
August 2016	Contract commencement
October 2016	Framework for Summative Assessment delivered
December 2017 (4-5 months)	Scoping Study final milestone
April 2017 (8-9 months)	Summative Assessment Support handover to National Evaluation

Project Management Structures

- 7.8 The Successful Provider(s) should have clear project management arrangements and lines of control. The Authority will require the Successful Provider to nominate a dedicated project leader with on-going commitment to the project as it proceeds, and to work with the Authority and project lead for other requirements. That project leader will be responsible for managing all aspects of the work of any sub-contractors, and for working productively and openly with other Providers. The Successful Provider's project team will be expected to hold full authority to command adequate resource levels from within the organisation and any of their named sub-contractors.

8. INFORMATION REQUIRED

The Authority requires Potential Providers to submit written responses to the following questions by email to Frances Dickson at Niche@crowcommercial.gov.uk. It is not mandatory to respond to this RFI and your organisation will not be prejudiced in any way should no response be provided. Any responses received will be used for information purposes only:

- 8.1.1 Please confirm whether you are interested in attending the supplier day at 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF at **3-5pm Tuesday 10th May**. Where



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your views are commercially sensitive, there will be scope for a limited amount of one-to-one discussion with the Authority's analysts responsible for commissioning from 5-6pm, and you will also be able to submit written feedback following the supplier day. Please confirm the names of the attendees from your organisation, due to space constraints the Authority may need to limit this to 2 people per organisation due to a space capacity of 45 people; this should be done by emailing Frances Dickson at Niche@crowncommercial.gov.uk by **16:00 on Wednesday 4th May**.

8.1.2 Please confirm whether you are interested in:

8.1.2.1 Delivering the requirements for the Scoping Study:

8.1.2.2 Delivering the requirements for the National Evaluation; or

8.1.2.3 Delivering the requirements for both the Scoping Study and the National Evaluation.

Please note this is for information only and you will not be committed to submitting a tender;

8.1.3 If you are not interested in delivering the requirements described in this RFI, please briefly outline why, noting that this will not preclude you from submitting a bid should you subsequently choose to do so;

8.2 All information submitted by Potential Provider shall be kept for audit purposes until 2025.

8.3 Section 1 outlined the purpose of this RFI. The following table identifies specific questions, linked to the requirements outlined in this RFI.



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<p>Q1 Section 3: Proposals for 2 competitive tenders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Authority seeks advice on defining responsibilities between the Scoping Study and National Evaluation: b) What are the benefits and issues to consider in defining these as separate competitive tender exercises as we have done? c) How can the Authority manage the phasing and inter-dependencies/linkages between them? d) What will be required to ensure clearly demarcated responsibilities/deliverables between them? e) What issues should be anticipated for the handover to and any overlaps with National Evaluation? f) Are there any IPR, data protection issues we should plan for? g) With regard to the proposal to transfer responsibility for supporting Summative Assessments across two competitive tenders, are there any alternative approaches which the Authority should consider?
<p>Q2 Section 3: Remits of the respective tenders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The first competitive tender comprises different elements including scoping, support for summative assessments and a possible short-term database. Can these be fulfilled under a single contract? b) The Scoping Study is expected to set out the detailed requirement for the National Evaluation. Are there any things that should be left to the National Evaluation? c) Is it feasible and desirable for the Scoping Study to detail the bulk of the requirement for summative assessment prior to the National Evaluation? d) Are there other tasks which should be commissioned prior to the National Evaluation? e) The Authority invites further views on the proposal for the National Evaluation, and which might help shape the first competitive tender exercise
<p>Q3 Section 7: Tendering Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) What are your views on the proposed routes to commissioning (the Framework Agreements)? b) Will the proposed routes permit you to bring the right expertise on board – particularly in light of the diverse ERDF objectives?
<p>Q4: Section 7: Duration and milestones</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Are the objectives of the Scoping Study including design of the Summative Assessment deliverable within the suggested timetable? b) The Scoping Study must deliver the framework and methodology for Summative Assessments, and set requirements for indicators. Section 5 explains that an early output is required to communicate this to projects and GDTs. How early in the scoping study can this be delivered?



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<p>Q5</p> <p>Sections 7: Timetable</p>	<p>a) Do you foresee any issues with the timetable for commencing the National Evaluation?</p> <p>b) Is there sufficient overlap proposed between the two contracts?</p>
<p>Q6</p> <p>Sections 4 to 6 Budget</p>	<p>a) The Authority seeks advice on appropriate budgets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scoping Study including design of the Summative Assessments • Summative Assessment Support • The National Evaluation, outlining broadly the differences in approach if giving a range <p>b) What further information might help support your costings for the first competitive tender?</p>
<p>Q7</p> <p>Sections 4 and 5: Scoping Study Summative Assessment design: Methodology/design</p>	<p>a) Are there any specific challenges associated with the evaluation approach outlined thus far; can they be mitigated?</p> <p>b) Are any of the suggested approaches considered infeasible, and should therefore be ruled out?</p> <p>c) The Authority invites advice on the feasibility for collecting details of businesses, and the potential to use these to support counterfactual analysis.</p> <p>d) Are there other methods the Authority consider?</p> <p>e) Are there ways, including through governance structures, that the Authority can encourage innovation and ambition?</p>
<p>Q8</p> <p>Section 4: Scoping Business registers and data linkage</p>	<p>a) The Authority has requested exploration of business registers and linking ERDF programme data to them. What would be the relative additional cost, and benefits, of also adding data from programmes in other departments as proposed?</p> <p>b) What other databases could be relevant for impact evaluation including counterfactuals?</p> <p>c) To what extent can hands-on exploration of datasets bring benefits to the scoping exercise?</p> <p>d) What if any data access issues are likely? How can they be mitigated?</p>
<p>Q9</p> <p>Section 6: Summative Assessment Support</p>	<p>a) The Authority seeks feedback on whether it is suitable to deliver support via GDTs, or whether, some or all support should be delivered direct to projects.</p> <p>b) What arrangements will facilitate the Successful Provider working effectively with the GDTs?</p>



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Q10 Section 6: Summative Assessment Support Database	a) We seek advice on a short-term, simple solution to capturing data that could be readily integrated into the new system when that is available. b) How feasible is it to produce this within the summative assessment support remit, to what timescale and cost? c) What information would Potential Suppliers need to know about the Authority's proposals to develop the in-house system?
Q 11	a) What further information would be helpful to allow you to respond to the ITT for the Scoping Study and Summative Assessment Support?
Q12	a) Is there anything further you would like to add?



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9. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION TIMETABLE

9.1 Please see below for the RFI's timetable:

DATE	ACTIVITY
Friday 29 th April 2016	Publication of the RFI
Friday 29 th April 2016	Clarification period starts
16:00 Wednesday 4 th May 2016	Clarification period closes
16:00 Wednesday 4 th May 2016	Deadline to request a place at the Supplier Day
17:00 Thursday 5 th May 2016	Deadline for the publication of responses to RFI Clarification questions
09:00 Monday 9 th May 2016	Deadline for submission of a RFI Response
Monday 9 th and Tuesday 10 th May 2016	Analysis of RFI responses
Tuesday 10 th May 3-5pm (to 6 pm) 2016	Supplier Day to be held at 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF
Monday 16 th May 2016	Deadline for submission of final written feedback to Niche@crownccommercial.gov.uk

10. CLARIFICATION PERIOD

- 10.1 Potential Providers may raise questions or seek clarification regarding any aspect of this RFI at any time prior to the Clarification Deadline. Questions must be submitted via email to Niche@crownccommercial.gov.uk before the deadline within section 9.
- 10.2 CCS will not enter into exclusive discussions regarding the requirements of this RFI with Potential Providers.
- 10.3 To ensure that all Potential Providers have equal access to information regarding this RFI, CCS will publish all its responses to questions raised by Potential Provider's on an anonymous basis.
- 10.4 Responses will be published in a Questions and Answers document to all Potential Providers who have registered their interest.

11. COSTS

- 11.1 The Authority will not reimburse any costs incurred by Potential Providers (including the costs or expenses of any members of its Group of Economic Operators (if acting as a Lead Contact), Sub-Contractors or advisors) in connection with the preparation and/or submission of the Potential Provider's RFI response, including (without limit) where:
- 11.1.1 The RFI is cancelled, shortened or delayed for any reason (including, without limitation, where such action is necessary due to non-compliance or potential non-compliance with the law, including the Regulations);
- 11.1.2 All or any part of the RFI is at any time amended, clarified, added to or withdrawn for any reason; and



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- 11.1.3 The Potential Provider and/or its Respondent is disqualified from participation in this RFI for any reason, including breach of these Terms of Participation.

12. RIGHT TO CANCEL OR VARY THIS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

- 12.1 The Authority reserves the right, subject to the rules set out in the Regulations, to:
- 12.1.1 Change the basis of or the procedures for this RFI at any time;
 - 12.1.2 Amend, clarify, add to or withdraw all or any part of the RFI at any time, including varying any timetable or deadlines set out in the RFI; and
 - 12.1.3 Cancel all or part of this RFI at any stage and at any time.

13. RIGHT TO CONFIRM OR REQUEST UPDATED RFI INFORMATION

- 13.1 The Authority reserves the right to require Potential Providers to confirm that their RFI response remains accurate at all stages of the RFI process and/or to request updated Information.
- 13.2 The Authority also reserves the right to specify additional standards or requirements according to their particular requirements.

14. CONDUCT - SPECIFIC OBLIGATIONS

- 14.1 The Potential Provider must not directly or indirectly canvass any Minister, officer, public sector employee, member or agent regarding this RFI or attempt to obtain any information from the same regarding this RFI (except where and as permitted by the RFI). Any attempt by the Potential Provider to do so may result in the Potential Provider's disqualification from this RFI.

15. NOTICES TO POTENTIAL PROVIDERS

- 15.1 This RFI and any related documents referred to have been prepared by CCS on behalf of the Authority for the pre-market test to gather information.
- 15.2 Whilst prepared in good faith, the RFI documents are intended only as a preliminary background explanation of the Authority's activities and plans. Therefore it isn't intended to form the basis of any decision on whether to enter into any contractual relationship with the Authority.
- 15.3 The RFI documents do not purport to be all inclusive or to contain all of the information that Potential Provider's may require.
- 15.4 Neither the Authority or its advisors, or the directors, officers, partners, employees, other staff, agents or advisers of any such body or person:
- 15.4.1 Makes any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the RFI documents;
 - 15.4.2 Accepts any responsibility for the information contained in the RFI documents or for its fairness, accuracy or completeness; or
 - 15.4.3 Shall be liable for any loss or damage (other than in respect of fraudulent misrepresentation) arising as a result of reliance on such information or any subsequent communication.



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15.5 Nothing in the RFI documents is, or should be, relied upon as a promissory or a representation as to the Authority's ultimate decisions in relation to the RFI.

15.6 The publication of the RFI documents in no way commits the Authority to award any contract.

16. CONFIDENTIALITY

16.1 Subject to the exceptions referred to in paragraph 16.2, the contents of the RFI are being made available by the authority on the conditions that the Potential Provider:

16.1.1 Treats the RFI as confidential at all times, unless the information is already in the public domain;

16.1.2 Does not disclose, copy, reproduce, distribute or pass any of the Information to any other person at any time or allow any of these things to happen, except where, and to the extent that, the Information has been publicised in accordance with paragraph 15 (Freedom of Information);

16.1.3 Only uses the Information for the purposes of preparing a Response (or deciding whether to respond); and

16.1.4 Does not undertake any promotional or similar activity related to this RFI within any section of the media.

16.2 Potential Providers may disclose, distribute or pass any of the Information to its members of its Group of Economic Operators (if acting as a Lead Contact), Sub-Contractors, advisers or to any other person provided that:

16.2.1 This is done for the sole purpose of enabling the Potential Provider to submit its response and the person receiving the information undertakes in writing (such written undertaking to be made available to the Authority on the Authority's request) to keep the information confidential.

16.2.2 It obtains the Authority's prior written consent in relation to such disclosure, distribution or passing of Information;

16.2.3 The disclosure is made for the sole purpose of obtaining legal advice from external lawyers in relation to this RFI;

16.2.4 The Potential Provider is legally required to make such a disclosure; or

16.2.5 The information has been published in accordance with paragraph 15 (Freedom of Information).



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- 16.3 The Authority may disclose information submitted by Potential Providers during this RFI to its officers, employees, agents or advisers or other government departments who are stakeholders in this RFI.
- 16.4 All Central Government Departments and their Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government. In particular, they report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure.
- 16.5 Further, the Cabinet Office has a cross Government role delivering overall Government Policy on public procurement – including ensuring value for money and related aspects of good procurement practice.
- 16.5.1 For these purposes, the Authority may disclose within HM Government any of the Potential Provider's documentation or information (including any that the Potential Provider considers to be confidential and / or commercially sensitive such as specific information in its response) submitted by the Potential Provider to the Authority during this RFI. Potential Providers taking part in this RFI consent to such disclosure as part of their participation in the RFI process.

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

- 17.1 In accordance with the obligations and duties placed upon public authorities by the FoIA (Freedom of Information Act 2000) and the EIR (Environmental Information Regulations 2004) and in accordance with any Government Code of Practice on the discharge of public authorities' functions under the FoIA all information submitted to the Authority may be disclosed under a RFI made pursuant to the FoIA and the EIR.
- 17.2 Potential Providers should note that the information disclosed pursuant to a FoIA or EIR request may include, but is not limited to, the disclosure of its RFI response (including any attachments or embedded documents).
- 17.3 If the Potential Provider considers any part of its Response or any other information it submits to be confidential or commercially sensitive, the Potential Providers should:
- 17.3.1 Clearly identify such information as confidential or commercially sensitive;
- 17.3.2 Explain the potential implications of disclosure of such information taking into account and specifically addressing the public interest test as set out in the FoIA; and
- 17.3.3 Provide an estimate of the period of time during which it believes that such information will remain confidential or commercially sensitive.
- 17.4 If the Potential Provider identifies that part of its Response or other information it submits is confidential or commercially sensitive, the Authority in its sole discretion will consider whether or not to withhold such information from publication. Potential Providers should note that, even where information is identified as confidential or commercially sensitive, the Authority may be required to disclose such information in accordance with the FoIA or the EIR.
- 17.5 The Authority is required to form an independent judgement of whether the Potential Provider's information is exempt from disclosure under the FoIA or the EIR and whether the public interest favours disclosure or not. The Authority cannot guarantee



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that any information indicated as being confidential or commercially sensitive by the Potential Provider will be withheld from publication.

- 17.6 If the Potential Provider receives a RFI under the FoIA or the EIR during and in relation to this RFI, it should be immediately referred to the Authority.

18. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

- 18.1 The RFI issued shall remain the property of the Authority and shall be used by the Potential Provider only for the purposes of this RFI.

- 18.2 The Potential Provider grants the Authority an irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive licence to copy, amend and reproduce any intellectual property contained within its Response for the purposes of carrying out this RFI; complying with the law and/or any government guidance; and/or carrying out the Authority's business activities. This licence shall also permit the Authority to sublicense the use of the Potential Provider's Response to its advisers or sub-contractors or other Contracting Bodies for the same purposes.

19. NO INDUCEMENT OR INCENTIVE

- 19.1 The Potential Provider acknowledges and agrees that nothing contained within the RFI shall constitute an inducement or incentive nor shall have in any other way persuaded an Organisation to submit a Response or enter into any other contractual agreement.

20. LAW AND JURISDICTION

- 20.1 Any dispute (including non-contractual disputes or claims) relating to this RFI shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of England and Wales.

- 20.2 The courts of England and Wales shall have exclusive jurisdiction to settle any dispute or claim that arises out of or in connection with this RFI (including non-contractual disputes or claims).

21. CONTACT INFORMATION

Procurement Lead	
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Telephone Number:	020 7276 8640
Email Address:	Niche@crowncommercial.gov.uk
e-Sourcing Helpdesk	
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22. GLOSSARY

CCS	The Crown Commercial Service
DCLG	The Department for Communities and Local Government
EC	European Commission
EIR	Environmental Information Regulations 2004
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
EU	European Union
FoIA	Freedom of Information Act 2000
GDT	Growth Development Team
GFA	Grant Funding Agreement
IDBR	Inter-Departmental Business Register
ITIs	Integrated Territorial Investments
ITT	Invitation to Tender
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
MA	Managing Authority
OP	Operational Programme
PAs	Priority Axes
RFI	Request for Information
SME	Small and Medium sized Enterprises



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Annex 1 - England ERDF 2014-20 Operational Programme

DCLG ("The Authority") is the Managing Authority (MA) for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programme in England. The Authority was responsible for preparing the England 2014-20 Operational Programme (OP) setting out the national investment strategy for ERDF.

The European Regional Development Fund forms part of ESIF with £2.6 billion available to invest in projects in the current 2014-2020 programme. ERDF is a key funding instrument of EU Cohesion Policy which aims to promote economic, social and territorial cohesion across the whole territory of the European Union. Cohesion policy for the period 2014-2020 is strongly orientated towards results in order to contribute to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (Europe 2020 strategy).

It is anticipated that ERDF will distribute £2.6bn to approximately 1,750 projects supporting over 150,000 enterprises. The smallest projects range from £500k and the average project cost is £1.5m. The majority of projects and almost 85 per cent of ERDF funding will address 3 priority axes: 1, 3 and 4 (below).

Main priority axes

PA 1: Promoting research and innovation (22% of funding)

PA 3: Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs (40%)

PA 4: Supporting the shift towards a low carbon economy in all sectors (22%)

Priority axes with smaller allocations

PA 2: Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, ICT (3.8%)

PA 5: Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management (1.9%)

PA 6: Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency (3%)

PA 7: Sustainable transport In Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (1.6%)

PA 8: Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and any discrimination (1.4%)

PA 9: Technical Assistance (4%)

The OP was published in May 2015 and set out the socio-economic circumstances, investment priorities, indicators, targets and partnership and management arrangements for ERDF in England. An ex-ante evaluation (i.e. appraisal) was conducted prior to the approval of the OP.



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Annex 2 - The aims and SMART objectives of the evaluation

There is a requirement to evaluate each of the 9 Priority Axes (PAs) (see below), as well as horizontal themes, and territorial impacts, making this a wide-ranging and complex evaluation which will allow us to view projects through a variety of lenses.

There is a regulatory requirement⁴ to analyse results for each of the 9 Priority Axes (PAs). The Authority suggests the majority of the National Evaluation resources should be committed to the process and impact evaluations of the 3 main Priority Axes, (PAs on innovation, SME competitiveness and low carbon growth) to be evaluated separately, but approaches should be identified to evaluate the priority axes with smaller allocations (broadband, flood defences and the environment).

The Operational Programme (OP) includes specific tools and approaches designed to respond to different territorial needs. It will be important these are also assessed for effectiveness, efficiency and impact particularly to understand how investments under different Priority Axes have combined to have a greater impact on the territories' growth. This includes impact for:

- Categories of region (the less developed, transition and more developed regions);
- Sustainable Urban Development;
- Community Led Local Development;
- Integrated Territorial Investments (ITIs); and
- at the LEP area level.

Evaluations should be established in relation to Local Enterprise Partnership areas, since this is how the ERDF programme and economic development more generally is organised in England (rather than on the basis of EU categories of region).

There is also a need to assess the application of the horizontal principles of the promotion of equal opportunities and non-discrimination and of sustainable development, which will be embedded into the assessment and delivery of programme activities across all PAs.

⁴ Common Provisions Regulation Article 56(3)

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Annex 3 Summative Assessment Outcome Indicators

It is expected that there could be approximately 1,600 projects with Grant Funding Agreements by end of 2020.

During the period of the Scoping Study and Summative Assessment Support, it is anticipated that 300-400 projects will have signed up, and 100-150 will have proposed indicators by October 2016.

Figure 1

