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**SPECIFICATION**

**INVITATION TO TENDER – ITT\_30053**

**Employees Support in Skills**

* 35-003-00-01: Apprenticeship Services
* 35-003-00-02: Skills Support for the Workforce, Intermediate/Higher Skills Provision

**Thames Valley Berkshire LEP**

**DATE: May 2016**

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| **EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND - SPECIFICATION: Employees Support in Skills**   * 35-003-00-01: Apprenticeship Services * 35-003-00-02: Skills Support for the Workforce, Intermediate/Higher Skills Provision |
| BACKGROUND |
| **General**  The contracting authority is the Secretary of State for Business Innovation and Skills acting through the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), an executive agency of the Department for Business Innovation and Skills exercising functions to fund adult education and skills.  The SFA, acting as an Opt-In Organisation for the European Social Fund (ESF), is procuring education and training services to meet priorities identified by Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area European Structural and Investment Funds Sub–Committees. As an Opt-In Organisation the SFA provides match funding at Priority Axis level utilising sources of public funding as match for ESF funded activity.  This Invitation to Tender (ITT) is for Priority Axis 2 and for Investment Priority (IP) 2.1, enhancing equal access to lifelong learning. Where the need has been identified both in the LEP area and European Structural and Investment Fund Strategies.  The IP 2.1 supports equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences. Resources are being focused through this IP on people in the workforce who lack basic skills or qualifications needed for their career progression and for business growth and innovation in the knowledge economy.  The themes in 2.1 are:   * Skills Support for the Workforce, Intermediate/Higher Skills Provision * Apprenticeship Services   The SFA is looking to procure an organisation to deliver education and training that best support the needs of local employers and employees in the LEP area set out below.  **Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership Background**  In the context of an international economy that is increasingly driven by knowledge, the overarching priority of Thames Valley Berkshire (TVB) Local Enterprise Partnership is to secure better access to talented people and bright ideas and to use both more effectively. With regard to people, the TVB Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) identified three objectives. Within these objectives, drawing on evidence from the SEP and from the research undertaken to produce a Skills Priority Statement, we have identified a number of key priorities.  **Objective 1: Use better those who are already in the workforce**  Key priorities:   * Improving the management and leadership skills of those in the workforce * Improving the entrepreneurial, business development and innovation skills of those in the workforce * Improving the job-specific skills of those in the workforce * Improving the English and maths skills of those in the workforce   **Objective 2: Ensure that economic potential is not restricted by labour supply issues**  Key priorities:   * Improving the supply of people with digital technology skills * Improving the supply of people with Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) skills (particularly skills required of engineering professionals) * Improving the supply of people into technician-level roles (particularly in construction, logistics, care and hospitality sectors) * Improving the quality of the environment and cost of housing   **Objective 3: Inspire the next generation and build aspirations and ambition**  Key priorities:   * Improving engagement between employers and young people * Improving the labour market fortunes of unemployed and under-employed people     **Priority sectors and job families**  To ensure interventions are targeted effectively we have used a range of evidence to identify a number of priority sectors and job families for which we believe greatest focus should be given.  We have identified **six priority sectors** for the long-term sustainable economic growth of Berkshire, and, in addition, three sectors that are experiencing particularly acute skills challenges and therefore warrant attention.  We believe it is most sensible to identify skills solutions at an occupational level, as many occupations exist within multiple sectors. Therefore, across these priority sectors, we have identified **two primary priority job families** (groups of similar occupations), which we believe should be given greatest priority in terms of skills supply, and seven secondary priority job families for which we need to ensure a sustained supply of skills. These are listed below  **Priority (growth) sectors:**   * Digital technologies * Financial, professional and business services * Life sciences and healthcare * Construction and the built environment * Logistics * Energy and environment   **Other sectors with skills challenges:**   * Education * Hospitality * Care   **Primary priority job families:**   * Digital technologies * Engineering and science   **Secondary priority job families:**   * Health, care and welfare * Construction * Transport and logistics * Education * Business and finance * Sales and customer service * Hospitality   Further information can be found at [http://thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/Skills Priority Statement November 2015](http://thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/Portals/0/Thame%20Valley%20Berkshire%20Skills%20Priority%20Statement%20-%20November%202015.pdf) |
| **DEFINITION OF TERMS** |
| **At risk of Redundancy:** means Employees identified by the employer as at risk or redundancy and/or commenced formal consultation with staff representatives on the need to make redundancies  **Candidate:** means an organisation who has been invited to take part in this restricted procurement procedure  **Disability**: A person has a disability if they disclose a disability that limits their ability to work.  **Eligibility:** Only people who are eligible to work in UK are eligible for this EU programme.  **Employed**: People are employees if they perform work for pay, profit or family gain. People are self-employed if they work in his/her own business for the purpose of earning a profit, even if they are not making a profit or are just setting up.  **Micro Businesses:** This relates to organisations employing less than 10 Employees  **Qualifications:** Qualification means a formal outcome assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards. Regulated qualifications/aims are those listed in the Learning Aims Reference Service as being regulated. Non-regulated aims are those listed in the Learning Aims Reference Service as being non-regulated.  Regulated and non-regulated aims must be planned to be delivered within budget.  Qualification rates are based on the published LARS rates at the start of the contract.  **Services:** The provision of education, training or support delivered to individuals.  **Small and Medium sized Enterprises**: This applies to organisations employing less than 250 employees  **Start Date:** Employment status and age are determined on the date of starting on the Services.  **Survey**: Where applicable, long term sustained outcomes over 6 months will be monitored separately. Some ESF indicators will be collected by survey by the ESF Managing Authority directly from the participants.  **Unemployed:** Unemployed are persons usually without work, available for work and actively seeking work. Persons considered registered unemployed would be included. Full time students are considered as inactive but not eligible for this provision as they are not available for work. Long term unemployment is greater than 6 months for under 25 years old and greater than 12 months for 25 years old or more. |
| **SERVICE REQUIREMENTS** |
| **General Service Requirements**  All activities must complement and avoid duplication with other provision, thereby adding value to Department for Work and Pensions/Big Lottery, Education Funding Agency, Skills Funding Agency, local authority, National Careers Service and the new Careers Enterprise Company funded provision. Successful candidates will be required to ensure that ESF provision will clearly add value and not duplicate any provision that can be arranged locally through existing mainstream institutions.  ***Capacity and readiness to deliver***  Candidates must have:   * The resources to offer locally tailored solutions and flexible delivery to meet the skills and Apprenticeship priorities of employers and employees in the defined geographical area of delivery. If the LEP area also has a ‘transitional’ area defined in addition to the ‘more developed’ area, delivery locations will have to be available *in each locality* * The capacity to deliver provision immediately upon commencement of the contract and that delivery should not be delayed in any way by any recruitment processes or other processes or relationships that need to be established. * Candidates must be able to demonstrate the ability to undertake robust initial assessment of eligible individuals. Vocational training delivered must be regulated units and qualifications on the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework and be able to support individuals into higher levels of training and workplace progression   ***Track record***  The ability to deliver the required activity, based on a track record in the successful delivery and management of this type and size of programme  ***Information, Advice and Guidance***  Where the activity requires effective Information, Advice and Guidance successful applicants and/or subcontractors delivering this element will either hold or be working towards the Matrix standard.  ***Management and quality assurance***  Candidates will need to have effective management arrangements in place to ensure all of the requirements of this specification are fulfilled. The Services must be delivered to a high quality and successful tenderers will need to have in place quality assurance and improvement processes.  The Service needs to be flexible and responsive to the changing economic and political landscape and take into consideration that the approach and associated processes may change during the life of this contract. Therefore Candidates will be expected to be able to change the delivery of the Services accordingly.  ***Partnership working***  Candidates will be required to work in partnership with other organisations delivering education and training in the area to ensure the Service is complementary to and not in competition with other funded provision.  The Service must be able to respond to changing local needs and opportunities, as well as policy changes.  Candidates will be required to establish linkages with and have an understanding of, local stakeholder needs and develop strong links with the key stakeholders.  Candidates will be required to work with employers to identify the skills gaps and needs to drive employer growth.  Where the Service works with Jobcentre Plus clients the Candidates will be required to co-operate effectively with Jobcentre Plus making them aware of candidates who fail to attend training and notifying them of any instances where individuals leave training due to starting work. Candidates will be required to establish links with Jobcentre Plus and visits to public or private sector employers should be made in conjunction with Jobcentre Plus and National Careers Service wherever possible to ensure a smooth, efficient, and joined up approach to arranging benefit claims, offering new employment opportunities and training for all eligible individuals.  ***Market intelligence and local knowledge***  The delivery of the Services must take into account the current and future social and economic indicators including labour market intelligence. Candidates must be able to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the current employment market and the current and future social and economic indicators including labour market intelligence for the geographical area being supported. Candidates must also have an understanding of local skills shortages and gaps and any existing skills support structures within the LEP area.  ***Management information and reporting***  Candidates will develop management information systems to enable it to submit data to the Skills Funding Agency via the Individual Learner Record (ILR) and put in place robust arrangements for ensuring that the evidence required to support payments is collected and retained.  Candidates will be required to share with LEPs and the Skills Funding Agency ongoing performance management data as well as additional intelligence to improve the effectiveness of Skills Support projects in the LEP area in the future.  **Specific Service Requirements**  **Apprenticeship Services theme**  The aim of the Services is to support SMEs (Small Medium Enterprises) to take on and develop apprenticeships at all levels across the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP area and increase employer participation in apprenticeships by raising awareness and providing support to employers. The Services should promote and support the take-up of key sector apprenticeships opportunities at all levels by individuals of all ages. The delivery of the Services should lead to an increase in apprenticeships at all levels, particularly focusing on those employers that have not offered apprenticeship previously  The Services must be focused on developing the technical skills base to meet the needs of employers in the following sectors;   * Digital technologies * Financial, professional and business services * Life sciences and healthcare * Construction and the built environment * Logistics * Energy and environment * Hospitality * Care   The Services should:   * Promote apprenticeships at level 3 and above in the key growth sectors identified in the Thames Valley Berkshire Skills Priority Statement * Address key skills shortages and achieve an increase in the demand for apprenticeships in the priority sectors * Provide a comprehensive package of support to SMEs enabling them to create apprenticeship opportunities for Thames Valley Berkshire residents resulting in an increase in apprenticeships in key sectors at level 3 and above   The target beneficiaries for the Services should be residents within the Thames Valley postcode area.  The Services should provide promotion and brokerage activities to increase the number of level 3 and above Apprenticeships in key priority sectors by:   * Agreeing LEPs requirement for brokerage programme * Developing plans for delivery agreed at TVB LEP Skills, Education & Employment (SEE) Programme Group meetings * Delivering brokerage by providing a local, co-ordinated brokerage service for businesses to recruit apprentices in TVB. We would expect the successful bidder to offer information and advice on all aspects of apprenticeships and support businesses through the process of identifying training providers that specialise in the area they are recruiting to and, * Simplifying the process of taking on an apprentice for employers and, * Working with employers to identify where they have employees who have completed a level 2 apprenticeship and encourage them to continue this training into higher level apprenticeships.   The details of the activities to be delivered as part of the Services should be agreed with TVB LEP Skills, Education and Employment Programme Group (SEE Group) who will agree a project plan (including financial and delivery milestones) for the delivery of the Services before delivery commences.  The Services must offer employers a single point of contact providing impartial advice on traineeships and apprenticeships including apprenticeship reforms and changes to funding.  The Services must provide business engagement support which includes identifying employers who can offer apprenticeship vacancies and brokerage support to ensure a successful recruitment outcome. This support may also extend to helping employers to progress existing apprentices/employees onto new Higher and Degree Apprenticeships.  The Services must be delivered in conjunction with employers and key education and training stakeholders to design and deliver innovative mechanisms and interventions that will lift barriers to individuals and employers participating in apprenticeships.  The successful Candidate must work with organisations undertaking similar and complementary support and delivery activities, including the National Apprenticeship Service within the Skills Funding Agency and National Careers Service providers to reduce duplication, share good practice, ensure added value and contribute to a seamless and integrated delivery infrastructure.  The successful Candidate must carry out a review against progress of the Services every 4 months to coincide with the TVB LEP Skills, Education & Employment (SEE) Programme Group meetings and at the end of the contract.  The successful Candidate must update the TVB LEP SEE Programme Group at each meeting by providing a written report covering at a minimum soft intelligence gained, learner activity and outputs delivered.  The Thames Valley and Berkshire LEP’s Programmes Manager will conduct intermediate programme and contract performance meetings with the successful Candidate on a cycle to be agreed post contract award.  **Skills Support for the Workforce, intermediate and higher level skills provision theme**  The aim of the Services is to provide individuals with the opportunities to develop the skills that will enable them to progress in employment. The Services will provide support to employers to take on and develop individuals to fill intermediate, technical and higher level skills gaps and shortages.  The Services must deliver a responsive skills programme that is tailored to the needs of the Thames Valley and Berkshire LEP area in order to stimulate a growth in the skills base for businesses that will give the best opportunity to grow the economy and create more and better jobs.  The Services must deliver highly responsive skills provision to meet business and industry needs. Employers must be engaged to shape and direct the Services.  The Services must focus on developing and improving the following skills:   * Management and leadership skills * Entrepreneurial, innovation and business development skills * Job specific skills of those in the workforce,   + Digital skills     - the Services should increase course, qualifications, qualification units and apprenticeships that could provide a pathway into the following skills shortage occupations:   Software programmers and developers  Cyber security specialists  IT engineers  IT systems administrators   * + STEM skills     - STEM skills remain in high demand; there is an on-going need to increase STEM skills with a focus on engineering, particularly at Level 3 and above. The Services should increase the availability of courses, qualifications, qualification units and Apprenticeships that could provide a pathway into the following skills shortage occupations:   Electronics engineers  Laboratory technicians  Engineering technicians  Production and process engineers   * + Other key sectors     - The Services should increase provision of Level 3 qualifications and Apprenticeships that provide a pathway into careers in the skills shortage occupations of   Care workers and home carers  Nursing auxiliaries and assistants  Pharmacy technicians  Heating and ventilation engineers  LGV drivers  Warehouse operatives  Professional chefs  Hospitality supervisors and managers  The Services must provide activities aimed at improving the English and Maths skills of those in the workforce  The Services must support individuals to start on higher level skills and apprenticeships by providing taster units of relevant vocational training; work-based access training and work shadowing opportunities related to higher skills/paid jobs.  There must be an assessment of the current skills profile of the individual and how it relates to the sector in which they are Employed and the employer’s needs and to develop the appropriate training option or provide access to it.  The Services must provide advice and guidance, personal development planning, skills development and learning and mentoring on an individual basis.  The Services must deliver skills provision which offers both accredited and non-accredited skills training which is innovative, responsive to local skills needs and increases participation by employed adults in education or training (including Apprenticeships) Provision will normally be accredited but where suitable accredited provision does not exist, bespoke packages may be delivered.  The skills provision must reflect the needs of the business and should be tailored to fit working practices and demands. It must be delivered on business premises and other appropriate venues.  Where demand requires, the Services should develop and support the delivery of new advanced vocational provision where mainstream provision is not available (not including tuition fees) and where a gap can be demonstrated.  Accredited units of learning at Level 3 and above in subject areas may also be funded where these do not lead to a full qualification. The Candidate must ensure that the activity does not duplicate or undermine national policy, including policy on grants and loans.  The successful Candidate must conduct exit interviews with employers to assess the impact of the activity.  The details of the activities to be delivered as part of the Services should be agreed with the TVB LEP SEE Group who will agree a project plan (including financial and delivery milestones) for the delivery of the Services before delivery commences.  The successful Candidate must carry out a review against progress of the Services every 4 months to coincide with the TVB LEP SEE Group meetings and at the end of the contract.  The successful Candidate must update the TVB LEP SEE Group at each of its meeting by providing a written report covering at a minimum soft intelligence gained, learner activity and outputs delivered.  Thames Valley Berkshire LEP will nominate an officer to conduct intermediate programme and contract performance meetings with the successful Candidate, on a cycle to be agreed post contract award |
| ELIGIBILITY |
| **General**  General eligibility requirements are set out in : the European Social Fund Programme for England 2014-2020 National Eligibility Rules which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-structural-and-investment-funds-programme-guidance>  Please note LEP Specific requirements are subject to the National Eligibility Rules detailed above.  Skills Support for the Workforce, Intermediate/Higher Skills Provision Eligibility  Age: 16+  Employment Status: Employed  Apprenticeship Services Eligibility  Age: 16+  Employment Status: Employed however the learner can be unemployed or economically inactive if they will be doing higher level skills  In delivering the Services, the successful Candidate must take into account and support the targets for the following groups where this is consistent with the other Services requirements for addressing the needs of groups identified as priority and meeting the Services deliverables.    Over 50s min 20%  Ethnic groups                          min 18%  Female                                    min 49%  Disability/health issues            min 8%  Lone parents                           min 5%  No basic skills                         min 18% |
| **GEOGRAPHY / AREA OF DELIVERY** |
| **LEP Specific**  The Services will be delivered within the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership area. |
| **FUNDING AND DELIVERABLES** |
| **LEP Specific**  Currently £1,361,700 will be available for the period from August 2016 to March 2018. This may be increased if additional funding becomes available. £900,000 for Skills Support for the Workforce and £461,700 for Apprenticeship Services.  The table below shows the initial planned outcomes, but performance management may change the volumes and mix during the life of the contract.  From the funding available on the regulated and non-regulated lines, the provider must plan to deliver the appropriate education & training for each participant to enable them to progress.  The minimum service deliverables, values and volumes for which evidence must be provided are:  **Promoting Apprenticeships Theme**   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Description** | **Volumes** | **Unit Cost Total Value Average per Intervention** | **£** | | ST01 Learner Assessment and Plan | 259 | £50 | £12,950 | | SD01 SME Training Needs Analysis | 200 | £150 | £30,000 | | RQ01 Regulated Learning |  |  | £199,750 | | NR01 Non Regulated Activity |  |  | £111,000 | | PG03 Progression Education (EDU) | 25 | £400 | £10,000 | | PG04 Progression Apprenticeship (EDU) | 170 | £400 | £68,000 | | SD02 Apprenticeship Brokerage plan at 3 intervals during life project | 3 | £10,000 | £30,000 | | Total |  |  | £461,700 |   **Skills Support for the Workforce Theme**   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Description** | **Volumes** | **Unit Cost Total Value Average per Intervention** | **£** | | ST01 Learner Start and Assessment ILP | 530 | £50 | £26,500 | | SD01 SME Training Needs Analysis | 300 | £150 | £45,000 | | RQ01 Regulated Learning |  |  | £448,800 | | NR01 Non Regulated Activity |  |  | £264,500 | | SD02 Progression with Work | 198 | £400 | £79,200 | | PG03 Progression Education (EDU) | 45 | £400 | £18,000 | | PG04 Progression Apprenticeship (EDU) | 45 | £400 | £18,000 | | Total |  |  | £900,000 | |