DPS FRAMEWORK SCHEDULE 4: LETTER OF APPOINTMENT AND CONTRACT TERMS

Part 1: Letter of Appointment

Dear [redacted]

Letter of Appointment

This letter of Appointment dated 24th September 2021, is issued in accordance with the provisions of the DPS Agreement (RM6018) between CCS and the Supplier.

Capitalised terms and expressions used in this letter have the same meanings as in the Contract Terms unless the context otherwise requires.

Order Number:	PS21059
From:	**Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy ,** 1 Victoria St, Westminster, London, SW1H 0ET("Customer")
To:	Wavehill Consulting, 21 Alban Square, Aberae ron, SA46 0DB ("Supplier")

Effective Date:	Monday, 27th September 2021
Expiry Date:	Tuesday, 31st December 2024

Services required:	Set out in Section 2, Part B (Specification) of the DPS Agreement and refined by: The Customer's Project Specification attached at Appendix A and the Supplier's Proposal attached at Appendix B.

Key Individuals:	[redacted] - BEIS [redacted], Wavehill Consulting

Contract Charges (including any applicable discount(s), but excluding VAT):	As per AW5 .2 Price Schedule response highlighted within the RM6018 Contract Terms, section; Annex 1 - Contract Charges. The total value of this contract shall not exceed £714,369.75 excluding VAT.

Insurance Requirements	Additional public liability insurance to cover all risks in the performance of the Contract, with a minimum limit of £5 million for each individual claim. Additional employers' liability insurance with a minimum limit of £5 million indemnity. Additional professional indemnity insurance adequate to cover all risks in the performance of the Contract with a minimum limit of indemnity of £2 million for each individual claim. Product liability insurance cover all risks in the provision of Deliverables under the Contract, with a minimum limit of £5 million for each individual claim.
Liability Requirements	**Suppliers limitation of Liability** (Clause 18.2 of the Contract Terms);
Special Condition(s):	Contract review point: Budget is only secured for one-year FY21/22, with a potential to secure funding for future years. After each financial year FY21/22, FY22/23, FY23/24 and FY24/25, there will be a break clause, to take into account future spending review announcements. At these stages BEIS reserves the right to terminate the project. Bidders must clearly signal this break clause within their pricing and proposed methodology. Depending on budget certainty and business need, we would equally look to extend the contract further.
GDPR	As per Contract Terms Schedule 7 (Processing, Personal Data and Data Subjects.

FORMATION OF CONTRACT

BY SIGNING AND RETURNING THIS LETTER OF APPOINTMENT (which may be done by electronic means) the Supplier agrees to enter a Contract with the Customer to provide the Services in accordance with the terms of this letter and the Contract Terms.

The Parties hereby acknowledge and agree that they have read this letter and the Contract Terms.

The Parties hereby acknowledge and agree that this Contract shall be formed when the Customer acknowledges (which may be done by electronic means) the receipt of the signed copy of this letter from the Supplier within two (2) Working Days from such receipt

For and on behalf of the Supplier:

Name and Title:
[redacted]

Signature:
[redacted]

Date: 29th September 2021

For and on behalf of the Customer:

Name and Title:
[redacted]

Signature:
[redacted]

Date:

APPENDIX A

Customer Project Specification

1. Background
This research project seeks to evaluate the Peer Networks Programme . SMEs are a vital part of the economy, at the start of 2020 they accounted for approximately 61% of the total employment and 52% of the total turnover in the UK. COVID-19 is having a widespread effect on the UK and global economy and this is particularly acute for SMEs, which often lack the cash reserves and resilience to withstand sudden shocks to their business. ONS data indicates that 30% of businesses experienced a decrease in turnover compared with normal expectations in Wave 33 (31 May to 13 June 2021). Prior to the pandemic, research suggested that there was low demand for external advice and overestimation of their own performance. In 2019, only 24% of SME employers sought formal business support, two percentage points less than in 2018 but down from 33% in 2015 and 46% in 2010 (LSBS,2019) Peer Networks are groups of peers which come together to discuss challenges and suggest solutions. Many SMEs lack an established or effective network of peers they can talk to about managing their business or improving productivity , which is recognised to contribute to the UK productivity gap. The Business Productivity Review [1]fo und that businesses like to learn from each other and that they trust that learning, but that the current public and private sector support market is considered confusing and fragmented. Prior to 2020, there was no single large national scale supplier of Peer Networks in England. Launched in 2020, the Peer Networks Programme is delivered through 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) across England to support SMEs to improve their productivity and their ability to recover from the impacts of Covid-19. Businesses are allocated to their nearest LEP who build cohorts of 11 SMEs. They then take part in 18 hours of action learning sets (ALS) and one half days ' worth of 1-1 coaching - all delivered virtually. In the first year of the programme (between October 2020 and March 2021), around 4,500 businesses of a target of 5,700 SMEs will had completed the programme. The programme will continue to recruit up to 6,000 SMEs each financial year (although funding is currently only confirmed for 2021-22) with delivery in a virtual for mat, with a view to consider face-to-face sessions when it becomes fe asible. SMEs are recruited on a rolling basis, but peaks in delivery of group sessions will likely occur between September-November and January-March. The Greater Manchester LEP's Growth Hub (*The Growth Company)* plays a key role supporting BEIS with the design, development and co-ordination of the Peer Networks programme. This has included liaising between LEPs and BEIS to flag and address emerging issues, steering recruitment and producing a real-time dashboard of programme progress. Given their role as the programme coordinator, the successful bidder will need to liaise closely with the Growth Company; as well as engaging with the 38 delivery partners.

[1]https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/844506/business-productivity-review.pdf

Following from 21/22, we wish to launch a four year research project that continues to monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the programme to inform future programme design and funding decisions, and to inform the longer-term strategy of business support policy. The evaluation also seeks to build on monitoring practices to enable longer term impact evaluation to be conducted on growth in value-added and firm level productivity. The existing evaluation involves surveys and interviews with participants and delivery partners, propensity score matching and data linking analysis using IDBR data for longer term tracking.

Budget is only secured for one-year FY21/22, with a potential to secure funding for future years. After each financial year FY21/22, FY22/23, FY23/24 and FY24/25, there will be a break clause, to take into account future spending review announcements. At these stages BEIS reserves the right to terminate the project. Bidders must clearly signal this break clause within their pricing and proposed methodology. Depending on budget certainty and business need, we would equally look to extend the contract further.

2. Aims and Objectives of the Project

The overarching objectives of the Peer Networks programme are to support SMEs in England to recover from the impact of COVID-19 and drive an increase in sales and firm-level productivity. In the short term, success will be determined by proxy measures which we would expect to contribute to longer term productivity improvements, for example any intermediate behaviour changes.

Evaluation Aims

The aims of the evaluation are to:

- Understand performance levels of the programme across LEP areas
- Understand how the Peer Networks project is being delivered in practice, gather evidence of how to make improvements to delivery through LEPs
- Test the theory of change to understand whether the desired outputs and outcomes are being achieved (e.g. SMEs making positive changes to their businesses)
- Understand how, and to what extent, the programme influences business behaviour
- Provide evidence to inform future funding decisions
- Collect the right data to enable a longer-term impact evaluation to be conducted

The evaluation consists of five high-level evaluation questions:

HLQ 1 - How effective is the Networks project in recruiting businesses and ensuring they complete the scheme?

- How successful has the programme been in recruiting the target number of businesses? Has this varied by LEP area, and if so, why?
- What are the most effective ways to drive awareness of the scheme and recruit participants? And does this differ by size, sector, region etc?
- Has the scheme effectively ensured a consistent marketing approach nationally, and has this helped to establish a Peer Networks brand?
- Do SMEs find the branding and marketing strategy relevant, clear and relatable (e.g. not using the word productivity)? If yes/no, why?
- Do participants see the training as a unique offer (e.g. they aren't part of or aware of a network that provides the same offer /benefits?

- Do SMEs in the target group have an equal chance of applying for the support (e.g. are there any unique barriers to particular sectors/sizes of businesses / protected characteristics of business leaders applying?)
- Did the project engage with and select the target beneficiaries? Were the right procedures and criteria in place to ensure effective targeting?
- Are LEPs recruiting a mixture of known and unknown SMEs? If yes /no, how?
- Are the same participants attending all sessions? If not, why not?
- Are businesses completing the training? If not, why not?
- Is there an impact of COVID-19 on recruitment and compliance with the intervention?
- Are there any other factors which predict non-attendance / non-compliance?
- Does the online nature of the programme affect compliance/ attendance / participation/ engagement with the programme?
- How does the national coordinator role affect recruitment targeting?

HLQ 2 - To what extent does the project successfully deliver high quality business support?

- To what extent do businesses understand the aims of the programme?
- How well was the programme managed? Were the right governance and management structures in place and did they operate in the way they were expected to?
- How effective is virtual delivery perceived to be in delivering this support?
- What are the different impacts of different modes of delivery (face-to-face / virtual)? (if face-to-face is introduced)
- Do businesses have the right technology to take part?
- To what extent has the programme delivered its intended activities to a high standard?
- How are project activities perceived by stakeholders and beneficiaries? What are their perceptions of the quality of activities / delivery?
- How does the programme vary across cohorts / delivery/ personnel / regions? What are the driving factors behind differences? What can we learn from the variation in what is delivered?
- What type of issues are SMEs bringing to the ALS sessions? And do these differ e.g. by location/type of business /size/ characteristics of business leader, etc?
- Is regional delivery through LEPs an effective way of delivering this support?
- Has the programme been sufficient in building up trust to initiate intensive knowledge transfer?
- What are the most important / effective behaviours of the ALS facilitator?
- Are the facilitators able to manage the ALS effectively? (e.g. time, topic, coaching)
- What impact does the role of the national coordinator have on the communication and delivery of the programme between delivery partners and BEIS?
- How can the national coordinator role be improved?
- Could the delivery of the programme have been improved in any way?

HLQ 3 - How effective is the Networks project at encouraging SMEs to adopt practices to improve productivity

- To what extent is the ALS approach flexible and relevant for all cohorts?
- Do SMEs think the ALS sessions are being delivered effectively? If yes/no, why? (e.g. is it the facilitators, lack of trust?)
- Do SME's think that the intensity of support received (i.e. 18 hours of network sessions plus 3.5 hours one-to-one support) is sufficient to enable them to gain sufficient learning that they can apply to improve their business?
- What value are SMEs getting from the ALS sessions versus the 1:1 support? How do they complement each other, if at all?
- Do SMEs think the 1:1 support is delivered effectively? If yes/no, why?
- Is the 1:1 support building on and complementing the ALS sessions? If yes, how, and if no, why not?
- Are SME managers bringing relevant and real issues to the ALS? If not, what are the issues they are raising?
- What aspects of the programme are viewed as being most effective by LEPs, participants and facilitators? (e.g. networks, coaching, ALS sessions)

HLQ 4 - What early changes are businesses making as a result of the Peer Networks scheme?

- To what extent are participants' ambitions and intentions to make positive productivity changes to their business impacted following completion of the programme?
- Are SMEs making changes in their business after the ALS? If yes, what types of changes and how long after the support are these changes being initiated?
- If managers/businesses are making changes to their businesses, are these related to adopting new management and technologies. If not, what changes are they making?
- How, if at all, does participation impact business performance in the short to medium term?
- To what extent has the support contributed to the survival of the participants' SMEs at the six month stage after completion of support?
- At a six months stage after completion of support, do the participants' SME's exhibit enhanced resilience or enhanced approaches around leadership and management, staff recruitment and retention, finance or technology adoption?
- What can we learn at this stage about the costs and benefits associated with the course and the Value For Money (VFM), on the basis of testing economic assumptions set out in the programme business case?
- How confident can we be that the programme will lead to GVA improvements?
- Do networks continue after the programme ends (i.e. are they self-sustaining)? If yes/no, why and how?
- To what extent are LEPs involved in networks during and after the programme?
- Were there any negative and/or unintended consequences of the training?
- Do participants who have taken up business support previously behave differently compared to those who haven't? If yes, how?

HLQ 5 - What other factors influence how and what changes businesses are making after they complete the scheme?

- To what extent are the main motivations for businesses entering the programme driven by short term (e.g. COVID-19 response) business needs, versus longer term growth / productivity aspirations? How does this change over time?
- Are participants taking up any other business support schemes (e.g. Help to Grow Digital/ Management)? If yes, how does this influence the impact evaluation?
- What share of participants would have gone to other business training but chose this one because it's free?
- To what extent do wider contextual factors e.g. COVID-19 or other economic conditions affect what changes businesses are making after they complete the programme?

We anticipate that the project will begin heavily focused on process evaluation, and over the term move towards impact evaluation.

The project is evaluated against a number of qualitative and quantitative variables to inform a view on its efficacy including:

- Growth in value added as an indicator of recovery from COVID-19
- Improvements in labour productivity
- Participant views on the resilience of their SME
- Participant views on their leadership and management skills
- The SME's ability to recruit and retain staff where appropriate

The outputs will:

- Help to determine whether the programme's delivery should change and if so, how
- Collect the necessary data to facilitate long-term analysis of the impacts on business growth and productivity and to enable an assessment of the programme's value for money.
- Feed into the evidence base for future business support programmes.

3. Suggested Methodology

If applicable:	**Insert numbers:**
Total number of Participants (experimental design)	**Up to 6,000**
Total number of Interviews (survey)	**5,000**
Total number of Interviews (qualitative)	**50-100**
Total number of Focus Groups	
Total number of Case Studies	**0-15**

Any other specific requirements	The above numbers are **indicative estimates for each year of cohorts (cycle) depending on the evaluation approach taken.** The survey estimate is based on what the

	bidder will need to administer themselves, **not** the total number of responses that need to be analysed. Bidders should suggest and **justify** their sample sizes based on what is realistic within the budget, and what they think will deliver a high quality evaluation.

From April/ May 2021, this evaluation follows on from an initial 1-year evaluation in Y20/21. For each year in which the programme is live, a phase-based approach is recommended to allow for data collection during the delivery period and further data collection and analysis following completion. Though the existing evaluation and suggested timelines are outlined below, the exact period of the evaluation is to be determined by the contractor. The bidder will be asked to provide indicative timings for the proposed work based on the programme timeline.

The evaluation will seek to measure and understand the delivery of the programme and the early outcomes and impacts. Productivity and GVA improvements can take 3-7 years to materialise and be measurable [2]. Therefore, this evaluation will focus on measuring the early outcomes and proxies for productivity improvements . This evaluation will also need to reinforce good monitoring practices to enable a longer term impact evaluation to be conducted (following the principles in the BEIS Business Support Evaluation Framework[3]) .

The evaluation partner will work closely with BEIS, The Growth Company and the LEPs to ensure the right monitoring data is collected and to ensure they have access to the participants for evaluation purposes.

A theory of change developed and tested during the first year of the programme is included .

In 2021-22, a maximum of 6,000 businesses can take part in the Peer Networks programme across England and will be recruited on a rolling basis. The expected numbers for future years would be subject to budget confirmation and whether some delivery is moved to a face-to-face format. To take part in the programme, businesses must have been in operation for over a year, have an annual turnover over £100,000 and have over 5 employees. The eligibility criteria is selected to ensure businesses are capable of enacting changes. Eligibility criteria will be reviewed throughout the programme and may be subject to change.

Businesses can apply direct to their local LEP/Growth Hub or via the national Peer Networks website at www.peernetworks.co.uk. Businesses currently complete an expression of interest (EOI) form on the Peer Networks website which is automatically

[2] Drews, C., & Hart, M. (2015). Feasibility Study-Exploring the Long-Term Impact of Business Support Services. Research Paper. https://www.enterpriseresearch.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/ERC-Research-Paper-LT-Impact.-Research-PaperNo29.-Final-02APR15.pdf
[3] BEIS Business support evaluation framework. (2019) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-support-evaluation-framework.
N.B. See also BEIS monitoring and evaluation framework. (2021).
https://www.gov.uk/government/pu blications/beis-monitoring-and-evaluation-framework.

assigned to their closest LEP. Real-time data on the EOI volumes are collected and LEPs are currently only required to pass on data of those that go on to complete the registration. SMEs that are ineligible are currently not recorded. Those that are assessed as eligible by the local delivery partner have to complete a full registration form.

The Growth Company also collects real time data on the make up of participants, satisfaction rates and completion rates, manually inputted by LEPs. This is displayed on a power BI dashboard. The dashboard is currently used by evaluators to target post-completion survey fieldwork. We are currently working to identify how data sharing can be optimised between the dashboard and evaluators to streamline data collection and reduce LEP burden.

Evaluation Design

Counterfactual approach

A continued quasi-experimental approach is necessary to understand the early impacts of the programme. The year 1 evaluation uses propensity score matching (PSM). Bidders should outline their proposed quasi-experimental method and counterfactual approach, including how the counterfactual group will be set up, what processes would ensure high quality, and what implications this may have on wider delivery.

Theory based evaluation

We recognise that there are some unobservable characteristics and nuances that cannot easily be captured when evaluating the early to intermediate impacts of business support for different businesses. Therefore we encourage innovative bids that include a theory-based evaluation component such as Contribution Analysis to increase understanding on the impact of the intervention given the wider complexity of the business support system and changing economic environment.

Bidders are expected to outline their choice of theory based method, how theory based evaluation will be incorporated across the programme cycles and how it would complement long-term data linking analysis. This is not a component of the year 1 evaluation and is therefore not detailed below.

A proposed evaluation and expected deliverables are detailed below. The evaluation is split into two phases for each year of incoming cohorts: Phase 1 consists of deliverables as participants pass through the programme. Phase 2 consists of deliverables after participants have completed the programme.

Phase 1A: April 2021 - March 2022 (Months 1-12)

The winning supplier will be joining after the start of this phase.

- **Baseline beneficiary data collection and analysis (online)**
  - The baseline survey collects key monitoring data to understand programme delivery, provide a baseline of productivity and enables long term evaluation.
  - The survey includes information such as their business and productivity characteristics, information about the participant and understanding of other business support received.
  - All participating businesses are required to complete this upon registration. The evaluation contractor will work closely with BEIS and the LEPs to adjust the existing baseline survey. LEPs will be responsible for administering and collecting this data, but the evaluation contractor will be responsible for collating and analysing this information to inform and answer some of the research questions.
  - Contractors will be expected to check the quality of the baseline data to ensure that information is accurate where possible, for example by checking against Companies House data.

<u>Phase 1b: April 2021 - March 2022 (Months 1-12)</u>

Participant satisfaction surveys (online - rolling basis - timings flexible)

The winning supplier will be joining after the start of this phase.

- The surveys will provide BEIS with timely evidence of how the programme is operating in practice and the quality of the programme (i.e. process evaluation questions). LEPs currently administer these short 5 minute feedback surveys following every session.
- The evaluation contractor will be asked to recommend an approach, timings and frequency of data collection and analysis. They will work with the delivery partners to administer these surveys, and ensure they are integrated in the delivery of the programme to maximise response rates. Currently, invitations go out to all businesses after the completion of each session. The Growth Company is scoping how to optimise data collection and the evaluator would be involved in this.

Participant post-completion survey (online -timings flexible)

- After the final session, a longer survey asks businesses about their experience and what changes they intend to make (i.e. what are the anticipated outcomes). This can then be compared with the follow up survey/interviews that will be conducted after 6 months to see whether or not they made those changes and how/why. As businesses will finish the course at different times, the survey will be designed during the early stages and completed as and when participants finish. All participants will have finished the course by the end of the year's cycle (i.e. 31 March).
- The contractors will be responsible for collecting and analysing this data as part of an internal interim evaluation report (see below) and for the final report.

The Growth Company are working with the year 1 evaluator to explore ways in which data collection can be optimised between all parties, including the evaluator and across the 38 LEPs. This includes refining the data collection processes and user experience for both the surveys and real-time dashboard. We would expect this to be continuously reviewed across the period of the evaluation and for the winning contractors to be involved in development.

In-depth interviews (timings flexible)

- To supplement the evidence gained from the surveys, in-depth interviews and/or case studies will be carried out. The aim of this is to understand the effectiveness of delivery and gain a deeper understanding of changes in business behaviour and practices, barriers faced and resulting impact. The sample may depend on the stage of the evaluation, the evidence gained from the survey and outstanding evidence gaps.
- The year 1 evaluation consists of 50 interviews involving delivery partners, the Growth Company, facilitators and businesses.
- Bidders should outline their interview approach, including the number of interviews they would conduct, at what stage (phase 1 or 2), and why.
- Contractors are welcome to propose alternative and innovative uses to effectively incorporate theory based methods.

To gain further information about delivery, particularly to understand how online interactions may be working and whether this is different for face-to-face interactions, observational methods may be useful. Contractors are welcome to suggest observational methodologies to help address delivery questions.

Annual interim evaluation report - by end of Phase 1

- The contractor will provide BEIS with publishable annual evaluation reports which outline key findings and trends at national and **LEP** level. The content of the report may evolve over the course of the evaluation. The report would be targeted towards policy-makers, delivery partners (LEPs) and key stakeholders. Contractors are expected to present the findings to the evaluation working and steering groups (see governance section).
- As an additional component, the year 1 evaluation also includes additional standardised one page-reports for LEPs to understand their general performance levels compared to the national average. Bids should consider how they would continue to provide end-of-year performance data to LEPs.
- This report will form a standalone product at the end of each financial year. At this point, the project will be reviewed and, subject to funding decisions, will progress to Phase 2 and subsequent years.
- BEIS will publish the reports on GOV.UK annually and so each report will go through the BEIS Peer Review Group (for external peer review) before being published. Please allow time to respond to and address peer review comments in the timeline set out in bids.

Drop out survey (telephone)

- As participants complete baseline data at the start, we will have data on SMEs who drop out. As per the year 1 evaluation, bidders are invited to propose an approach for those that do not begin or complete the programme. The year 1 evaluation surveys roughly 100 businesses in phase 2. If resources allow, it is preferable that this survey is conducted during phase **1.**

<u>**Phase 2: October 2021 - December (timings flexible)2024**</u>

6-month follow-up survey (online/ telephone)

- Participants will be followed up around 6 months after they have completed the last ALS/coaching session. This survey will provide fundamental evidence for understanding the programmes early impacts. The evaluation contractors will be responsible for designing and conducting the survey.

- This survey will seek to follow up on data collected during earlier phases (e.g. intended actions as specified in the feedback survey). It will seek to gain an understanding of what businesses have done since completing the programme and to answer wider research questions. Related to HLQ 3, 4 & 5, the survey will collect information such as:

    - What support the businesses actually received (as they may have dropped out/not attended all sessions)
    - What issues are brought to the ALS and actions taken away
    - Whether attitudes/behaviours have changed regarding business operation
    - Whether they are aware of changes they can make to their business
    - Whether they have or are planning on making any changes to their business
    - Whether they are experiencing any barriers to implementing change
    - Whether networks are maintained after 6 months
    - Whether they have shared their knowledge more widely (e.g. with other businesses, their networks etc.)
    - Some understanding of the costs and benefits associated with the programme from the business's perspective.

- As the sample will need to be representative of participating firms, other variables will also need to be considered (e.g. sector, size, location). As this data will not be available until baseline data has been collected, please provide indicative sample sizes and costs, suggestions for sampling, and target number of achieved interviews . Please include your underlying rationale and assumptions underpinning these, including power calculations if planning to make comparisons with a counterfactual group. Once baseline data is available (during the first phase), the evaluation contractors will be asked to provide a more comprehensive sample frame. The survey should be short to maximise response rates (around 15 minutes for participants and could be shorter for dropouts) .

The bidder is asked to state what mode they would use (e.g. phone or online survey), the associated cost and why the approach was chosen for each survey. This will include considering factors such as costs, response rates and practicalities. A mixed approach may be chosen (e.g. telephone for dropouts and online for participants). The bidder will also have to provide information on how they will maximise response rates and ensure the quality of the surveys (e.g. piloting, testing questions). Using questions from existing surveys will be encouraged.

As participants will finish the course at different times, the contractor is asked to provide indicative timelines of when this survey work will occur.

The contractors will be responsible for analysing and reporting the findings of the surveys. This includes producing descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations and producing a summary of the aggregated data to be published, as well as assessing early outcomes and impacts from the follow-up surveys. We require contractors to produce findings at both the national and LEP area level.

Quantitative analysis & identifying the comparison group

- To identify the comparison group, the year 1 evaluation involves a counterfactual survey based on the profile of beneficiaries and the logic model. The telephone survey seeks to refine the comparison group by going beyond administrative data, and matching businesses by other characteristics such as growth ambition. This survey currently runs in phase two only (around 6 months after programme completion). A counterfactual survey in phase one was not conducted due to risks of high attrition rates, in turn becoming low value for money.
- Bidders should outline their approach to identifying the counterfactual group, providing reasons, timings and wider implications . Bidders should state whether they would continue to carry out a counterfactual survey or use alternative methods, again providing reasons why. To minimise response burden, we suggest the survey is designed to gather data efficiently and administrative data is used where possible to avoid unnecessary questions.

- To conduct quantitative analysis between the treatment and comparison group, the current evaluation involves using difference-in-difference and propensity score matching with administrative & publicly available data sources such as IDBR. Bidders are expected to conduct quantitative analysis of the programme and should outline their approach to quantitative analysis using both the treatment and comparison group data.
- Another option for assessing the outcome of business survival of the COVID-19 period is by using data on company failure, e.g. Companies House liquidation reports which are available close to real time. Contractors are asked to consider this option in their proposal. A full clean dataset FY 20/21 should be available.

Full evaluation report

- The evaluation contractor will be responsible for producing an evaluation report summarising all of the evidence across each year. This will be of publishable standard. The report will be signed off by members of the evaluation working group and steering group. The report will also go through the BEIS Peer Review Group (for external peer review) before being published.
- Contractors should produce a technical report outlining the methodology and quantitative analysis in more detail. This report should be of sufficient detail that the research could be replicated by someone not involved in the project.

The contractors are also asked to deliver a presentation to the Peer Networks Programme Board to share findings. The slide pack is a deliverable of the project.

Quality Assurance

All deliverables are to be quality assured by the contractor before delivery. The contractor will also respond to comments by BEIS officials and peer reviewers , and undertake to improve outputs which do not meet BEIS standards.

Contractors are asked to provide information on their own quality assurance processes as part of their tender response .

The reports will also go through BEIS's quality assurance processes, for example reviewed by analysts and policy officials, with senior analyst and policy sign-off. As already mentioned, the main reports will also be subject to peer review by external experts.

All research and outputs are required to meet standards set out in the aforementioned Business Support Evaluation Framework, the Government Social Research code and the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

Governance

The current evaluation consists of fortnightly project boards with BEIS analysts, policy colleagues, The Growth Company and evaluators. The board agenda considers project progress, expenditure, the effect of external factors on the project, potential improvements to the delivery (content and administration) of the project and the evaluation approach. Contractors will be expected to attend when necessary to provide updates.

We would expect to have similar regular and/or ad hoc evaluation meetings to address emerging deliverables and issues.

The winning bidder should expect to work flexibly with other evaluation contractors of other BEIS programmes if required, including sharing data.

Timetable

Subject to funding confirmation for each year, the indicative timings are that the project will last for 4 years and involve three 'cycles' of two phases (phase 1 and phase 2). We anticipate the maximum time frame for each 'cycle' of the programme (P1 & P2) would be 21 months. This means there will be overlap between cycles i.e. Cycle 1 Phase 2 will overlap with Cycle 2 Phase 1. The bidder is welcome to propose alternative timings. Depending on budget confirmation and policy priorities, there is a possibility to extend the contract for a fourth cycle. Equally, we have included break clauses in between each year of the contract should we not receive budget confirmation for future years.

Indicative timings:

- P1: The baseline, feedback, post-completion and drop-out surveys will be conducted on a rolling basis - month 1-12
- P1: Interviews with stakeholders may be completed - month 10-12
- P1: Interim report - month 12
- P2: 6-month follow up survey - month 11 -18
- P2: Quantitative analysis - month 13- 19
- P2: Full evaluation report - month 20-21

	COMPLETE Year1 (20/21)	Year2 (21/22) £110,000	Year3 (22/23) £233,000	Year4 (23/24) £233,000	Year 5 (24/25) £149,000
Cycle 0 (in field)	P1 (complete)	P2			
Cycle 1		P1	P2		
Cycle 2			P1	P2	
Cycle 3				P1	P2

Contractors are welcome to suggest amendments to the above timetable, with a rationale for differences to the above timings.

Dissemination

- Delivery partners are keen to understand the performance of the Peer Networks Programme as a whole and in their local area. Effective dissemination will ensure that delivery partners will better understand what areas they are doing well in, and areas that need to be improved going forward. In the long term, dissemination will be key in maintaining engagement and providing a better understanding of which changes are feasible and should be prioritised.
- There is likely to be high demand from policymakers and organisations involved in business support to understand the key findings over the course of the project.
- As part of the current evaluation, the contractors are producing performance reports at the LEP-level to aid their second-year planning.
- Contractors should propose a dissemination strategy or resources to communicate key learnings and the impact of the programme to key stakeholders. This may include producing summary infographics or conducting periodic workshops with delivery partners annually or at the end of the programme's contract.

4. Deliverables

The list of essential deliverables for this project are:

- Data collection tools:
  - Baseline survey (rolling basis, to be reviewed annually)
  - Feedback surveys (rolling basis, to be reviewed annually)
  - Post-completion survey (flexible based on proposal, to be reviewed annually)
  - Drop-out survey (flexible based on proposal, likely Jan-September annually, to be reviewed annually)
  - Six-month follow up survey (flexible based on proposal, to be reviewed annually)
  - In-depth interview topic guides (flexible based on proposal, to be reviewed annually)
  - Datasets (flexible based on proposed timings, annually)
- Published annual interim evaluation reports (Annually - March)
- Full clean dataset to enable longer term impact evaluation to be carried out - this will include contact details of firms (for re-contacting) and information about participants (and non-participants where relevant) e.g. unique business identifiers to enable data linking (December 2025).
- Quality-assured, replicable technical report (December 2025)
- Published full final evaluation report including synthesis of findings across methods. (December 2025)

- Presentation of results to Programme Board including slide pack summary and (desirable) Dissemination resources; for example summary poster/ infographic, (flexible based on proposal - annual or December 2025)

See methodology for more details on deliverables

APPENDIX B

Supplier Proposal

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Part 2: Contract Terms

Contract Terms v6.0