# DPS FRAMEWORK SCHEDULE 4: LETTER OF APPOINTMENT AND CONTRACT TERMS

## Part 1: Letter of Appointment

Dear ██████████

**Letter of Appointment**

This letter of Appointment dated Monday, 10th January 2022, 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.

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| Order Number: | PS21121 |
| From: | **Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy**, 1 Victoria St, Westminster, London, SW1H 0ET("Customer") |
| To: | RSM UK Consulting LLP, 6th Floor, 25 Farringdon Street, London EC4A 4AB ("Supplier") |

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| Effective Date: | Friday, 14th January 2022 |
| Expiry Date: | Monday, 31st March 2025 |

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

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| Key Individuals: | ████████████████ <br> ███████████████████ <br> ███████████████████ |

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| 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 £1,559,789.00 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. |
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| | 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 Clause | This programme will run over four financial years up to March 2025 (Y21/22, Y22/23,Y23/24,Y24/25). Break clauses between each year to take into account future budget decisions are applicable with 30 days' notice. |
| 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:

Signature:

Date:  10/01/22

**For and on behalf of the Customer:**

Name and Title:

Signature:

Date:  19/01/22

# APPENDIX A

## Customer Project Specification

| 1. Background |
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This research project will evaluate the Help to Grow: Digital programme.

The UK has a long-standing productivity gap compared with major competitors in the G7. In 2016 the ONS estimated that labour productivity is on average 18% higher in the other six members of the G7 relative to the UK[1]. SMEs are more likely to have low productivity, and less likely to adopt modern management techniques and business technologies[2]. The Business Productivity Review we conducted with Treasury also found that leadership and management skills are a critical factor in determining firm productivity [3]. SMEs also tend to have the lowest scores on surveys designed to measure the quality of business management and leadership. Low quality management is a primary factor associated with lower productivity in the UK[4,5].

Help to Grow: Digital will provide information and advice to SMEs to help them understand their digital technology needs. The platform will also offer a digital technology voucher that provides SMEs with a discount of up to £5,000, covering up to 50% of the cost of a technology solution from a pre-approved list for up to a year. The voucher is intended to support up to 100,000 SMEs over three years and will launch in Autumn 2021. An evaluator will join the programme ahead of launch to produce data collection tools and conduct process evaluation. An evaluation method has not yet been confirmed. The total cost of the programme is £296 million.

The programme has five key strategic aims:

1) To **tackle the information barriers SMEs face** to successfully adopt and embed digital technologies by creating a trusted, impartial and high-quality online advice platform, to help SMEs assess their technology needs, navigate the existing technology market successfully and purchase and implement new digital technologies.

2) To **make it easy for SMEs to access advice and support** through their digital adoption journey, creating an easy-to-use, recognisable and interactive online platform with seamless SME user journeys from initial interaction to successful digital adoption.

3) To **tackle the financial barriers SMEs face** in successfully adopting productivity-enhancing digital technologies by providing up to 100,000 SMEs with a substantial discount on and clear financial incentive to purchase digital technology.

4) To **support and incentivise the existing digital technology market to better work for SMEs** and address their needs, by raising standards, competition and quality in the marketplace to leave a lasting impact and provide SMEs with the products that are right for them.

5) To provide **value for money and measurable impact during the lifetime of and after the Programme has been delivered**, by seeking to minimise deadweight and fraud risk through the Programme design and its SME and technology

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[1] Tenreyro, s., (2018) The fall in productivity growth: causes and implications. Bank of England

2 BIS 2012, Leadership and management in the UK – The key to sustainable growth

[3] The Business Productivity Review: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/business-productivity-review-call-for-evidence

[4] ONS (2018), Management practices and productivity in British production and services industries - initial results from the Management and Expectations Survey: 2016

5 Andy Haldane Speech, Productivity puzzles, 2017

supplier/product eligibility and application processes, operational delivery and delivery partner contract management.

Some of the success criteria outcomes and benefits realisation outcomes include:

- SMEs participating in the scheme experience a percentage increase in productivity per employee in line with the benchmark for the product type they chose, 3 years after implementing new digital technology through the voucher scheme.
- At least 90% of SMEs who redeem vouchers report satisfaction with their experiences of using the Digital Platform.
- At least 70% of SMEs who purchase digital technology using the vouchers report their adoption was successful.

Secondary success criteria can be shared in future.

**Policy details**

The successful bidder will be joining the Help to Grow: Digital programme ahead of SME launch and will have the opportunity to feed into development of the platform, including interface and user experience. The vendor registration form, SME registration form would have been created, and the diagnostic will be in development upon joining.

Across the lifetime of the programme (three years currently), a maximum of 100,000 businesses can access online advice and claim a discount of up to 50% on the costs of approved software, worth up to £5,000. Vouchers are initially expected to be available for software that helps businesses:

- build customer relationships and increase sales
- make the most of selling online
- manage their accounts and finances digitally

The current eligibility criteria for SMEs is:

- Have between 5- 249 employees
- Registered in the UK
- Have been trading for more than 12 months
- Purchasing new to firm software

This eligibility criteria will be kept under review to ensure it continues to meet the scheme objectives and SME needs. We do not yet have a sense of demand across the three years.

Participants can join at any time over the lifetime of the programme. Businesses can apply directly to the programme via the national website at (https://helptogrow.campaign.gov.uk/). Participants currently complete an expression of interest form. When the programme launches, prospective participants, including those that expressed an EOI, can then fully register onto the platform. Their eligibility is then checked automatically by a third-party verification tool. Eligible SMEs are notified and given access to the site. Ineligible businesses are notified of their rejection. Full details of the onboarding process and data sharing between the online platform and grant administrator will be discussed with the successful bidder. The delivery partner will report on ineligibility, appeals and complaints on a regular basis for quality assurance purposes.

From 2022, SMEs will be able to create an account that will allow them to save their progress on the platform. For those that do no create an account, we will not be able to identify how SMEs engage with the platform without primary data collection.

## Learning and advice

The online platform will provide clear and customer-focused 'self-serve' information, guidance and learning material to SMEs around digital technology adoption. The learning offer will support SMEs across all stages of their adoption journey (realisation, assessment, navigation of marketplace, embedding tech) to drive successful and lasting digital adoption and behavioural change. SME learning needs will differ at each stage of their adoption journey, which will shape how the learning offer content, functionality and navigation is designed.

The learning offer will develop over the lifetime of the programme, in terms of content, functionality and integration with other relevant learning offers. Learning advice will focus on both software specific guidance and strategic guidance to build leadership and management capabilities. The learning offer will also consider the timing of support (pre and post-purchase) and to complement third party resources to deepen impact. Learning advice will be targeted at SMEs based on their eligibility, SME 'personas', organisational structure and through effective comms and marketing. Learning and advice will be offered in a range of intensive and light touch including interactive and self-service learning, various multimedia and possible formats such as 1-1 advice. Full details to be shared with the winning bidder.

## Voucher and vendor eligibility

Help to Grow: Digital will offer SMEs a voucher covering up to half of the costs of pre-approved, new-to-firm (not an upgrade) digital technology solutions up to a maximum of £5,000. The voucher will initially provide financial discounts to SMEs for digital customer relationship management, accountancy and e-commerce solutions. Details of available software will be shared with the winning bidder. SMEs will purchase their selected software using a voucher via the portal and will receive access and support via the vendor and delivery partner both within the platform and externally.

Vendors interested in adding their software onto the platform will undergo an application and onboarding process to check their eligibility. The current vendor eligibility criteria includes:

- Operating for 1yr+
- Registered in the UK
- A going concern (not dormant)
- MTD Compliant (accountancy)
- Have not previously acted fraudulently
- Has an established SME base

The vendor will undergo a series of checks and if the vendor or products are ineligible, they may appeal the decision or follow a complaints process.

An appointed delivery partner will manage the platform, including a range of digital services such as:

- SME and vendor account capabilities,
- Vendor and product onboarding and eligibility checks,
- SME onboarding and eligibility checks
- Creation of the virtual voucher
- Vendor support, non-compliance, cash management and quality and assurance.

Deliver partner capabilities may evolve across the lifetime of the programme. With support from BEIS analysis, the winning bidder will need to work closely with the delivery partner to ensure that the evaluation is carried out appropriately, including ensuring data collection is valid, robust, and accessible for evaluation purposes. Data collection processes will also be embedded to enable a longer-term impact evaluation to be conducted.

The platform will be the single source of data for registrations, the learning offer and voucher redemption. Vendors will have access to data on product usage

This four year evaluation project will evaluate the delivery and early impacts of the programme in order to feed into decision making throughout the programme (so an agile approach will be needed). This is so as to inform future programme design and funding decisions, strengthen the evidence base on business support, and inform longer-term strategy on business support policy. The evaluation will also produce evidence on the impacts of wider factors such as the Covid-19 pandemic on technology awareness, engagement and take up in relation to the programme. The evaluation also seeks to build on monitoring practices to enable longer term impact evaluation to be conducted on growth in value added and productivity. A key component of this work will be the effective collection of baseline and realtime data.

**This programme will run over four financial years up to March 2025 (Y21/22, Y22/23,Y23/24,Y24/25). We have proposed break clauses between each year to take into account future budget decisions. 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 objective of the Help to Grow: Digital programme evaluation is to enhance and measure the impact of the programme on SME participant's productivity levels.

The evaluation will have **five key** aims:
1. To understand how to improve delivery (process evaluation);
2. To measure the early impacts of the Programme, including adoption and implementation of appropriate technologies (impact evaluation)
3. To understand and measure the impacts of the Programme on the market;
4. To generate evidence to inform future Programme design and funding (strategic question); and
5. To embed effective data collection practices to enable longer-term impact evaluation.

The evaluation consists of six high-level evaluation questions:
**HLQ 1 - How effective is the programme in recruiting businesses and ensuring they complete the programme?**
- What was the take up of each of the programme elements?
- What are the most effective ways of recruitment? And how does this differ by sector, size, region, characteristics of the business etc?
- Do the participants see the training as a unique offer? (e.g. they aren't part of or aware of other leadership training that provides the same offer/benefits)?
- Did the programme engage with and select the target beneficiaries? Were the right procedures and criteria in place to ensure effective targeting?
- What barriers do businesses with certain characteristics face when registering for the programme?
- Does the programme attract and retain participants from protected groups?

- How do participants engage with the platform and its various elements? How does engagement differ across the different elements, and why?
- Are participants completing the advice elements? If not, why?
- Are participants taking up, and redeeming the digital technology voucher? If not, why?
- What impact has COVID-19 had on registrations and engagement with the intervention?
- What other factors lead to non-engagement with the intervention?

**HLQ 2 – To what extent is the programme successfully delivering high quality business support?**
- To what extent was the programme well managed? Were the right governance and management structures in place and did they operate in the way they were expected to?
- To what extent did the programme deliver its intended activities to a high standard?
- How is the quality of the scheme and its delivery perceived by stakeholders and beneficiaries?
- To what extent is the delivery of the programme consistent across its various elements?
- To what extent has the programme effectively transferring knowledge to beneficiaries, and how can this be improved?
- How does the user experience of the platform affect the effectiveness of the programme?
- What are the most important/effective behaviours of those delivering support via the scheme (e.g. 1-1 advice, post-adoption support)
- Does the learning and advice offer deliver high quality, relevant advice/support and/or support the implementation of learning from other aspects of the programme? How can this be improved?
- Could the delivery of the programme have been improved in any way?

**HLQ 3 – To what extent is the programme effective at building technology awareness and encouraging and supporting businesses to adopt new technologies?**
- Is the learning offer relevant and sufficiently varied for all beneficiaries?
- To what extent do beneficiaries feel the learning offer was tailored enough to their businesses?
- To what extent do vendors and beneficiaries think the information and advice delivered effectively, and why? (e.g. the quality of information and events, clarity of teaching)
- What aspects of the learning offer are viewed as most or least effective by beneficiaries and vendors and why?
- How does this feedback differ by beneficiary characteristics (e.g. region/sector/size etc)
- What issues are beneficiaries raising during 1-1 advice?
- To what extent is the make-up of 1-1 advice providers effective and suited to beneficiaries, and why?
- To what extent are the effects of the different strands of the programme cumulative?

**HLQ 4 - What early changes are businesses making as a result of participating in the programme?**
- Are SMEs making, or planning to make further changes to their businesses after taking part in the programme? If yes, what types of changes and what can we learn about their implementation?

- Has the programme supported the SMEs in recovering from the impacts of COVID-19?
- What are the costs and benefits associated with the programme, and what can we learn about the vfm?
- What additionality does the programme provide to SMEs?
- How confident can we be that the programme will lead to firm-level productivity improvements?
- What were the negative and/or unintended consequences from the programme, if any?
- To what extent do participants who have taken up business support previously behave differently compared to those who haven't? (e.g. encouraging others)
- How does engagement with various programme elements, or a combination of elements, affect changes businesses make?
- How do early changes and business impact differ by what product type and technology (e.g. e-commerce, accountancy, CRM) is adopted?
- How does business behaviour and impact change compared to earlier and later releases of the programme?

**HLQ 5 – What other factors influence how and what changes businesses are making after they complete the programme?**
- To what extent are the outcomes proportionate to the amount of time the participants dedicate to the programme?
- Are participants taking up any other business support schemes (e.g. ERDF) or other forms of advice? If yes, how does this influence the impact evaluation?
- How does previous technology adoption experience affect the changes made by SMEs?
- How do wider contextual factors e.g. COVID-19 or other economic conditions affect what changes businesses are making after they complete the programme?

**HLQ 6 - To what extent were there impacts on the market providing these technologies?**

- How has the cost and methods of payment for technology solutions changed since the programme started?
- How has SME engagement with the digital technology market changed over time?
- To what extent have vendors selling technology solutions changes their products, services and processes to cater to the SME market, and if so how?

**As there will be ongoing policy development over the lifetime of the programme, these research questions may change slightly.**

**3. Suggested Methodology**

| If applicable: | Insert numbers: |
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| **Total number of Participants on programme** | **100,000 over 36 months** |
| **Total number of Interviews (survey)** | **8,000** |
| **Total number of Interviews (qualitative)** | **130** |
| **Total number of Focus Groups** | |
| **Total number of Case Studies** | **10** |

| **Any other specific requirements** | The above numbers are **indicative numbers per annum depending on the evaluation approach and timing proposed**. Contractors 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. |
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See Annex 1 for draft Theory of Change.

**Approach & Methodology**

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[6]. Therefore, this evaluation will focus on measuring the early outcomes and proxies for productivity improvements. This evaluation will also reinforce good monitoring practices to enable a longer term impact evaluation to be conducted (following the principles in the BEIS Business Support Evaluation Framework[7]).

To conduct a process and an early impact evaluation, the evaluation contractors will need to conduct primary research via surveys and in-depth interviews, and collate secondary data via the online platform and via vendors. The early impact evaluation will seek to measure outcomes and proxies for productivity improvements (e.g. adoption of technology, improved operational efficiency, improved cash flow management, etc) with SME beneficiaries and conduct some early productivity analysis in Y4. The early-impact evaluation will also seek to understand the wider market impacts of the programme, for example understanding changes vendors have made to the products or services they offer, and conducting wider market analysis.

The evaluation contractor will be required to work alongside delivery partners to collate and analyse monitoring data, for example, working with them to ensure that data collected is fit

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[6] 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
[7] 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/publications/beis-monitoring-and-evaluation-framework.

for evaluation purposes as the platform evolves. The evaluation contractor will also need to be live to any process improvements made over the course of the programme. We are ensuring that the correct data sharing provisions are in place before all relevant parties come onboard.

The key deliverables and timelines are outlined below. The bidder will be asked to provide indicative timings and suggestions for the proposed work based on the programme timeline. The exact timings of programme updates and milestones may change and will be confirmed with the winning supplier upon award.

A theory of change developed through the insights of previous business support programmes is included in the annex. Bidders are welcome to make suggestions on adjustments either in their bid or once awarded if necessary. BEIS will share a full list of programme success criteria that the evaluation will need to address with the winning bidder.

## Evaluation Design

## Impact Evaluation

For the impact evaluation methodology, bidders should outline their proposed quasi-experimental method and counterfactual approach, including how the counterfactual group will be set up, the potential variables that may be considered, and 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 mixed-method evaluation bids with a theory-based evaluation component to increase understanding on the impact of the intervention, given the wider complexity of the business support system and changing economic environment. Bidders should propose the method and how this will work alongside the quasi-experimental design to maximise the learnings from the research, including what deliverables such as case studies may look like.

## Process Evaluation

The **process evaluation** will seek to understand how the programme is delivered in practice and inform how delivery can be improved across the lifespan of the programme. The contractors will draw on monitoring data, for example on registrations, diversity, engagement, and satisfaction scores, and conduct a process evaluation survey for beneficiaries completing the programme, as well as surveying those that have dropped out of the programme. They will also conduct qualitative research with delivery partners, beneficiaries, and wider stakeholders to better understand delivery and the impacts of wider factors such as Covid-19.

The essential deliverables are detailed below. Bidders should outline their approach to the below with justification, and are invited to suggest changes.

## Scoping Stage - November (Month 1)

The evaluation contractor(s) will conduct a scoping exercise to refine the evaluation plan (including revising the theory of change, proxy productivity indicators and evaluation

questions) and reviewing counterfactual group options. Bidders should outline their scoping approach, including whether primary or secondary data collection will be conducted.

We have found that an early peer review of the evaluation plan reduces concerns with the methodology and reduces the need for retrospective data collection/ analysis. Where appropriate and where timings allow, the evaluation plan may be put forward to be peer reviewed by external academics and contractors may be expected to take part in an informal discussion with peer reviewers to address comments.

## Data collection – July 2021 - ongoing

Where possible, the collection of baseline and monitoring data will be built into the platform, existing processes and systems including the registration process.

**Baseline data collection**
- Registration form
  - All beneficiaries are required to complete registration to take part in the programme. Data collection includes unique identifiers (e.g. CRNs), company name and address, etc. This data includes those who are ineligible. Suppliers will review the existing registration form and work with BEIS colleagues and the delivery partner to make changes if necessary. We anticipate that the diagnostic may be reviewed and updated across the lifetime of the programme.
- Diagnostic
  - Beneficiaries will be encouraged to complete a diagnostic once granted access the platform to understand more about their business and any relevant information that can help them to identify their technology needs. The winning bidder will work with BEIS colleagues to develop and finalise the diagnostic. We anticipate that the diagnostic may be reviewed and updated across the lifetime of the programme.
- Expressions of Interest (optional)
  - SMEs interested in the scheme ahead of launch may sign up via an expression of interest (EOI) to receive updates about the scheme and take part in research. We have collected their SME name, contact details, companies house number and SIC code. We have earmarked 1,000 SMEs to be part of the evaluation if desired. These SMEs would have not been invited to previous user research. Suppliers interested in using this group as part of their approach, for example as part of the counterfactual approach, should outline their proposal and mode of data collection.

**Feedback Surveys/ interim data collection ( rolling basis, online)**
- Feedback evaluation surveys at key points in the customer journey will provide BEIS with timely evidence of how the programme is operating in practice in line with our success criteria. We would expect questions to address both the content and user experience of the Help to Grow: Digital scheme and platform
- **For the purposes of this tender, bidders should expect to administer the survey themselves as survey functionality for feedback surveys is not confirmed.** Should survey functionality allow, the successful bidder will design and analyse the surveys.
- Ideally when possible, the supplier can explore platform integration of surveys with the delivery partner. Functionality could range from links embedded into the platform leading to the supplier's own survey, or mini survey tools within the platform where SMEs can give quick responses to pop up questions, for example a thumbs up or down or rating.

- Feedback surveys should be reviewed and updated regularly.
- The supplier will work with BEIS colleagues and delivery partners to access monitoring and back-end data at a real-time or regular basis to supplement their primary data collection. Examples of secondary data include using google analytics to understand the no. of visits to programme elements and time spent on the learning and advice pages. We will share a full list of available monitoring data with the supplier upon award.
- Bidders should recommend their desired approach, timings and frequency of data collection and analysis, acknowledging any links to secondary monitoring data. They will work with the delivery partners where needed to maximise response rates and reduce respondent burden. Bidders are also invited to suggest alternative methods of collecting interim data.

## Participant Completion Survey (rolling basis, online)
- Businesses will purchase software at different times throughout the lifetime of the scheme. As part of the process and impact evaluation, a completion survey will ask beneficiaries that redeemed a voucher about their experience of the scheme, including what they intend to make as a result (i.e. the anticipated outcomes).
- BEIS will regularly receive data from vendors on which SMEs redeemed a voucher from early 2022. To administer the survey, bidders may wish to send a completion survey to these SMEs, or work from registration data. The survey will form a key part of the evidence for future updates and changes to future releases of the programme.
- As survey functionality of the online platform is not confirmed, bidders should expect to administer the survey themselves. Integration with the online platform can be explored at a later date.
- The survey should be short to maximise response rates (max 10-15 minutes). Bidders should also state the timing of administration, for example whether beneficiaries will be sent the survey as soon as the voucher is redeemed, or shortly after.

## Non-completion surveys (Online preferable, timings flexible)
- Non-completers will range from SMEs that engaged with the learning offer only and decide not to purchase software, and those that didn't engage with anything. This survey will help us to improve the user experience, identify improvements to the learning offer or voucher redemption, and give us a better understanding of the barriers to tech adoption. As part of the process evaluation, evidence from this survey will be as valuable than other components.
- Suppliers should administer this survey themselves, though the supplier may work with BEIS colleagues and the delivery partner to streamline beneficiary communications where possible. This survey may be combined with the completion survey using routing.
- Bidders should detail their approach to this survey. Bidders should suggest when non-completers should be contacted to complete this survey.

## Six-month follow-up survey (rolling basis, mode flexible)
- Participants will be followed up six months after they have completed the programme. This survey will provide fundamental evidence for understanding the programme's early impacts. 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 received (did they revisit the learning offer/ receive post-purchase support)
- Whether there's anything about the scheme they would like to see improved
- 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 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.

- The evaluation contractors will be responsible for designing and administering the survey. A six-month on participant survey will be a sample of beneficiaries, and may include those that engaged with the voucher, learning offer or both. Surveying a sample will be more cost-effective and reduce overall respondent burden.
- Please outline your sampling approach, including expected sample size and target number of achieved interviews, how you will ensure a representative sample for example using stratification and if so which variables you intend to stratify by(e.g. sector, size, location).
- The survey should be short to maximise response rates (maximum 10-15 minutes). Please indicate suggested survey sample size.
- We are aware that some of the last participants will finish the programme in November 2024 and their six-month survey will not be due until May 2025, after the evaluation end. Suppliers should conduct their survey in March 2025 with the understanding that this cannot be included in the final report analysis.

**Vendor data collection**
- Views from vendors on their experiences will be valuable in improving the vendor application and onboarding process, the SME customer journey, and identifying opportunities to increase the impact of the learning and advice offer. The anticipated number of vendors is likely to be small (below 50).
- Bidders should detail their approach to getting views from vendors along with rationale, for example whether surveys or interviews are more appropriate. Please include your sampling approach and timings.

**For all surveys,** the bidder should state the sampling approach and sample size targets, expected response rates, survey mode, and why the approach was chosen. This will include considering factors such as costs, response rates and practicalities. A mixed methods approach may be chosen (e.g. telephone for dropouts and online for participants) with the appropriate considerations. Where a large sample of participants are surveyed, our preference is for a stratified sample.
The bidder should provide information on how they will maximise response rates and quality of the survey (e.g. piloting, cognitive testing, minimising bias in data collection). As participants will likely finish the programme on a rolling basis, the contractor is asked to provide indicative timelines of when all survey work will occur and how they will manage this.
The supplier will be responsible for analysing and reporting the survey findings. 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.

Bidders should also outline what contingency deliverables will be pursued should take up of the scheme be lower than anticipated and few surveys are required. Contingency proposals can be further refined and agreed with BEIS during the scoping phase.

**Qualitative research e.g. In-depth interviews (mode variable, timings and frequency flexible)**

- Qualitative research should be conducted with beneficiaries, delivery partners and stakeholders to understand how delivery can be improved and to interrogate why there were or were not any early impacts based on the programme and their reflections on the programme.
- Bidders are invited to make creative proposals for example conducting user research, interviews with 'rejectors', virtual deliberative forums
- Bidders should outline their approach, including whether their approach would be used for process/ impact evaluation, number of interviews and suggesting timings based on the programme plan. Bidders will work with the delivery partners to recruit beneficiaries, and may work with BEIS colleagues to recruit stakeholders.

**Interim evaluation report – Bi-annually**

- The contractor will provide BEIS with publishable bi-annual evaluation reports which outline key findings and trends at national level. Reporting should cover key characteristics such as size, sector, owner types, region, etc. The content of the reports may evolve over the course of the evaluation. The report would be targeted towards analysts, policy-makers, delivery partners and key stakeholders. Contractors are expected to present the findings to the evaluation working and steering groups (see governance section).
- While the reports will be bi-annual, exact timings of reports will need to complement key milestones and new releases of the programme (see timings section). While earlier findings may be required for the programme's agile approach (see policy life changes and programme review points), this report will form a standalone product.
- 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.

**Identifying the comparison group/ counterfactual survey (mode variable, timing flexible)**

- Bidders should suggest how they will identify or construct the comparison group, providing reasons, timings, power calculations and wider implications. Bidders should consider additionality/deadweight aspects in their counterfactual approach.
- Bidders will have an opportunity to explore this further during the scoping phase and to refine this later.
- Bidders should state whether they would carry out counterfactual surveys and their approach for this, including the volume of surveys undertaken, timings and sampling method. The bidder may suggest 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.
- Depending on the counterfactual approach taken, surveying both beneficiary and counterfactual groups as part of the evaluation may give us a) some shorter term indicators of programme impact and b) additional data about both sets of firms to include in longer term analysis using administrative data.

**Quantitative analysis and identifying the comparison group**

- Quantitative analysis between the treatment and comparison group will be quasi-experimental,. This will be conducted by the evaluation contractors based on the data collected through the programme and linking to admin or commercial databases (e.g. IDBR, FAME).BEIS does not have access to databases that bidders can use and bidders should expect to obtain their own licenses for databases of interest. BEIS however can support applications to databases such as the ONS Secure Research Service. Bidders should outline their chosen approach and data sources, and explain why. The contractor will provide a full clean dataset each year.

**Desk research and analysis of programme impacts on the market**
- Desk research will help us to understand whether the programme is having a positive impact on the wider business support landscape, and reducing SMEs barriers when accessing digital technology solutions. This review should address HLQ 6 using a range of sources and market data. Primary data collection can be used to supplement desk research. Outputs for this piece of work should be a standalone report, though bidders are invited to propose products they think will best illustrate changes, such as infographics or a framework on the change in market costs.
- Desk research and analysis should be conducted on an annual basis, either as a standalone product or incorporated into the interim reports. Full analysis and a summary of the key findings and trends across the lifetime of the programme should be included as part of the full evaluation report.
- Bidders should outline their approach to addressing this work, and should indicate the types of data sources used, frequency and depth of analysis.

**Full programme evaluation report (March 2025)**
- The evaluation contractor will be responsible for producing an evaluation report summarising all evidence and analysis over the lifetime of the programme. This will be published and should 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.
- Bidders are encouraged to propose supporting deliverables to accompany the report such as case studies or other dissemination materials.
- 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.

**Harmonisation with Randomised Control Trials (RCTs)**

Bidders should be aware that BEIS is also exploring and looking to procure an additional evaluation project in parallel that uses Randomised Encouragement Design (RED), a type of randomised control trial. The RED project will provide BEIS with insights in running a trial within business support and at this scale. The project will use HMRC data to randomly encourage SMEs to participate in the scheme and we will measure the impact of the programme between those that received the encouragement (the treatment group) and those that didn't (the control group). The RED partner will support messaging trials for the encouragement, a pilot in 2022 and if successful, support a full RED trial. BEIS and HMRC colleagues will likely conduct analysis and administer the encouragements. We anticipate that the RED project would mainly affect take up, and have a low impact on the core evaluation as the data collection tools will not need to change considerably.

We are also in the early stages of exploring other trial options as the programme evolves, for example running mini trials on elements of the programme.

The winning supplier should expect to align with other evaluation projects where appropriate, for example including flexible evaluation review points or flagging if changes will close down possible trial options.

**Harmonisation and Data Sharing with other business support programmes**
There are other business support programmes which will be running concurrently with Help to Grow: Digital which will need to be factored into evaluation plans. The primary programmes to consider are:
- Help to Grow: Management – Launched in June 2021, this programme is a 12-week intensive leadership and management course that aims to boost firm-level productivity for up to 30,000 SMEs over the course of three years.
- There is likely to be overlap in businesses taking part in the programmes. Please consider how this will affect the analysis, data sharing etc that may be required.
- Harmonisation of data collection and metrics between the programmes will be required (balanced with the evaluation requirements for this programme).
- This may require working with the evaluators of the other programmes.

Other to be considered are:
- Peer Networks: This programme brings businesses together to build networks, share ideas and address issues to increase business growth and productivity. This programme aims to support up to 6,000 SMEs a year.
- Business Basics: A number of randomised control trials and pilots that aim to increase firm-level productivity. There have been three rounds of trials funded by BEIS, of which the third is focused on increasing technology adoption[8]. The level of overlap is likely to be less than 1,000 SMES.

There are also other existing forms of business support and advice for example from Growth Hubs, Local Authorities, Trade Associations, the private sector which you should factor into evaluation plans.
**Programme/Policy Changes**
Over the Lifecyle of the programme there may be changes to the content and delivery of the programme, for example, the learning and advice offer may change format. The winning supplier will be required to work flexibly with BEIS analysts and the policy team to ensure that the evaluation continues to reflect any programme changes and to update the evaluation over the programme duration as required.
**Timings and Programme Review Points**
The programme is currently expected to run for three years (36 months) from November 2021 to November 2024. There are four key 'releases' of new functions and services planned into the programme and are listed below. We will share the exact changes made at each release as soon as possible with the winning bidder when possible. The bidder should acknowledge the timings in their proposal.
- October 2021 – Learning and advice platform opens
- December 2021 - (Full programme launch including voucher scheme opens)
- July 2022 – Release 1
- February 2023 – Release 2
- July 2023 – Release 3
- April 2024 – Release 4

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[8] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/business-basics-programme

The grant scheme and learning platform will remain continuously open to SMES across the lifespan of the programme, and improvements will be made on a rolling basis. The winning supplier will be made aware of both minor and major changes to the programme in advance and will have access to an action log.

**Risks**: Bidders should include a sample risk analysis as part of their project plan and timeline.

There is currently no funding profile for the programme from FY 24/25 onwards, though this will be confirmed when possible. We have included a break clause in the contract between each year to take into account future budget confirmation. Equally, the programme may be extended subject to future policy and funding decisions.

The below gives a breakdown of the timings and budget allocations for each year:

| FY 21/22 | FY 22/23 | FY 23/24 | FY 24/25 |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| £390,000 | £440,000 | £420,000 | £360,000 |

Years 1 and 2 are higher to account for increased set up costs research design required. We expect demand to be low in years 1 and 2 and peak in years 3 and 4, though bidders should expect to work flexibly to accommodate demand fluctuations where needed within the budget.

**Covid and other contextual Factors**

Please consider how you will try to assess the impact of Covid-19 and other macro or contextual factors which might affect programme take up, outcomes and the evaluation plan.

**GDPR**

The successful bidder will need to handle personal data, including protected characteristics of participants. All research and outputs must meet GDPR requirements. Bidders should state whether they have sufficient privacy policies in place to satisfy GDPR regulation. BEIS will be the data controller of all data collected and deliverables produced as part of the contract.

**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 all reports will also be subject to peer review by external experts. This will include initial plans/scoping report.

All research and outputs are required to meet standards set out in the Magenta Book[9], the BEIS Monitoring and Evaluation Framework[10], The BEIS Business Support Evaluation Framework[11], the Government Social Research code[12] and the Market Research Society Code of Conduct[13].

**Dissemination**

There is high interest from policymakers and organisations involved in business support to understand the key findings over the course of the Help to Grow: Digital Programme. 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.

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[9] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-magenta-book
[10] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/beis-monitoring-and-evaluation-framework
[11] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/business-support-evaluation-framework
[12] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-goverment-social-research-code-people-and-products
[13] https://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/code-of-conduct

Contractors are invited to 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 tools.

**Governance**

The winning supplier should expect to attend regular evaluation catch ups with BEIS colleagues to address progress, emerging deliverables and risks. The supplier will also occasionally attend the Help to Grow Evaluation Advisory Group which aims to provide progress updates on the evaluation, and seek advice on key changes. The evaluation advisory group will include senior evaluation stakeholders across government and external evaluation experts. The exact frequency of meetings and attendance will be agreed with the successful bidder upon award. Outputs from these meetings may be shared within BEIS to reduce burden on the supplier.

The successful bidder may also have to attend other programme steering groups on an ad hoc basic, including delivery meetings. management including project progress, expenditure, emerging risks and potential improvements to the delivery. More details will be provided upon award.

**Social Value**

As part of the government's commitment to consider how procurement of services can increase social value, suppliers are required to explain how social value has been considered in what they have outlined to deliver, and in how they will deliver. Examples of how suppliers may exhibit social value within their bids could be:

- Internal commitment to environmental sustainability
- Skills and employment initiatives such as increased apprenticeships within the company, or;
- Commitments to safe and secure supply chains such as how Modern Slavery will be avoided and prompt payments

## 4. Deliverables

**A summary of essential products with timings below:**

Contractors are welcome to suggest amendments to the timetable, with an accompanying rationale.

| Year | Reports | Analysis |
|------|---------|----------|
| 1 | Scoping report (evaluation plan and updated theory of change)<br>Interim report at end of FY | Process evaluation |
| 2 | Evaluation interim report x2<br>Dissemination materials e.g. case studies, infographics<br>Full clean dataset | Early impact findings for year 1 + additional process data |
| 3 | Evaluation interim report x2<br>Dissemination materials e.g. case studies, infographics<br>Full clean dataset | Early impact findings for year 2 + additional process data |

| 4 | Evaluation interim report x1<br><br>Final report including detailed technical annex<br><br>Full clean dataset | Early impact findings for years 1 – 4, and complete process evaluation |
|---|---|---|

All reports should be quality assured by the contractors.

The list of deliverables expected for this project are:

- Scoping phase deliverables such as evaluation plan, theory of change, scoping consultation guides, desk review, scoping phase report
- Data collection tools such as baseline survey, feedback surveys, completion survey, non-completion survey, vendor data collection tools, six-month follow up survey, topic guides, survey data tables
- Published bi-annual interim evaluation reports
- Full clean dataset for years 1-3 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.
- Quality-assured, replicable technical report
- Published final programme end evaluation report including synthesis of findings across methods.
- Presentation of results to Programme Board including slide pack summary and (desirable) Dissemination resources for example summary poster/ Infographic

# APPENDIX B

## Supplier Proposal
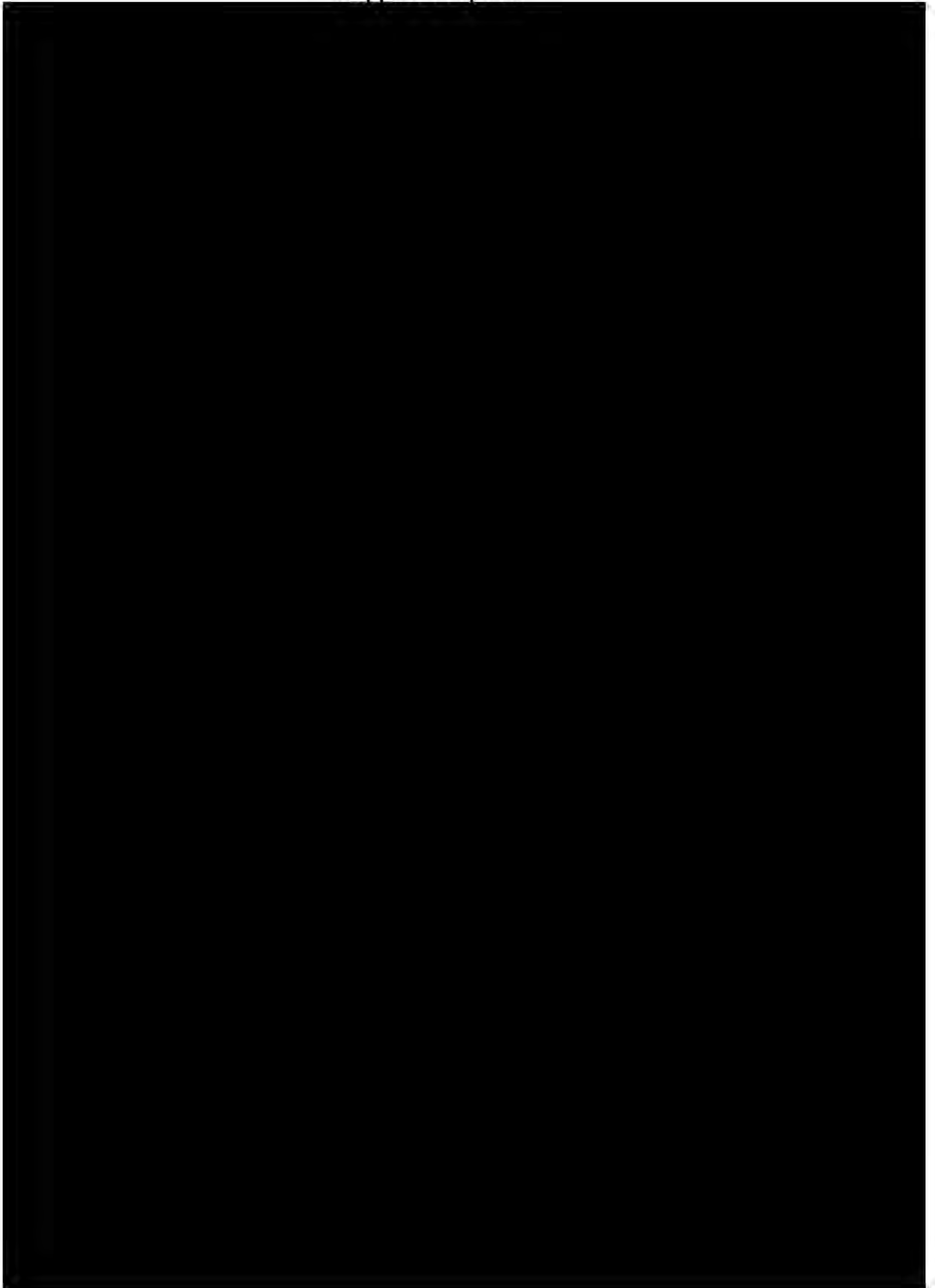
# Part 2: Contract Terms

Contract Terms v6.0