DPS FRAMEWORK SCHEDULE 4: LETTER OF APPOINTMENT AND CONTRACT TERMS

Part 1: **Letter of Appointment**

Hatch Associates Ltd
20 St Andrew Street
London
UK
EC4A 3AY
Dear Sirs

Letter of Appointment

This letter of Appointment dated Wednesday, 2nd September 2020 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:	CR20069
From:	**Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy**, 1 Victoria St, Westminster, London, SW1H 0ET("Customer")
To:	**Hatch Associates Ltd,** 20 St Andrew Street, London, UK, EC4A 3AY ("Supplier")

Effective Date:	Monday, 7th September 2020
Expiry Date:	Friday, 31st December 2021

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:	BEIS Project Manager

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 £ £227,205.00 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. 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 - After phase 1 a and b, there shall be a break clause. At this stage BEIS reserves the right to terminate the project. Bidders must clearly signal this break clause within their pricing and proposed methodology.
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: 23-9-20

For and on behalf of the Customer:

Name and Title:

[redacted]

Signature:

[redacted]

Date: 27/10/2020

ANNEX A

Customer Project Specification

1. Background

This project is looking to evaluate the £13m COVID-19 Strengthening Business Networks Programme.

COVID-19 has a had a significant impact on business operation to date, with ONS data indicating that 45% of businesses have lower turnover. A survey by Sage showed that 77% of SMEs are having to make significant adaptations to their business. 46% believe their business has changed for good with only half thinking they will return to trading in the same way. Just under half of SMEs believe they would operate at a reduced rate from 7th May, 16% believe they could resume operations at an increasing rate from 7th May. 42% of firms are working at under 50% of their usual capacity. Almost 9 out of 10 respondents predict a drastic decline in production volumes and 85% expect sales to drop over the next six months. Comparing ERC figures from March this year with the full month's data from March 2019, the number of firms going out of business was 70% higher than a year ago (up 21,206), while the number of new firms incorporated fell by 23% (14,270 fewer).
The Business Productivity Review (the BPR) found that businesses usually take advice when faced with trigger points such as challenges which require change. Over the last three months, businesses have faced a large number of trigger points such as whether to furlough staff, whether to hibernate their business and whether to pivot to a different operating model which may include embracing technology adoption. They are likely to face more trigger points in the coming months as lockdown measures are loosened and SMEs have to decide whether to repivot their business again and whether to move employees out of furlough.

Engagement with LEPs, Be the Business, various Business Representative Organisations and a survey through the SME Insights Team in BEIS found that there is a high demand for Peer Networks as a way of providing intensive support to businesses as they move through the COVID-19 crisis and the end of the Transition Period.

Participants will attend a series of Action Learning Sets (ALS) which may be followed by 1:1 support to improve the operation of the business. The availability of 1:1 support is likely to vary by LEP with some delivering this as part of the ALS package and some signposting to alternative sources of support. Action learning is a process in which a real-life problem is worked through with a group that promotes enquiry and reflection, and which results in tangible actions or solutions. Peer Networks are groups of peers which come together to discuss challenges and suggest solutions with the support of a trained facilitator in an action learning style. Given the current social distancing restrictions, this project will begin virtually but we expect delivery to move to face-to-face as soon as is feasible. The programme will be delivered through 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) across England, targeting 6,000 SMEs in England during the first year. Each LEP has a different operating model so there may be some variation in delivery.

The overarching objectives of this project are to support SMEs in England to recover from the impact of COVID-19 and drive an increase in sales and firm-level productivity. Funding for this project is only secured for one year. We will not be able to determine the productivity gain or increase in sales of businesses in this first year as these kinds of improvements typically materialise over a longer time period of three to seven years. In the short term, success will be determined by proxy measures which we would expect to contribute to longer term productivity improvements.

While the above are the overarching objectives which may take several years to materialise, shorter-term key objectives of the programme include:
- To increase the availability and accessibility of high-quality peer networks to meet latent demand from SMEs
- Improvement in ability of SMEs to adapt to the impacts of COVID-19
- Improvement in resilience of SMEs
- Improvement in SME leadership and management skills
- Improvement in SMEs' ability to recruit and retain staff where appropriate, access cash to continue trading, and adoption of technology
- Maintenance of business networks after delivery of programme and engagement with other networks
- Increased SME survival

As funding has only been secured for one year, this project seeks to monitor and evaluate the early 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 embed monitoring practices to enable longer term impact evaluation to be conducted on growth in value added and firm level productivity. This longer-term impact evaluation will form part of a separate, future evaluation project.

In the short term, success will be determined by proxy measures which we would expect to contribute to longer term productivity improvements, for example changes in attitudes (e.g. attitudes towards growth), intentions (e.g. intention to change management practices), increased awareness of best practices and openness to technology adoption.

This evaluation will be phase-based. The two phases are interlinked in an overall programme of work but there is no guarantee for the latter phase – funding is conditional on the outcome of Spending Review.

The first phase, running from July 2020 to end of March 2021, will involve Phase 1a: baseline survey and 1b: immediate feedback surveys, in-depth interviews with wider stakeholders, and interim reporting. The product of Phase 1 will be an interim evaluation report. This will therefore be evaluating the delivery of the programme itself and immediate feedback.

Subject to policy and spending decisions, this contract will then progress to Phase 2 from April 2021. This phase will involve follow-up surveys, in-depth interviews and a full evaluation report. This second phase would therefore evaluate the intermediate term (i.e. 6 – 12 month) outcomes of the programme.

The deliverables required for this project are:
- An interim evaluation report (by end March 2021)
- Summary poster / infographic
- Published full final evaluation report
- Slide pack summary, systematically providing answers to the high-level research questions
- Presentation of results to key stakeholders
- 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.

- Other deliverables include baseline survey, feedback surveys, 6-month follow up survey, topic guides, survey data tables
- Quality-assured, replicable technical report

This evaluation should meet the standards set out in the Business Support Evaluation Framework.

2. Aims and Objectives of the Project

The evaluation project has four main aims:

- To understand how the Networks Programme is being delivered in practice and to understand how to improve delivery (process evaluation)
- To understand and measure the early impacts of the programme in terms of the adoption of new practices (early impact evaluation)
- To generate evidence to inform future programme design and funding decisions (strategic question)
- To embed the right data collection practices to enable a separate longer-term impact evaluation to be conducted in the future (impact evaluation)

The objectives of the evaluation are to address five high-level evaluation questions (see below), which BEIS has developed with key stakeholders. The research questions will be refined during the scoping phase and theory of change development.

Contractors are invited to propose their own research questions and suggestions for methodology which may differ from those outlined below. Innovative methods are welcomed where appropriate. Proposals should be clear in their rationale for the questions, project structure and methodologies proposed. A successful proposal will have a very clear link between suggested methodologies, approaches and ways of working and the project's aims and research questions. It will therefore clearly demonstrate that it will provide the required high-quality evidence to answer the evaluation questions.

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

- What are the most effective ways to drive awareness of scheme and recruitment participants? And does this differ by sector, size, region etc?
- Do SMEs find the branding and marketing strategy relevant, clear and relatable (e.g. not using the word productivity)? If yes/no, why?
- Do the 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 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?

HLQ 2 - Is the Networks programme successfully delivering high quality business support?

- 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?
- Is virtual delivery perceived to be an effective method of delivering this support?
- What are the different impacts of different modes of delivery (face-to-face/virtual)?
- Do businesses have the right technology to take part?
- 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?
- 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)
- Could the delivery of the programme have been improved in any way?
- Is virtual delivery perceived to be an effective method of delivering this support?

HLQ 3 - How effective is the Networks Programme at encouraging SMEs to adopt new practices?

- Is the curriculum 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?)
- What types of issues are SMEs bringing to the ALS sessions? And do these differ e.g. by location/type of business/size etc?
- Do SMEs think the day of 1:1 support is delivered effectively? If yes/no why?
- Are the 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)
- Do all aspects of the programme suit being delivered remotely? If not, why not?
- Is the make-up of the cohorts effective? If yes, what makes it effective or not (e.g. mixture of experience, non-competitors)

HLQ 4 - What early changes are businesses making after participating in the programme?

- Are SMEs making changes to their businesses after the ALS? If yes, what types of changes and how long?
- What are the costs and benefits associated with the course, and what can we learn about the vfm?
- 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 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?
- 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? (e.g. encouraging others)

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

- What is the optimal frequency of the sessions?
- Do participants stay in the business for a long enough time to have the desired changes? If not, are there spill over effects?
- Do participants who have taken up business support previously behave differently compared to those who haven't? (e.g. encouraging others)
- Are participants taking up any other business support schemes (e.g. ERDF)? 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? Do wider contextual factors e.g. COVID-19 or other economic conditions affect what changes businesses are making after they complete the programme

3. Suggested Methodology

The evaluation is proposed to last 12-15 months (to be determined by the contractor, maximum time frame 18 months) and will seek to measure and understand the delivery of the programme and the early outcomes and impacts. Productivity and GVA improvements can take years to materialise and be measurable (3-7 years according to the Enterprise Research Centre). Therefore, this evaluation will focus on measuring the early outcomes and proxies for productivity improvements. This evaluation will also need to embed good monitoring practices to enable a longer-term impact evaluation to be conducted in the future as part of a separate project (following the principles in the BEIS Business Support Evaluation Framework, Jan 2019).

The evaluation partner will work closely with BEIS, the LEPs and The Growth Company to ensure the right monitoring data is collected and to ensure they have access to the participants for evaluation purposes. A timeline of key programme activity will be provided to the contractor. The bidder will be asked to provide indicative timings for the proposed work based on the programme timeline.

Phase 1a – Baseline survey

Baseline survey

If the evaluation contractor is in place in time for the start of delivery, the evaluation contractor will work closely with BEIS and the LEPs to design a 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. If the contractor comes in after delivery has begun, the survey will already have been administered (designed by BEIS) but the contractor will still be responsible for analysis. This baseline data will also be used for later phases (e.g. to inform the sample for surveys and interviews).

All participating businesses will complete this before starting the programme. Recruitment will be rolling from July 2020 – February 2021. This survey has three key purposes:

- Collecting key monitoring data to understand programme delivery (e.g. understanding number, types, location of participating businesses, compliance with the programme, information generated by the online delivery system and monitoring the successful recruitment of businesses). LEPs will report this back to BEIS routinely.
- Providing a baseline of their productivity. This evidence will enable us to understand the current 'state' of the business, to which we can compare them with after they complete the programme.
- Enabling longer-term evaluation. The baseline survey will also include information about the business (e.g. unique business identifiers to link to HMRC data) to enable and inform a future impact evaluation.

The baseline survey will include information such as:

- Customer Reference Numbers (CRNs)
- Eligibility (if relevant)
- Business characteristics - e.g. size, sector, location, take up of other business support, unique business identifiers, organisational structure (e.g. family run).
- Information about the participant (e.g. diversity data, role in the business).
- Contact information (including back up contact)
- Understanding of the business' productivity at baseline. This can include behavioural/ operational (e.g. practices already in place, previous business support uptake), and specific metrics (e.g. turnover, employment).
- Understanding whether beneficiaries are receiving other support from other schemes, e.g. ERDF
- How they found out about the programme/why they want to participate

The use of existing survey questions is encouraged to ensure questions are well framed and enable comparability (e.g. the ONS Management Expectations Survey and the Small Business Survey).

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 for CRNs.

As participants will be completing this survey at the start, we will also have information on businesses who drop out. A privacy notice will be supplied at this point ensuring there are permissions for re-contacting (even for businesses who drop out of the programme).

Contractors will be responsible for providing indicative timings for this work. Early analysis will be needed for monitoring purposes and interim reporting. Analysis will be conducted after all baseline data is collected. BEIS will receive monitoring information monthly.

Counterfactual:
To establish a robust counterfactual for this work, we would aim to match businesses to a comparison group. We would envisage that the comparison group would also be surveyed at baseline and then again around 6 months after the programme, with a similar survey to the one administered to the beneficiary sample.

Contractors are asked to propose their approach for the counterfactual, including the sample, target number of achieved interviews, timelines and costs.

Phase 1b - Feedback surveys, in-depth interviews and interim reporting:

Feedback surveys:

The evaluation contractor will be responsible for designing and working with the LEP to administer feedback surveys. 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). The evaluation contractor will be asked to recommend how, when and how often they will collect and analyse this information. They will work with the delivery partners to administer the survey, and ensure it is integrated in the delivery of the programme to maximise response rates. For example, participating firms can fill this out at the end of sessions to maximise response rates.

A final feedback survey will be administered at the end of the final session. This will be slightly longer and ask businesses about what changes they intend to make in their business (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 March 2021.

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.

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 these delivery questions.

In-depth interviews:

During this phase, the evaluation contractors will also be asked to conduct 20 in-depth interviews with stakeholders to provide an understanding of the delivery of the programme and understand potential early outcomes. These interviews will be conducted early in the phase to inform future programme design. The timing of these interviews will be revised during the scoping phase but will likely be in October-November 2020. A sample of stakeholders to interview will be agreed during this phase, but could include:

- Selection of business owners going through the programme
- Delivery bodies (LEPs may outsource the programme)
- LEPs co-ordinating the programme
- SME owners who drop out or never take part (i.e. only fill out the baseline survey)
- Facilitators who are delivering the action learning sets

Interim evaluation report – by end March 2021

The contractor will provide BEIS with early findings report. They will also present the findings to the evaluation working and steering groups (see working arrangements section).
This report will form a standalone product at the end of financial year 20/21. At this point, the project will be reviewed and, subject to funding decisions, will progress to Phase 2.

Contract review point - After phase 1 a and b, there shall be a break clause. At this stage BEIS reserves the right to terminate the project. Bidders must clearly signal this break clause within their pricing and proposed methodology.

Phase 2 – Follow up surveys & in-depth interviews

Survey:

Participants will be followed up around 6 months after they have completed the last 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. The survey will collect information such as:

- What support the businesses actually received (as they may have dropped out/not attended all sessions)
- More detail around issues they are bringing to the ALS and actions taken away
- Whether their attitudes/behaviours have changed in terms of the operation of their business
- Whether they are aware of changes they can make to their business
- Whether they are planning on making any changes to their business
- Whether they have already made 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 perspective.
- Whether their business is still in existence or has been liquidated.

The survey will need to be representative of the participating organisations (6,000 in total) and seek to survey businesses that drop out also. As this data will not be available until baseline data has been collected, bidders will be asked to provide indicative sample sizes and costs, suggestions for sampling, and target number of achieved interviews. Once baseline data is available (during the first phase), the evaluation contractors will be asked to provide a more comprehensive sample frame.

As the sample will need to be representative of participating firms, other variables will also need to be considered (e.g. sector, size, location). The survey could also seek to survey businesses that have dropped out and/or never took the support up. The evaluation contractors will be asked to outline how they would do this.

The survey will be short to maximise response rates (around 10-15 minutes for participants and could be shorter for dropouts). The bidder is asked to state what methods they would use (e.g. phone or online survey), the associated cost and why the approach was chosen. 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 survey (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 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.

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.

As indicated in the baseline survey section, the contractor **will also have the option to survey a matched comparison group** at this point and is welcome to suggest their approach for this. 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.

In-depth Interviews:

To supplement the evidence gained from the surveys, 40 in depth interviews or case studies will be carried out. The aim of this is to further answer the research questions and gain a deeper understanding of what changes businesses are making to their businesses, how they are embedding changes and any barriers they face. The sample will depend on the evidence gained from the survey and outstanding evidence gaps, but could for example include interviewing some of the following stakeholder types:

- Participants who have implemented significant changes to their business.
- Employees in businesses where significant changes have occurred to understand how these changes have landed (to form a case study).
- Participants who have not made any changes, to understand how and why they have not been able to. This could provide evidence of what other support businesses may benefit from.

- Participants who have made different types of changes, to compare and contrast challenges and best practice for implementing.
- Different types of businesses to understand whether there are unique barriers to businesses of different sizes, sectors, locations etc.
- Participants who did not see the course through or who didn't end up taking it up at all, to understand whether they have made changes (for a qualitative comparison).

The sample selected will be different to those interviewed in Phase 1. The contractors are expected to provide indicative timings of when this work would take place.

Full evaluation report

The evaluation contractor will be responsible for producing an evaluation report summarising all of the evidence from phase 1 and 2. This will be of publishable standard and in the usual BEIS format (i.e. around 30 pages, executive summary, technical annexes). 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.

The contractors are also asked to deliver a presentation to the evaluation steering and working group 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 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 report will also go through BEIS's quality assurance processes, for example reviewed by multiple analysts and policy officials, with senior analyst and policy sign-off. Other external experts will be used for peer review throughout the project.

All research and outputs are required to meet standards set out in the aforementioned Business Support Evaluation Framework, the GSR's code and the MRS Code of Conduct.

Timetable

The indicative timings are that the project would last around 12 months, but the bidder is welcome to propose alternative timings. We anticipate the maximum time frame would be 18 months in total. The first phase would run from **August 2020 to March 2021 (*Contract review point - After phase 1 a and b, there shall be a break clause. At this stage BEIS reserves the right to terminate the project. Bidders must clearly signal this break clause within their pricing and proposed methodology*)**, and the second phase **from April 2021** onwards.

The baseline survey (if applicable) would be conducted in line with participant sign-ups – participants are being recruitment from August 2020 – mid February 2021.

The evaluation contractor will be asked to specify how, when and how often they will collect feedback information.

Final feedback surveys would be completed on a rolling basis as participants complete the sessions (9 weeks after sign-up) (end August 2020 – March 2021).

March 2021 - Contract review point - After phase 1 a and b, there shall be a break clause. At this stage BEIS reserves the right to terminate the project. Bidders must clearly signal this break clause within their pricing and proposed methodology.

Interviews with stakeholders (September - October 2020)

Follow up surveys will be completed 6 months after finishing the programme (March – September 2021).

In depth interviews (July - August 2021)

Write-up (August – September 2021)

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

Challenges

Challenges to this project may come in the form of ensuring that data can be collected virtually if social distancing measures remain in place. There may be a challenge in ensuring that this doesn't affect data quality. Contractors may have a challenge in unpicking what the virtual delivery will mean for compliance with the programme.

Response rates for surveys and participation in depth interviews might be challenging. Attrition rate for surveys may also be challenging. Contractors are welcome to suggest strategies to mitigate these points. Interviewing and surveying businesses that have not engaged may also be challenging. Surveys will be continuous as recruitment is on a rolling basis, which may require a larger amount of time and resource for coordination than if they were all in one go. Data will be collected by LEPs and it will need to be ensured that this is standardised. Contractors will face the challenge of balancing data requirements with burden on the businesses and delivery partners.

As social distancing measures are relaxed, this may mean a change in delivery for the programme from virtual to face-to-face delivery. There may be a challenge in adapting data collection and ensuring that the evaluation is not affected by any such inconsistencies in delivery. Given the changing circumstances, the contractor will have to ensure they can work flexibly. Early insights on the sessions may feed into changes so quick turnaround of insights will be an important part of the evaluation

Another key challenge will be capturing and assessing the impact of COVID-19 on the outcomes and applicability of the findings to other times and contexts, in addition to whether outcomes are a result of the programme itself versus other factors. The evaluation contractor will need to ensure that data is of sufficient quality for long term evaluation, and are asked to indicate how they will make sure they get the right data and what quality checks they will build in.

There may be a challenge in ensuring that there is a standalone product in the form of an interim evaluation report in time for the end of this financial year. The main challenge for this is likely to be the timing. Bidders will be asked to demonstrate how they will be in a position to provide this and not hold up further evaluation, should the evaluation contract continue into the next financial year.

Contractors are asked to suggest how they will address these challenges.

Working Arrangements

The successful contractor will be expected to identify one named point of contract through whom all enquiries can be filtered. A BEIS project manager will be assigned to the project and will be the central point of contact. Contractors will be expected to outline their own project management processes and their proposed working arrangements with the BEIS project manager, including how they will regularly communicate with BEIS and when face-to-face meetings with the wider project team will occur.

Contractors should also set out a risk register for the evaluation.

Governance:

LEP Co-ordinator – A grant co-ordinator will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the programme across LEPs. They will be used to disseminate information to LEPs regarding the evaluation.
Evaluation working group – this group will be more involved in the evaluation compared to the steering group. They will be involved in quality assuring key deliverables and feed into the content of the evaluation (e.g. sample frame, topic guides, survey design and reports). The group will consist of key BEIS analysts and policy colleagues to feed into the design and delivery of the evaluation.
Steering group – will be kept up to date with the progress of the evaluation and will be informed of key decisions. This group can also be drawn upon to sense check decisions. The emerging and full evaluation report will be presented to them. Members will include senior BEIS analysts and policy, HMT, LEPs, business schools, academics and wider stakeholders delivering business support. They will also provide a peer review and sign off function of the final and interim report.

4. Deliverables

The key deliverables of this project will be:

Phase 1;

- Baseline survey (if applicable)
- 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.
- Feedback Surveys
- Topic Guides – for Interviews
- Presentation of results to key stakeholders
- An interim report of emerging findings (internal only)

Contract review point - After phase 1 a and b, there shall be a break clause. At this stage BEIS reserves the right to terminate the project. Bidders must clearly signal this break clause within their pricing and proposed methodology.

Phase 2;

- Summary poster / infographic
- Published final report
- Presentation of results to key stakeholders
- Slide pack summary, systematically providing answers to the high-level research questions
- Other deliverables include 6-month follow up survey and survey data tables

Part 2: Contract Terms

Contract Terms v6.0

