

Digital Skills Innovation Fund
Project Evaluation Invitation to Tender

1. Background

The 2017 UK Digital Strategy¹ set out the Government's approach to ensuring that people have the skills they need to participate fully in the digital economy and are prepared for technological change. The Strategy emphasised the need to support people to up-skill and re-skill throughout their working lives.

It also emphasised the need for strong collaboration between the public and private sectors and civil society to improve digital skills in a coordinated and coherent way, so everyone has better access to the training they need. Finally, the Digital Strategy set out the importance of enabling a more diverse digital workforce, both as the right thing to do and as an important step to addressing our digital skills shortages.

2. Digital Skills Innovation Fund

Digital Skills Innovation Fund² is an innovative programme, funded by the Department for Digital Culture Media & Sport (DCMS) that aims to address local or regional digital skills challenges while supporting people from underrepresented groups and/ or disadvantaged backgrounds into digital roles.

Underrepresented Groups e.g. individuals disproportionately represented in UK unemployment statistics, individuals with low levels of skills attainment, long term unemployed

Digital Job Roles e.g. job roles that require some level of digital skills

The Digital Skills Innovation Fund also aims to encourage partnership working between Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), employers and skills providers to identify and act on opportunities to address local skills challenges and gaps in provision, and to identify and share good practice.

Four LEP areas were awarded a combined total of £1.1m to deliver innovative digital skills programmes focusing on two core objectives:

- a) To address a clearly identified local or regional digital skills need or challenge
- b) To help people from underrepresented groups and/or disadvantaged backgrounds, gain the skills needed to work in digital roles

3. Delivery Partners

The four LEP areas were awarded contracts to deliver the Digital Innovation Fund are:

- a) Lancashire
- b) Heart of the South West
- c) Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire & Sheffield City Region
- d) West England Combined Authority

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-digital-strategy>

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/736054/DIGITAL_SKILLS_INNOVATION_FUND.pdf

4. Scope of Delivery

Delivery will vary between each project however, it is anticipated projects will share the following core features:

- a) **Delivery Timeframe** – Projects to be delivered between May and October 2019 with key milestones achieved throughout delivery
- b) **Interventions** – Delivery methodologies will vary between LEP area however, interventions will include a range of classroom and community based learning programmes, remote learning, work experience, graduate and employer mentoring
- c) **Beneficiaries** – Unemployed, underemployed and employed individuals located in the four LEP areas
- d) **Participants** – It is estimated that a combined total of 500 participants will be supported to progress through the four projects
- e) **Stakeholders** – Stakeholders will include; Local Authorities, Skills Providers, Businesses, Specialist Digital Agencies, University Graduates, LEP's and DCMS
- f) **Location** – Digital skills training will take place across multiple locations within the four LEP areas
- g) **Outcomes** – Outcomes will include; accredited and none accredited learning, progression into work experience, further training, progression into employment, investment by employers in similar future training

5. Evaluative Approach

Conducting a formative evaluation of the four Digital Innovation Fund projects is a fundamental requirement of DCMS. As such, one organisation will be commissioned to carry out an in depth comparative evaluation in order to capture, consolidate and provide a data rich evaluation. The evaluation should focus on both impact and process.

Whilst there will be similarities across the four LEP projects and benchmark and comparison is useful, the evaluation should include allowances to capture the nuances of each program which contain within themselves a range of skills delivery methods.

6. Evaluation Objectives

The Digital Innovation Fund Evaluation will deliver on the following objectives:

- a) **Effectiveness of Interventions** – Analyse effectiveness of interventions and delivery models e.g. what is making a difference and having the most impact for disadvantaged groups? What is an effective employer led skills programme? This will include:
 - i. identifying the cost effectiveness of the programme and the barriers being addressed by the interventions
 - ii. identifying genuine innovative approaches to digital skills interventions
- b) **Inclusion, Engagement & Motivation** – What works in terms of raising awareness and motivating individuals, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds, to undertake digital skills training
- c) **Local Partnerships** – Measure effectiveness of Local Partnerships responsible for digital skills growth

7. Proposed Methodology

- a. This tender does not seek to be prescriptive of the methodology to be used by the contractor. Suggestions of how to meet the objectives of the project are welcome.
- b. However, it is assumed that the tenderer will carry out:
 - i. **Follow Ups** – Measure participants progression/achievements six months after project completion
 - ii. **Outputs & Progressions** – Monitor and produce robust reports capturing project outputs and progressions e.g. training outcomes, progressions in to work experience, employment or further training
 - iii. **Learning** – Identify key learnings, including interventions providing limited progression for beneficiaries
- c. A lead LEP contact will be responsible for overseeing the evaluation process with a schedule of expected reporting provided e.g. weekly emails, face to face meetings, monthly reports, final report
- d. At the offset the nuance evaluation requirements of each project should be captured

Each project will collect a range of key information (e.g. length of unemployment, participant demographics, previous skills levels, progressions) which will feed in to the evaluation.

8. Evaluation Timeframe

Work is expected to start June 2019:

- Draft report end of November 2019
- Final report end April 2020 (taking in to consideration six month follow up)

9. Draft Project Evaluation Application Form

Applications must demonstrate:

- a) Knowledge and understanding of the strategic objectives set out within the UK Digital Strategy and UK Digital Inclusion Strategy
- b) In depth knowledge and understanding of socio-economic factors enabling digital skills growth and inclusion
- c) Experience of developing and managing effective partnerships with LEP's, Local Authorities, Businesses and Digital Innovation Fund Stakeholders e.g. skills providers
- d) Experience of working with individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds
- e) Experience undertaking skills based research and analysis to produce robust reports, utilising qualitative and quantitative data
- f) Ability to meet the objectives of the Digital Skills Innovation Fund Evaluation, whilst providing 'value for money'

- g) Applicants to provide an 'Evaluation Plan' (on no more than two side of side of A4) demonstrating how the evaluation objectives will be met, including a timeline for delivery indicating key milestones. Application must also:
- I. Identify key risks for the evaluation and how these would be addressed e.g. risk register
 - II. Identify how GDPR and ethical considerations will be met
 - III. Identify plans for ownership of intellectual rights (if required)
 - IV. Identify and design a standard for collecting participant information that can be shared with the project and evaluation partner, therefore reducing the duplication and request for participant information

10. Award Criteria

The successful quote will be determined based on the following four criteria:

Criteria	Weighting
Value for Money	30%
Quality, innovation, credibility, excellence	25%
Impact	25%
Implementation	20%

Each criterion will be scored out of 4. The interpretations of the scorings are:

Score	Description
0	Unacceptable Nil or inadequate response. Fails to demonstrate an ability to meet the requirement
1	Poor Response is partially relevant but generally poor. The response addresses some elements of the requirement but contains insufficient/limited detail or explanation to demonstrate how the requirement will be fulfilled
2	Acceptable Response is relevant and acceptable. The response addresses a broad understanding of the requirement but may lack details on how the requirement will be fulfilled in certain areas
3	Good Response is relevant and good. The response is sufficiently detailed to demonstrate a good understanding and provides details on how the requirements will be fulfilled
4	Excellent Response is completely relevant and excellent overall. The response is comprehensive, unambiguous and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the requirement and provides details of how the requirement will be met in full

11. Submission

Application queries - Should be submitted to Owen Harvey at owen.harvey@nottinghamcity.gov.uk or 0115 8762820

Costs Range - It is anticipated that the total value of this contract will be £40,000. A full breakdown of costs with day rates to be included in the submission.

Deadline - The deadline for receiving submissions is noon on **Monday 3rd June** . You will be informed of the decision within 5 working days. Your submission should be emailed to owen.harvey@nottinghamcity.gov.uk