**UKSPF Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q1**. 1.2 The Need for Investment the **word count** is stated as 800 words. Could funders please confirm whether the word count is 800 words for each sub-section (1.2.1 to 1.2.6) or 800 words in total across all sub-sections? We had noted that the application form states that word counts should be proportionate to the value of the bid and are conscious that an overall word count of 800 for section 1.2 (approximately 130 words per sub-section) would not leave room for sufficient detail to reflect our bid value

**A** - The word count is across all of the sections within 1.2. As stated, the word count is **indicative** and should be proportionate to the value of your bid, however, if a project is particularly complex or you are working with partners and require additional words to ensure that sufficient information is provided this is acceptable, but please ensure your answers are as concise as possible.

**Q2.** For section 8.0 **Communications & Marketing Plan** there is no narrative box or word count. Could funders please confirm whether bidders are required to submit anything for this section?

**A** -Applicants are not required to provide any detail here. This is to highlight that a Communications and Marketing Plan will be required for successful projects but TVCA will work with successful applicants to develop a plan following approval.

**Q3.** Can funders please confirm whether there is a **word count** for question 2.2 Recommended Proposal?

**A** - There is no word limit however applicants should ensure that their response is concise.

**Q4.** Is there a **portal** that we need to be registered on as a company to be able to see all clarification questions that come in and if we need to use this to upload any documents etc?

**A** - FAQs will be uploaded onto the TVCA website on the [UKSPF pages](https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/investment/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-ukspf/). Access is open to all. See the Open Call document for submission details. Documents to be submitted via email.

**Q5.** In terms of providing **costs**, is the expectation that these are on the basis of actual incurred cost? In other words, if successful, claims would be made with evidence of actual cost incurred, such as salary costs paid, and not on the basis of an hourly rate, as would be the case in procured activity?

**A** –All project costs should relate to actual defrayed expenditure.

**Q6.** Can you advise if the estimation, and ultimate evidencing of, **overhead cost** is permissible using a Simplified Cost Option approach, such as 15% of actual salary costs, or would you expect overhead costs to be evidenced to actual defrayed expenditure?

**A** - We are not offering a simplified cost option approach. UKSPF is a competitive process therefore applicants should carefully consider costings during the development of their project.

**Q7.** For both the People & Skills and Supporting Local Business interventions, please can you confirm what **financial evidence** would be required from successful parties in order to submit a grant claim? Are indirect costs set at a certain percentage of staff costs? e.g. do they follow the ESF **15% or 40% methodology**?

**A** - We are not offering a simplified cost option approach. UKSPF is a competitive process therefore applicants should carefully consider costings during the development of their project. We would expect applicants to retain all evidence relating to costs incurred for audit purposes. Upon submission of a claim and associated transaction sheet we will request a random sample where applicants will be expected to supply for example, invoice and evidence of payment, redacted pay slip etc

**Q8.** Could you clarify whether it will be possible to agree **monthly billing** for any grant payments to ease the cash flow burden on delivery partners

**A** - As stated in the Open Call document, standard payment terms are quarterly in arrears following submission of a grant claim, however, individual terms can be discussed with successful applicants in **exceptional** circumstances during the contracting stage only.

**Q9.** Can you confirm that the form indicated is the correct one to respond to this call? And if so, it’s not clear to us where to detail our actual **proposal for delivery**, could you confirm?

**A** - The application for Supporting Local Business (SLB) is accessed via the link in the call document. Project overview and purpose of the investment proposal should be provided in the Introduction.

**Q10.** Do we need to **register interest** formally?

**A –** No.

**Q11.** Is the opportunity on a **tender portal**?

**A –** No. These opportunities are Open Calls and Investment Proposals should be submitted via the email address stated in the call documents.

**Q12.** Where will answers to the **clarification questions** be found?

**A** – FAQs will be added to the TVCA website and will be kept as up to date as possible.

**Q13.** What’s the deadline for submitting **clarification** questions?

**A** - We have not set a deadline for clarification questions for Supporting Local Business but it is advised to submit questions at the earliest opportunity to ensure a timely response.

The deadline for clarification questions for People & Skills is 19th April 2023.

**Q14.** Supporting Local Business - If bidding for more than one lot, how and where can we explain where **economies of scale** can be reached?

**A –** You should ensure that you cross reference throughout the forms.

**Q15.** Supporting Local Business - Will there be just **one winner per Lot** or can multiple suppliers be appointed?

**A –** There will be one winner per Lot.

**Q16.** If we bring in a **delivery partner** for a specific aspect of a lot, can that partner be named in other bids as well or are they required to be unique?

**A** - Yes they can be part of other bids as long as there is sufficient capacity to deliver both/all. This will be tested via due diligence.

**Q17.** Is each lot expected to acquire its own pipeline of customers, and therefore should be allocating a budget for **marketing** and promotions?

**A –** Yes.

**Q18.** Where there is **no word limit** indicated (e.g. 2.2, 6.0), is there no word limit?

**A** - Correct but please ensure answers are concise.

**Q19.** Can we include **graphics** in the response document where helpful?

**A** - Yes as long as they are relevant.

**Q20.** Should we include the proposed **Communications Plan** as an attachment? What is the response required for question 8?

**A** - No. TVCA will work with successful applicants to develop a Communications and Marketing plan. This question is to highlight the fact that one will be required.

**Q21.** The assessment guidance suggests a **quarterly profile** will score higher - can we amend the existing template to allow for a quarterly breakdown? Or can we attach a quarterly profile?

**A** - The quarterly breakdown should be provided within the Excel Evidence pack.

**Q22.** What **quality marks** is the authority expecting?

**A** - We do not require quality marks.

**Q23.** Supporting Local Business - Do programme-wide **output and outcome targets** exist and can the authority share those? This would help us understand what sorts of specific activities are required, and ensure we can support the authority to meet your overall UKSPF milestones.

**A** - The Supporting Local Business call includes the relevant outputs/outcomes for the investment priority but as UKSPF is a competitive process it is for applicants to consider what is achievable and provide targets accordingly.

**Q24.** We note the specification asks that we do not attach **appendices.** Presumably this is no appendices except where the authority has specified we include them e.g. a Risk Register?

**A –** That is correct.

**Q25.** How would you like us to detail any **profit** and **central support costs** for this delivery. We assume we can show this within a management fee?

**A** - Revenue/income generation should be provided in table 2 question 4.1. Delivery costs should be included within Table 1 and broken down quarterly within the Excel Evidence Pack to be supplied with your application.

**Profit** – It is acceptable for you to make a profit/surplus in your general business activity however costs relating to the delivery of UKSPF activity will be paid based on evidence of eligible defrayed actual costs. As confirmed previously, those actual costs may include, for example, a management fee (where properly incurred in relation to the project) which we assume will include an element of profit in the normal course of business.

**Q26.** Please can you forward a copy of the **Terms and Conditions** for the opportunity?

**A** - The draft Funding Agreement is currently being reviewed. Once finalised it will be uploaded to our website.

**Q27.** Are you able to provide any **target volumes** for the outputs and outcomes identified (e.g. number of new businesses created) that you would expect providers to achieve - or is it for the bidder to determine what they would expect to achieve within the funding envelope?

**A** - The Supporting Local Business call includes the relevant outputs/outcomes for the investment priority but as UKSPF is a competitive process it is for applicants to consider what is achievable and provide targets accordingly.

**Q28.** Do the words used in the Risk Register and the Logic Model documents we will be uploading count towards the total **word count** under 1.2 as well?

**A –** Words included in the Risk Register & Logic Model are excluded from the word count.

**Q29.** Under the call for ‘Supporting Local Business’, we recognise that Tees Valley Business currently deliver a range of business interventions which are similar to the open call. Are the ‘Business Consultants’ who provide these services, or any other staff associated with this provision, in scope for **TUPE**? Are there any organisations currently delivering Lots 1 & 2 of People & Skills who would also be in scope for TUPE?

**A –** Reg 3 (1) (b) (iii) states that TUPE applies when “*activities cease to be carried out by a contractor or a subsequent contractor on a client’s behalf (whether or not those activities had previously been carried out by the client on his own behalf) and are carried out instead by the client on his own behalf*”. We believe that no client/contractor relationship with current delivery partners, which is necessary for the provisions under Regulation 3(1)b)iii), applies. We would however strongly recommend that each prospective bidder undertakes their own due diligence/seeks their own legal counsel.

**Q30.** When would you expect **delivery** of the People & Skills activity to commence?

**A –**The expectation is that activity commences in June 2023, however this is dependent on the indicative timeline, which is provided within the open call document.

**Q31.** People & Skills **-** It is noted that the **spend deadline** is 31 March 2025. How does that work taking into account some of the output definitions of being 6 months in work and being able to count them?

**A –** We understand that there are some concerns around this, we will discuss in detail with successful delivery partners how this builds into the programme exit strategy. The spend deadline is important as it aligns with the spending review period relating to this activity. If there are any flexibilities we will update the FAQs.

**Q32.** People & Skills - What is the **minimum participant age**? Are we missing out a cohort of young people who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training)?

**A –** The minimum participant age is 16. The purpose of this call is to support Economically Inactive individuals. If individuals are NEET and not available for Education, Employment or Training, they would be considered as economically inactive, providing they meet the definition on page 3 of the open call document. If they are NEET and available for Education, Employment or Training they are not considered to be economically inactive as they are available for work.

**Q33.** People & Skills - Do the **clients** in each Lot not **overlap**?

**A –** No the target cohorts for each Lot are different. The call document states that participants who are eligible for Lot 1 are not eligible for Lot 2, and vice versa. Successful providers are expected to cross refer any individuals who are not eligible for their Lot to other appropriate support. We have considered learnings and feedback from other programmes of activity including ESF and other local provision to develop the call. In addition, we have used our evidence base to target groups under the different Lots.

**Q34.** People & Skills – Is there an expectation that there would be **cross referrals** to other provision such as UKSPF, Multiply, AEB etc?

**A –** Yes, we would expect referrals between and across all appropriate funding streams, including but not limited to skills provision.

**Q35.** People & Skills – What are the **evidence requirements** for the individuals?

**A –** We acknowledge that it can be difficult to obtain evidence for the target cohorts of this programme. DWP have confirmed that they will not share information on individuals for the purpose of this programme. The economically inactive status of individuals should be assessed and evidenced at the point of entering the programme, this is done as part of the registration to the programme process. Individuals who do not meet the definition as provided on page 3 of the open call document will not be eligible for the programme.

**Q36.** People & Skills - Will **DWP** refer onto the programmes?

**A –** No as DWP do not actively engage with the target cohort for this programme.

**Q37.** People & Skills - Are the **outputs** listed in the call the minimum required?

**A –** Yes, the output and outcome numbers provided are the minimum we expect to see supported..

**Q38.** People & Skills - If an individual enters the programme, disengages and then re-enters at a later date would this count as 1 individual?

**A** - Yes

**Q39.** People & Skills – Applicants are required to name **delivery partners** up front but if the lead identifies other suitable partners can they be added during delivery?

**A –** Yes. There is a need to be flexible and responsive to ensure successful delivery. There is an expectation that any changes such as this are reported to TVCA via the performance management process.

**Q40.** People & Skills - Would you expect to see **multiple contracts** across the Local Authority areas?

**A -** We are looking for bids to deliver across the Tees Valley.

**Q41.** People & Skills – Will there be checks carried out to ensure that all **named partners** are actually delivering on behalf of the project?

**A –** There is an expectation that the progress report, provided via the performance management process, should include details of activity during that claim period together with any partner involvement. Therefore, any issues with named partners not delivering or partners changing during delivery should be addressed via this process.

**Q42.** People & Skills – The open call states that **letters of support** should be provided where working with delivery partners. Is there a template for this letter? Would an email suffice?

**A –** No there is no standard template. A letter would be preferred but email would be acceptable if it is clearly branded and sent/signed by a senior member of the proposed partner organisation.

**Q43.** We are considering a shared application to respond to lot number 7 of Supporting Local Business. If we were to submit a combined bid with another local authority area, could we concentrate delivery in those **two geographical areas** only?

**A** - Delivery of Lot 7 across only 2 LA areas would not provide Tees Valley wide delivery and as stated in the call we will not accept proposals for delivery of part of an individual Lot. In this circumstance it is recommended that entities seek to partner with other organisations to be in a position to submit a consortium proposal for the full Lot value and ensuring Tees Valley wide delivery.

**Q44.** Supporting Local Business - Please can you confirm whether providers are allowed to make **profit/surplus** through the delivery of this contract?

**A –** It is acceptable for you to make a profit/surplus in your general business activity however costs relating to the delivery of UKSPF activity will be paid based on evidence of eligible defrayed actual costs. As confirmed previously, those actual costs may include, for example, a management fee (where properly incurred in relation to the project) which we assume will include an element of profit in the normal course of business.

**Q45.** People & Skills - Under lot 2 outcomes, what is the **definition** of interpersonal skills and how would this increase in employability and interpersonal skills be evidenced?

**A** - The definition for the outcome ‘Number of people reporting increased employability through development of interpersonal skills funded by UKSPF’ is ‘The number of people who have been supported by UKSPF funded activity who have reported increased employability through the acquisition or improvement of interpersonal skills relevant to employment and skills settings, including but not limited to confidence, communication skills, working with others, time management, motivation to work or to training.’ This will be evidenced via the key objective of ‘Implement an action focused approach to identify and enable the achievement of personal goals to move individuals towards the labour market, including self-employment.’ The action focussed approach requires action plans to be developed and updates on progress to be recorded, this includes interpersonal skills. The action plans provide evidence for progress where it is not possible to provide physical evidence for the improvement of interpersonal skills.

**Q46.** People & Skills - Under lot 2, are students who have completed education within the last 12 months be eligible as a target cohort/classed as **economically inactive**?

**A** - Please refer to page 7 of the open call document which provides details on the target cohort and additional eligibility for Lot 2. In addition, please refer to page 3 of the open call document which provides the Economically Inactive Definition. Students who have completed education and are searching for work are not considered economically inactive under the definition as they are available for work.

**Q47.** People & Skills - Under lot 2, would people who have accessed **YEI provision** be eligible?

**A** - Please refer to page 7 of the open call document which provides details on the target cohort and additional eligibility for Lot 2. In addition, please refer to page 3 of the open call document which provides the Economically Inactive Definition. Q. 32 of the FAQ document provides information on the eligibility of young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

**Q48.** Will TVCA **share data** with DWP?

**A -** We will discuss general performance and findings with DWP where appropriate,

**Q49.** How would an individual’s economically inactive status be **evidenced**?

**A** - Similar to Q35 of FAQ document – same response provided - We acknowledge that it can be difficult to obtain evidence for the target cohorts for this programme. DWP have confirmed that they will not share information on individuals for the purpose of this programme. The economically inactive status of individuals should be assessed and evidenced at the point of entering the programme, this is done as s part of the registration to the programme process. Individuals who do not meet the definition as provided on page 3 of the open call document will not be eligible for the programme.