UKSPF Supporting Local Business Open Call (TVCA UKSPFSLB004)

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated 29.01.24

Q1. **Can you clarify if the targets required are for existing or potential businesses, for example the number of business start-up?**

Targets are for all businesses once they are adopted as a business. So a start up business can only be counted as a business receiving support once trading. Applicants wishing to provide support to potential businesses to start up should add this as a separate output.

Q2. **Are on-costs required for the submission?**

Where a submission does not include 'staffing' we would not expect oncosts to be claimed.

Please refer to page 18 of the call specification - Project expenditure and costs, which states:

Projects under this Open Call can contain three types of costs:

• Direct Costs: Non staffing costs which are directly related to the delivery of the project activity. They will be subject to audit and must be capable of being traced back to the source transaction.

• Direct Staff Costs: The salaries and on costs for those staff delivering the project or engaged in activity directly related to the implementation and management of the project.

• Indirect Costs: A fixed cost calculation using a 12% flat rate applied to Direct Staff costs, this would cover costs which are not or cannot be attributed directly to the project activity, meaning an actual cost cannot be attributed to the project.

Q3. How will the targets/outputs for individual bids be assessed against the overall investment plan?

Please refer to page 16 of the call specification - How bids will be assessed.

Q4. Will current approved UKSPF bids targets/outputs be set against the overall investment plan?

Yes

Q5. Is there a maximum value for 1 submission?

No. However, the call specification states:

'Whilst there is no upper limit defined, there is an expectation that no single proposition will fulfil all programme requirements and provide the range of innovative and pilot solutions we expect to see.'

Q6. If we currently have existing programmes with TVCA can we apply?

Yes. However, programme/project delivery under this call must enhance or add value to any existing provision.

Q7. Can we start programmes/projects ahead of approval?

Please refer to page 18 of the call specification - Project expenditure and costs, which states:

'Successful projects can begin to incur costs and spend at risk from the date of grant approval.'

Q8. Can you confirm the timelines for development and submission deadline?

Deadline for submissions is 17:00 on Wednesday 31-January-2024

Q9. Can targets/outputs be counted more than once against different programmes?

Each project should clearly set out the Outputs and Outcomes it will deliver as this will be used to assess Value for Money. Where there is duplication of output reporting this should be clearly indicated.

Q10. **Can capital equipment be supported through this?**

UPDATED RESPONSE (25.01.24)

Please refer to page 18 of the call specification - Project expenditure and costs, which states:

'Projects must be revenue based and must deliver activity that is in line with the Tees Valley UKSPF Investment Plan and align with the Supporting Local Business Interventions.

Projects that focus on the construction or major refurbishment of buildings, the purchase of land or the purchase of large pieces of equipment will not be supported.

Purchases of equipment required to deliver the project are eligible for revenue grant support under the de-minimus level of £5,000.

Q11. **What is the weighting for each element of the submission?**

Please refer to page 16 of the call specification - How bids will be assessed.

Q12. **What is the value for money that is required to be evidenced through a submission?**

Please refer to page 16 of the call specification - How bids will be assessed.

Q13. **Can a bid be under £100k?**

No.

Q14. **Can we submit multiple applications that are interlinked, or should each application be separate?**

Where an applicant is submitting proposals for more than one project, each project should be distinct and a standalone project. These will be assessed as separate projects.

The applicant should consider the level of interdependency, if this is high, a single application highlighting the separate delivery activities could be submitted.

Q15. **Are the payment terms flexible as the paid quarterly in arrears may adversely affect cash flow in some businesses?**

Please refer to page 15 of the call specification - Payment terms, which states:

'TVCA's 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.'

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Q16. **Just looking for some clarity on the outputs and outcomes for the call off for business support. Specifically in relation to the number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be business ready (200) and then the number of new businesses created is (985).**

As this call off relates to business start this doesn't make sense as you would expect a higher number than the 200 to convert into the start-up of new businesses i.e. if you were looking for 985 new businesses you would expect at least engagement of maybe approximately 4000 potential entrepreneurs.

Any guidance would be appreciated.

These two outputs are distinct for each other. The 200 potential entrepreneurs are not assumed to be the totality of the start-ups.

Q17. **Are the organisations who bid for this first time round being invited to resubmit do you know?**

Any organisation that applied in previous lots, whether successful or not are eligible to submit a bid as this is a new round of funding and a new appraisal process.

Q18. **We are interested in making a submission for the open call, but unable to make the 10th January event. Could we please ask for a copy of the output from the event and the forms for submission once live?**

Following the information session on Wednesday 10th January 2024, information relating to the Supporting Local Business Open Call can be found here:

https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/business/supporting-local-business-open-call-fund/

This includes the opportunity to book a place at one of the 1-1 Clinics taking place w/c 15th January 2024 – should this be of interest to you.

Q19. **Can I just clarify that it is 800 words in total for all responses to questions 1.2-1.7 and not each question?**

The proposal form states, '800 words in total for 1.2 through to 1.7'.

The proposal form also states, 'Word Counts are indicative, and the amount of detail provided should be proportionate to the value of the bid.'

If a proposal 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.

Q20. **Is there a PDF version of the application form available? We can submit our final application via the webform; however, it would be helpful to see the form in full prior to this.**

An 'Offline Application Form Template' can be found at the bottom of this web page:

https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/business/supporting-local-business-open-call-fund/#

Q21. **We cannot locate the funding agreement terms and conditions that are mentioned in the Due Diligence section of the Specification, could you point us to where they are or provide us with a copy?**

We do not provide a copy of the Funding Agreement prior to funding award. At that point the agreement will be provided to the successful applicant.

Q22. **I've looked over the information and it seems to be aimed at people who are offering support rather than asking for support. Are these 1-1 meetings at all aimed at organisations who are looking for funding?**

The 1-1 clinics are for those organisations wishing to apply for UKSPF funding to deliver the support service. Any business that is looking for Business Support in the meantime should contact TVCA Business Solutions team via: business@teesvalley-ca.gov.uk

Q23. **Can individuals supported on this programme access dual funding? i.e., could Restart participants receiving self-employment support also receive this funding to grow their business?**

It is anticipated that in order to access business growth funding a business must be trading and have clear growth potential. Depending upon the support service that is approved, each business/individual requesting access to the support on offer will be assessed to the appropriateness of their support needs. Restart individuals could not access duplicate funding for start-up.

Q24. **What level of financial assistance will individuals/businesses be able to access under intervention E23? There doesn't appear to be outcomes associated with this like there are for E29.**

There are no defined levels of financial assistance, this should be included in any submission if required. The outputs and outcomes for both E23 and E29 are highlighted in the Tees Valley UKSPF Evidence Base – Supporting Local Business Logic Model.

Q25. **Should we factor in loans and bursaries to individuals/startups/businesses when putting budgets together? Or will this support be separate?**

Each submission should include all required funding to deliver the proposal submitted. This would include any type of financial assistance to individuals / Startups / Businesses.

Q26. **In the Specification under the Submitting a Bid section it says that;**

Bids must be submitted to TVCA using this email address: UKSPFsubmissions@teesvalley-ca.gov.uk and that the initial assessment of bids will be based on information provided in the Investment Proposal Form only. Please do not attach appendices or include links to websites.

Please could you clarify if we are to submit the online proposal or complete the offline version and submit by email and are we able to submit attachments i.e. Delivery Plan, risk register, Impact Plan etc.?

All applications should be made on the online proposal template. The offline version is for your drafting process. If any applicant has any submission issues, please let us know before the submission deadline.

Q27. **We note from the UKSPF Supporting Local Business Proposal Offline Form that "Word Counts are indicative and the amount of detail provided should be proportionate to the value of the bid", please can you therefore clarify if there is a maximum word count associated with each question and also clarify how the evaluation criteria will be applied fairly and equitably should there be a wide range of bids received, each with a varying level of response.**

Please refer to page 16 and 17 of the Call Specification - How bids will be assessed and Allocation Process.

If a proposal 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.

Q28. **Please can you clarify what format the Project Plan needs to be in?**

We have not determined a format for the project plan. Each applicant can determine the most suitable format for their submission. The plan should incorporate relevant and sufficient detail to demonstrate the plan to implement and achieve the outputs and outcomes for the lifetime of the project.

Q29. **Please can you confirm the Quality weighting and Price weighting, we note from page 16 of the Specification that the quality assessment amounts to 100%, however, project costs are included within this, can you confirm if quality (technical responses) therefore amounts to 90% and the commercial (price) element equates to 10% of the score?**

The weightings are as described on page 16 of the Call Specification and are not aggregated to a simple split of Quality and Cost as this query describes.

Q30. **In relation to the 800 words available for responses 1.2 – 1.7, and taking into consideration the level of detail requested across the 6 different questions, please can the Authority consider reviewing and increasing the respective word counts for each of these questions, in order that bidders are able to articulate a full and comprehensive response for each question?**

The Lead Authority will not change the indicative word counts at this late stage. However please refer to the following information.

The proposal form states, '800 words in total for 1.2 through to 1.7'.

The proposal form also states, 'Word Counts are indicative, and the amount of detail provided should be proportionate to the value of the bid.'

If a proposal 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.

Q31. **Please can you confirm whether the 'Data Protection Impact Assessment' needs to be completed as part of the submission as well as the 200-word written response to Q3.4?**

Yes, a 'Data Protection Impact Assessment' is required to be submitted with your proposal. We have supplied a sample template so the form of this could vary.

Q32. **Please can you clarify if the Equalities Impact Assessment template needs to be completed and submitted at the time of bid submission or if this can be provided if successful with our application.**

Whilst this is not a condition for submission, it will be a condition for any funding approval. In order to minimise any delay in finalising the funding agreement it would be preferrable that this was completed prior to submission. Submissions will not be penalised for not completing and submitting this proforma.

Q33. With regards to question 3.5 Subsidy Control, please can you confirm what responsibilities the bidder has with regards to ensuring compliance with Subsidy Control regulations? The regulations available on the government website are in relation to the responsibilities of the commissioner, rather than the bidder.

It is the responsibility of each applicant to consider how they respond to the requirements of Subsidy Control and that their processes and recording are compliant with Subsidy Control.

Q34. Is there a system in place where we need to record our data (outputs)?

Each supplier is expected to have appropriate data capture systems and so will utilise their own recording systems, including capturing relevant data. This should then be supplied in a format attached to the Monthly/Quarterly returns as agreed with successful applicants as part of the Funding Agreement.

Please also refer to page 22 of the call specification - Monitoring and evaluation, which states:

'All proposals will be required to set out how and when monitoring and evaluation will be carried out and if successful, they will be required to develop a full Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.'

'Project performance will be monitored against agreed targets, milestones and financial profile.'

Q35. With regards to Q1.3, please can you confirm whether 'evidence in relation to cost, demand, turnover and assets' is referring to that of the provider or of that of our intended participants?

Q1.3 relates to any existing delivery arrangements known by the applicant, including any delivered by the applicant. Where these are listed, as much evidence as possible should be provided as to the cost of those services and demand etc.

Q36. Please can the Authority confirm whether matched revenue grants to businesses are permissible within programme offer. The reason for asking is that there is no corresponding SPF output on pp 13 on the specification.

Revenue grants to businesses are considered as financial support to businesses. Whilst this is not listed as a specific output under E23, if it is an integral part of the proposal, outputs should be listed to support the proposal.

The outputs and outcomes listed are considered as a minimum list. Applicants are encouraged to add additional outputs to support their proposals and demonstrate impact.

Q37. Please can the Authority provide the slides (or recordings) in relation to the event on 10 January to enable access for all potential bidders.

The Information Session slides can be found on the following TVCA UKSPF webpage under 'Supporting Documents':

https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/business/supporting-local-business-open-call-fund/

Q38. Please can the Authority provide definitions and underpinning evidence expectations for the outputs and outcomes specified.

Please refer to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund: outputs and outcomes definitions (2), which can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-outputs-and-outcomes-definitions-2

Q39. The Authority have specified that bidders should complete a Risk Register and Project Plan. Is there an agreed format for this or can bidders determine this?

We have not determined a format for the Risk Register or Project Plan. Each applicant can determine the most suitable format for their submission. The Project Plan should incorporate relevant and sufficient detail to demonstrate the plan to implement and achieve the outputs and outcomes for the lifetime of the project.

A Risk Register template and Risk Register Guidance Notes can be found on the following TVCA UKSPF web page under Supporting Documents:

https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/business/supporting-local-business-open-call-fund/

Q40. Would it be possible for you to confirm if we can add in web-links for testimonials and illustrations into the online form to keep the word-count down please?

Please refer to page 21 of the call specification - Submitting a bid, which states:

'Please do not attach appendices or include links to websites.'

Weblinks should not be included. If they are, they will not be opened, nor their detail considered as part of the appraisal process.

The proposal form states, 'Word Counts are indicative, and the amount of detail provided should be proportionate to the value of the bid.'

If a proposal 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.

Q41. **Please could you confirm if the SRO and Project Lead can be the same person.**

The SRO and Project Lead should be two different people, if this is not possible, please explain why in the project proposal and delivery details, including how the project will be managed and how any issues will be escalated and/or dealt with.

Q42. **Which organisations were awarded from the Supporting Local Business Round 1 competition?**

UPDATED RESPONSE (26.01.24)

Information will shortly be available on the Tees Valley Combined Authority website for each of the four suppliers.

In the interim, a summary of the aims, objectives and proposed delivery for each of the 4 Lots, as specified in the call specification for the Supporting Local Business Open Call TVCA UKSPFSLB002, can be found in Appendix A at the end of the FAQ responses.

Whilst we wish to minimise duplication, there is scope in each of the four areas currently funded via UKSPF under Supporting Local Business i.e. Digital Support, Net Zero, Supply Chain Development and Access to Investment.

Potential applicants for the current Open Call (TVCA UKSPFSLB004) can request a 1-2-1 conversation with the TVCA Development team to understand more about the current UKSPF Supporting Local Business offer.

Q43. **Within the call specification, you state that there is an existing UKSPF programme already awarded funding through Supporting Local Business in a previous round for:**

Digital - supporting businesses to adopt digital technologies and develop new products and services.

Is there any further information available on this programme and the support that is currently being delivered so that we can ensure complementarity and avoid overlap in any potential bids?

UPDATED RESPONSE (26.01.24)

Information will shortly be available on the Tees Valley Combined Authority website for each of the four suppliers.

In the interim, a summary of the aims, objectives and proposed delivery for each of the 4 Lots, as specified in the call specification for the Supporting Local Business Open Call TVCA UKSPFSLB002, can be found in Appendix A at the end of the FAQ responses.

Whilst we wish to minimise duplication, there is scope in each of the four areas currently funded via UKSPF under Supporting Local Business i.e. Digital Support, Net Zero, Supply Chain Development and Access to Investment.

Potential applicants for the current Open Call (TVCA UKSPFSLB004) can request a 1-2-1 conversation with the TVCA Development team to understand more about the current UKSPF Supporting Local Business offer.

Q44. **Would the below be appropriate/eligible Direct Costs?**

1. **Project marketing**
2. **Project legal fees**
3. **Project equipment (electrical monitoring equipment etc)**
4. **Project postage**

Assuming said staff were 100% on the project:

5. **Project staff recruitment fees**
6. **Project staff external training fees (if any)**

7. **Project staff mileage**
8. **Project staff subsistence**
9. **Project staff travel**

10. **Project staff mobile phone**
11. **Project staff hardware (laptops etc)**
12. **Project staff computer software (specialist software necessary for the project)**
13. **Project staff 365 subscription & external ICT support**

What kind of procurement process would 5 and 13 be subject to? Please provide as much detail as possible.

All costs listed (numbered 1-13) are eligible Direct Costs as they all are linked to direct delivery of the project.

The overarching public procurement guidance within section 7.6.2 of the Prospectus launched on 13 April 2022 remains applicable to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

Businesses are required to follow procurement rules when purchasing goods and services with the support of a UKSPF grant, as set out in the UKSPF procurement guidance UK Shared Prosperity Fund: procurement (8) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-procurement-8

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Q45. **Some staff on management/delivery will be owner/directors remunerated through a mix of salary and dividends. Can we include dividends within the direct staff costs for the purpose of application?**

Dividends should not be included in direct staff costs.

Q46. **Please can you provide an example copy of the contract which will be used for successful bidders to the current UKSPF Supporting Local Business call?**

We do not provide a copy of the Funding Agreement prior to funding award. At that point the agreement will be provided to the successful applicant.

Q47. **Could I please ask a question regarding the UKSPF tender, specifically one of the E29 outputs 'number of businesses receiving financial support other than grants'. What can be classed as financial support that wouldn't be a grant?**

Please refer to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund: outputs and outcomes definitions (2), which can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-outputs-and-outcomes-definitions-2

Q48. **Is there any information the Lead Authority can provide to outline what has been commissioned already in previous UKSPF Supporting Local Business projects so that we can tailor the proposal accordingly?**

UPDATED RESPONSE (26.01.24)

Information will shortly be available on the Tees Valley Combined Authority website for each of the four suppliers.

In the interim, a summary of the aims, objectives and proposed delivery for each of the 4 Lots, as specified in the call specification for the Supporting Local Business Open Call TVCA UKSPFSLB002, can be found in Appendix A at the end of the FAQ responses.

Whilst we wish to minimise duplication, there is scope in each of the four areas currently funded via UKSPF under Supporting Local Business i.e. Digital Support, Net Zero, Supply Chain Development and Access to Investment.

Potential applicants for the current Open Call (TVCA UKSPFSLB004) can request a 1-2-1 conversation with the TVCA Development team to understand more about the current UKSPF Supporting Local Business offer.

Q49. **E23: Number of businesses receiving non-financial support. Will this to be achieved within the 12-month timeframe?**

Yes. All outputs and outcomes must be achieved by 31st March 2025.

Q50. **E23: Number of new businesses created.**

a. **Are there enough people who are at the right stage to start a business at the rate required which is 2.69 new business a day to achieve this target?**

b. **How many new businesses were created and trading in the TV region in the past 12 months?**

c. **If support is provided in the later stage of the agreement, however the business gets set up outside of the contracted dates, will they be included in the target figures?**

The Lead Authority cannot provide responses to questions (a) and (b).

It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide evidence of demand for their proposal.

However, please refer to the Tees Valley UKSPF Evidence Base, which can be found here:

https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/business/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2023/12/UKSPF-Evidence-Base.pdf

(c) If a business is provided with support via the proposal submitted it can be included in the target figures reported.

Q51. **The KPI targets appear to be stretched, is there a clawback penalty being applied in the contracts? The Lead Authority cannot provide responses to questions (a) and (b).**

Targets are stretching but each applicant should propose realistic targets they feel can be achieved through their proposals.

Underperformance can could affect continuation of any funding agreement in place. The implications for underperformance will be defined in the funding agreement.

Please refer to page 15 of the call specification - Payment terms, which states: 'TVCA's standard payment terms are quarterly in arrears following submission of a grant claim'.

As payment is paid quarterly in arrears clawback is not currently the approach in place. Each quarterly grant claim will be assessed, and payment made accordingly.

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Q52. **In order to not allocate a proportion of the £5.5m fund too hastily, and not being of full; benefit to TV business community:**

- **Is there any interest in holding back, say, a TOTAL of £1.0m of the fund for 3 months – allowing organisations to make secondary 'scoping' applications, up to £30k from the £1.0m element in a 2nd phase release.**
- **<£30k would be used to scope out a 'new to the TV 'Creative/Open Innovation/Consultancy Methodology'..**
- **This approach would also build on knowledge/data/experience gained from the first 3 months (quarter) of project – for a share of the ~£1.0M? EFFECTIVELY the <£30k pilot projects (over 3 months) would enable the most effective Programme/Workshops/Accelerator/Incubator (OR any ideas/programmes that the pilot projects generated).**
- **This £1.0m project to be developed in conjunction with National/International brands looking to expand/move into the area.**
- **If there were no 'winners of this fund element – it could be reallocated to projects/initiatives that are delivering the best value to businesses.**
- **TVCA desirability for this within £5.5m bid: SCORE 1 – 10?**

Please refer to page 3 of the call specification - Introduction, which states:

'The total value of funding for this call is £5.55m'.

Q53. **Understanding that TV has one of the largest asylum-seeking communities in the UK, is there any interest in engaging with this sector, in this bid, while working towards delivering the Objectives/Outcomes. TVCA desirability for this within £5.5m bid: SCORE 1 – 10?**

Please refer to page 11 of the call specification, which states:

'Projects must meet the call priorities outlined above as well as clearly stating how they will contribute to the outputs and outcomes of the UKSPF Supporting Local Business programme.

Annex A provides indicative objectives that could be proposed in bid submissions, however, this is not an exhaustive list and proposals are encouraged to include innovative approaches to addressing the challenges and opportunities that Tees Valley businesses face.'

Q54. **What is the capital grant threshold? Is this tied to de-minimus still and when does that period start?**

Purchases of equipment required to deliver the project are eligible for revenue grant support under the de-minimus level of £5,000.

Q55. **Do you need to be a Limited Company to apply, or can you be a sole trader with a bank account?**

No. Both a Limited Company or a sole trader with a bank account can apply.

Q56. **Are recruitment fees covered by the project?**

Recruitment costs are eligible Direct Costs only if they relate to staff recruited to work directly on the project.

Q57. **Please can the Authority confirm whether it is expecting bidders to commission an external evaluation of their project and if this should be included in their budget?**

A Logic Model and Evaluation Plan will be provided for all successful bidders to complete. Bidders should indicate how they will monitor and review their proposals whilst in delivery.

Costs for the post evaluation can be included in the project costs. It is not necessary to procure an external evaluation, however where a bidder considers this to be essential or add value to demonstrate objectivity this can be included.

An objective evaluation of the UKSPF programme will be undertaken by TVCA and all successful projects will be expected to participate in that.

Please also refer to page 22 of the call specification - Monitoring and evaluation, which states:

'All proposals will be required to set out how and when monitoring and evaluation will be carried out and if successful, they will be required to develop a full Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.'

'Project performance will be monitored against agreed targets, milestones and financial profile.'

Q58. **Just for avoidance of doubt – we understand the bidders need to submit the following as part of their application. Please can you confirm if there is anything else?**

a. **Completed Word version of the application (not on-line form)**
b. **Certificate of Incorporation and accounts (x3 years) as per pp 22**
c. **DPIA**
d. **Equalities Impact Assessment – the latter is said to be optional at submission in the tender response document, is the former optional as well?**
e. **Risk Register (format to be determined by the bidder?)**
f. **Project Plan (format to be determined by the bidder?)**

By submitting a bid, applicants are providing authorisation for TVCA to carry out financial due diligence. Please refer to page 22 of the call specification – Due Diligence.

All applications should be made on the online proposal template. The offline version is for your drafting process. If any applicant has any issues with making an online submission, please let us know before the submission deadline.

*Documents to be submitted **with your online application** include:*

DPIA (template provided in Supporting Documents)

Equalities Impact Assessment (template provided in Supporting Documents).

Risk Register (format to be determined by the bidder, however, a Risk Register template and guidance are provided in Supporting Documents).

Project Plan (format to be determined by the bidder).

Q59.   For a £100k to £300k project how should a summative assessment be handled? Could this be done internally by project staff, or should it be externally procured?

The going rate for an external summative assessment seems to be £20k-£30k, which would be disproportionate for a small project.

Please provide guidance on whether external costs should be included, and if so, how much.

A Logic Model and Evaluation Plan will be provided for all successful bidders to complete. Bidders should indicate how they will monitor and review their proposals whilst in delivery which will then form the basis of a post evaluation.

Costs for the post evaluation can be included in the project costs. It is not necessary to procure an external evaluation, however where a bidder considers this to be essential or add value to demonstrate objectivity this can be included.

An objective evaluation of the UKSPF programme will be undertaken by TVCA and all successful projects will be expected to participate in that.

Please also refer to page 22 of the call specification - Monitoring and evaluation, which states:

'All proposals will be required to set out how and when monitoring and evaluation will be carried out and if successful, they will be required to develop a full Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.'

'Project performance will be monitored against agreed targets, milestones and financial profile.'

Q60. Please could you clarify the following for us?
- **Please can you confirm whether it is the post code of business or post code of residence for participants.**
- **Please can you confirm what the evidence criteria is regarding how we demonstrate business interventions.**

The postcode of the applicant is required.

The postcode of the business / beneficiary receiving support is required as evidence they are based in Tees Valley.

Applicants and businesses are expected to provide suggested evidence that supports the proposal.

Q61. E29: Amount of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed (m2). Will the 3000m2 infrastructure be funded through the UKSPF or a separate budget? For example, will this be paid from the £5.5m pot?

The outputs and outcomes agreed with Government included in the Tees Valley UKSPF Investment Plan will be delivered across the whole Tees Valley UKSPF programme.

Please refer to page 13 of the call specification - Outputs and Outcomes, which states:

'Projects will be expected to contribute to the outputs and outcomes detailed below. Projects can contribute to both interventions (E23 and E29), or they can contribute to a single intervention (E23 or E29).

Q62. E23: Number of businesses receiving non-financial support.
- a. **What data will be made available to help make contact to the 10,137 business contacts within the TV region?**

Each applicant should consider and propose how they will identify their market. TVCA will support all successful applicants to engage new businesses in their service offer, but it is the responsibility of the successful applicant to engage businesses to deliver their proposal.

However, please refer to the Tees Valley UKSPF Evidence Base, which can be found here:

https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/business/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2023/12/UKSPF-Evidence-Base.pdf

Q63. E23: Jobs created

a. What will be the classification of jobs being created for example, 2,370 FT roles or a mixture FT, PT, Interim and apprenticeships.

Each applicant should highlight what type of jobs created would be within their proposal, breaking this down as described would be helpful.

Please refer to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund: outputs and outcomes definitions (2), which can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-outputs-and-outcomes-definitions-2

Q64. E23: Jobs safeguarded.

a. What evidence would be required to demonstrate the achievement of this outcome?

Applicants should define what evidence they will provide to demonstrate the achievement of the outputs and outcomes.

Please also refer to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund: outputs and outcomes definitions (2), which can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-outputs-and-outcomes-definitions-2

Q65. E23: Number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be business ready.

a. Are we able to provide financial support to these entrepreneurs to be business ready?

b. If project KPI's are not met, is there a clawback threshold, if so what does this look like?

If financial support is part of your delivery model to assist potential entrepreneurs to be business ready, then this should be included in your delivery model and financial plan with justification of why the intervention is required.

Applicants should propose realistic targets they feel can be achieved through their proposals.

Underperformance could affect continuation of any funding agreement in place. The implications for underperformance will be defined in the funding agreement.

Please refer to page 15 of the call specification - Payment terms, which states: 'TVCA's standard payment terms are quarterly in arrears following submission of a grant claim'.

As payment is paid quarterly in arrears clawback is not currently the approach in place. Each quarterly grant claim will be assessed, and payment made accordingly.

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Q66. Is there any interest from the TVCA, for a single company to propose a solution that would enable individual projects to 'plug into some tech' (GDPR compliant) that would produce a real time project performance dashboard – against the metrics individually set/agreed? TVCA desirability for this within £5.5m bid: SCORE 1 – 10?

Please refer to page 22 of the call specification - Monitoring and evaluation, which states:

'All proposals will be required to set out how and when monitoring and evaluation will be carried out and if successful, they will be required to develop a Logic Model and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.

Project performance will be monitored against agreed targets, milestones and financial profile.'

This will be done through the Lead Authority's performance monitoring system and associated performance dashboard.

TVCA will send out claims forms on a quarterly basis which will be checked and a 10% check of expenditure and outputs will be will be requested. A progress report and updated risk register will also need to be updated.

Performance and monitoring processes will be discussed in detail with all successful applicants at the initial start of the project.

Q67. If a proposal has multiple project strands/sub-partners, under one umbrella organisation – does each of these require a separate bid application. OR if appropriate be combined into a ~£100k elements?

If a single proposal is being developed and submitted under one lead organisation, and the single proposal has multiple project strands, and these project strands clearly contribute to achieving the overall objective of the single project proposal, then each project strand does not need to be submitted as a separate bid.

However, we would expect to see detailed in the application, the contribution, in relation to the overall project Outputs and Outcomes, that each project strand will make.

Where an applicant is submitting proposals for more than one project, each project should be distinct and a standalone project. These will be assessed as separate projects. The applicant should consider the level of interdependency, if this is high a single application highlighting the separate delivery activities could be submitted.

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Q68. **The table on page 13 of the call specifications outlines the Outputs and Outcomes for the programme. Can you clarify whether this relates to the entire programme i.e. the total E23 and E29 outputs and outcomes for the entire programme or just for the £5.55m call?**

The Outputs and Outcomes listed on page 13 of the call specification relate to this Call only. This call, along with other programme delivery activity, will contribute to the total Tees Valley UKSPF Programme Outputs and Outcomes.

Q69. **You have answered a clarification question in relation to the submission process and stated that this should be done online only and that the template is provided to support the drafting process only. In the call specifications page 21, you state:**

Submitting a bid
Bids must be submitted using the TVCA UKSPF Investment Proposal Form, which will be available from the Tees Valley Combined Authority UKSPF website from 10th January 2024. Bids submitted in any other format will not be accepted. The initial assessment of bids will be based on information provided in the Investment Proposal Form only. Please do not attach appendices or include links to websites. The investment proposal form will be made available at 5pm on 10th January 2024.

Bids must be submitted to TVCA using this email address: UKSPFsubmissions@teesvalley-ca.gov.uk

This is confusing. Can you confirm that this last statement is not correct and that only submissions via the online form will be accepted?

All applications should be made on the online proposal template. The offline version is for your drafting process. If any applicant has any issues with making an online submission, please let us know before the submission deadline.

Q70. **Are new products and services new to business or new to market?**

New products and services are new to business.

Q71. **What is social impact value?**

Social impact is the wider social contribution that any proposal makes outside of the outputs and outcomes to be achieved.

Q72. **Is there a post project evaluation cost?**

A Logic Model and Evaluation Plan will be provided for all successful bidders to complete. Bidders should indicate how they will monitor and review their proposals whilst in delivery which will then form the basis of a post evaluation.

Costs for the post evaluation can be included in the project costs. It is not necessary to procure an external evaluation, however where a bidder considers this to be essential or add value to demonstrate objectivity this can be included.

An objective evaluation of the UKSPF programme will be undertaken by TVCA and all successful projects will be expected to participate in that.

Please also refer to page 22 of the call specification - Monitoring and evaluation, which states:

'All proposals will be required to set out how and when monitoring and evaluation will be carried out and if successful, they will be required to develop a full Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.'

'Project performance will be monitored against agreed targets, milestones and financial profile.'

Q73. Do you need to be a Limited company to apply? Do you need to be established?

No. You do not need to be a Limited Company to apply.

Finance checks will be carried out (please refer to page 22 of the call specification)

Q74. How quickly once contract is awarded will SLAs be put in place?

SLAs will be put in place as quickly as possible with the aim for delivery activity to commence no later than April 2024.

Q75. Will TVCA provide a list of contacts from CRM?

No. Applicants are expected to identify their own business contacts for their proposal and are accountable for achieving the targets proposed. However, where appropriate TVCA will direct businesses to the support confirmed and will pro-actively support suppliers to access businesses.

Q76. What are procurement rules limit on capex?

Any applicant who requires to undertake a procurement process should satisfy themselves on capex limits.

Q77. Are any capital items allowed i.e. under £3k or is this 100% revenue?

Purchases of equipment required to deliver the project are eligible for revenue grant support under the de-minimus level of £5,000.

Q78. **Capital Grant to businesses, what are the criteria for revenue grants?**

Each applicant that wishes to include revenue grants should provide in their proposal the detail and criteria to justify the need for these.

Q79. **How long will the SLAs take to be issued beyond the initial confirmation of successful bid?**

SLAs will be put in place as quickly as possible with the aim for delivery activity to commence no later than April 2024.

Q80. **Is there a database that will be used to collect data across the whole UKSPF programme?**

TVCA will collate data from all successful applicants. Each applicant should identify their own systems and processes for collecting data that will then be shared with TVCA. Data sharing agreements will be put in place with successful applicants to enable this.

Q81. **The upfront costs could be 80% in the first three months. However, within the agreement, impact would need to be demonstrated within the first year. This would be possible with the project plan however the finance guidance of 25% every quarter, but the product or service would need to be up and running within the first quarter. It appears to limit to those projects that are already up and running. However, if this is to support companies to scale up through this funding can some consideration be taken for this?**

The justification for project spend should be included and the rationale for any development or upfront costs required. Spend profile should be provided.

Please refer to page 15 of the call specification - Payment terms, which states:

'TVCA's 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.'

Q82. **If claw back happens, will it be individual or based on the collective of every project, because as has been stated no singular project should be accounted for an entire output.**

Underperformance could affect continuation of any funding agreement in place for each project. The implications for underperformance will be defined in the funding agreement.

Please refer to page 15 of the call specification - Payment terms, which states: 'TVCA's standard payment terms are quarterly in arrears following submission of a grant claim'.

As payment is paid quarterly in arrears clawback is not currently the approach in place. Each quarterly grant claim will be assessed, and payment made accordingly.

Q83. **We are looking at supporting more sustainable companies over a long period and the impact being over years. The criteria appears to require an immediate impact, which it will have but more so in the long term by a change of behaviours within business. Is this being taken into account in the bid?**

The plans for project monitoring and recording short and longer term outcomes should be submitted as part of the proposal. However, reporting for the purpose of UKSPF Programme 2022-25 will be in line with the end of the programme (March 2025).

Q84. **Productivity increases will vary widely for each company and on what level. How will 'productivity' be specifically measured please?**

Applicants should set out in their proposals how they will measure productivity.

Q85. **In addition, productivity can be measured per company only if they are using the project service or product, however if they have another initiative running alongside this that is not part of the UKSPF programs, this will positively or negatively impact productivity, has this been considered and how will this be considered to ensure claw back is inflicted?**

Applicants should consider how they will measure productivity and set this out in their proposals.

Applicants should also include any potential risks to a project in the Risk Register.

Underperformance could affect continuation of any funding agreement in place for each project. The implications for underperformance will be defined in the funding agreement.

Please refer to page 15 of the call specification - Payment terms, which states: 'TVCA's standard payment terms are quarterly in arrears following submission of a grant claim'.

As payment is paid quarterly in arrears clawback is not currently the approach in place. Each quarterly grant claim will be assessed, and payment made accordingly.

Q86. **Please can you clarify whether the costs and activity of evaluation need to be incurred/ completed by 31 March 2025?**

In terms of time, this may be too early to have meaningful evaluation of the activity, but we can pre-pay if the expenditure needs to be made in the timeframes. The alternative would be to evaluation on the 9 months to 31st December 2024 so the evaluation can be completed within the timeframes, but this seems counterproductive.

All project expenditure should be completed by 31st March 2025.

A Logic Model and Evaluation Plan will be provided for all successful bidders to complete. Bidders should indicate how they will monitor and review their proposals whilst in delivery which will then form the basis of a post evaluation.

Costs for the post evaluation can be included in the project costs. It is not necessary to procure an external evaluation, however where a bidder considers this to be essential or add value to demonstrate objectivity this can be included.

An objective evaluation of the UKSPF programme will be undertaken by TVCA and all successful projects will be expected to participate in that.

Please also refer to page 22 of the call specification - Monitoring and evaluation, which states:

'All proposals will be required to set out how and when monitoring and evaluation will be carried out and if successful, they will be required to develop a full Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.'

'Project performance will be monitored against agreed targets, milestones and financial profile.'

Q87. Please advise if any recruitment fees to secure new staff who'll be dedicated to the project can be classified as direct staff costs? These would be paid to get the right team in place as quickly as possible post being awarded the grant.

Recruitment costs are eligible Direct Costs only if they relate to staff recruited to work directly on the project.

Q88. What are the gateway checks required? I see it mentions them on the funding but I'm not sure what we need to do? Is it just straight forward checks, i.e. checks on the business, date established etc. is there anything we need to make sure complies?

Please refer to page 22 of the call specification – Due Diligence, which states:

'By submitting a bid, applicants are providing authorisation for TVCA to carry out this due diligence and risk will be assessed on the following documents:

> *• Certificate of Incorporation, Charity Registration, VAT Registration Certificate or alternate form of incorporation documentation to inform organisation status.*

> *• Where available financial statements for the last three financial years to inform trading and liquidity status. This may include, depending upon filing requirements, Profit and Loss Statement, Balance Sheet (Statement of Financial Position) and Cashflow Statement*

In addition, other Gateway checks carried out by TVCA to ensure that applicants meet the following criteria include:

Project Proposal will be delivered (including all expenditure Incurred) within the timescales set out in the call.

Project proposal will be delivered by a legally constituted organisation that can receive public funds.

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Project proposal responds to a need and priorities identified in the UKSPF Investment Plan and specification provided.

Project proposal does not duplicate other national of local provision and does not conflict with national policy.

Project proposal will be delivered in line with Subsidy Control requirements.

Q89. With regards to investment into the Tees Valley region, has there been any historical connection with any specific type of investor i.e. Angel investors, venture capitalists?

Angel investors and venture capitalists do work with Tees Valley businesses.

Q90. Can you share the details of flagship projects connected to the Supply Chain and Securing Investment focus areas as detailed on page 5 of the Specification document? What was the scope and what were the intended outcomes and main deliverables?

Information will shortly be available on the Tees Valley Combined Authority website for each of the four suppliers.

In the interim, a summary of the aims, objectives and delivery for each of the 4 Lots, as specified in the call specification for the Supporting Local Business Open Call TVCA UKSPFSLB002, can be found in Appendix A at the end of the FAQ responses.

Whilst we wish to minimise duplication, there is scope in each of the four areas currently funded via UKSPF under Supporting Local Business i.e. Digital Support, Net Zero, Supply Chain Development and Access to Investment.

Potential applicants for the current Open Call (TVCA UKSPFSLB004) can request a 1-2-1 conversation with the TVCA Development team to understand more about the current UKSPF Supporting Local Business offer.

Q91. Have any projects under the UKSPF involved the Teesside Freeport to date and if so, to what extent and to what end?

All projects can work with businesses in the Freeport sites. The extent of this is unclear at this stage as delivery activity is in the early stages and not all businesses have been engaged yet.

Q92. Has the Department for Business and Trade been directly or indirectly involved with any projects under the UKSPF? Can any details be provided on this?

We are not aware of Department for Business and Trade involvement in any of the UKSPF projects.

Q93. **If match funding was excluded in our submission, how detrimental would this be to our chances of being selected?**

Please refer to page 20 of the call specification - Match Funding which states:

'Match funding is not mandatory however applicants are encouraged to explore their options in terms of the provision of match funding as this will increase value for money and impact of the Fund.'

'All match funding must be auditable and attributable and therefore, must relate to actual project expenditure. There is no fixed proportion of match funding.'

'Match funding should be clearly shown in the financial tables submitted and be included in total project costs. Levels of match funding will be taken into consideration under the value for money assessment criteria.'

Q94. **Will you be sharing clarifying questions submitted by other possible applicants with your answers for transparency? If so, where will this information be posted?**

Yes, clarification questions and responses are available. Please see the 'Frequently Asked Questions' on the following TVCA UKSPF webpage:

https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/business/supporting-local-business-open-call-fund/

Q95. **Please could you confirm that as an applicant for the UKSPF, I, or the business I represent, would be the 'beneficiary' of the fund?**

In which case, if I am the beneficiary, I should not be asked to confirm how the proposal will conform to subsidy control principles. This is not a matter for a beneficiary, but for the public authority giving the subsidy or making the subsidy scheme.

It is the responsibility of each applicant to consider how they respond to the requirements of Subsidy Control and that their processes and recording are compliant with Subsidy Control.

The published UK Shared Prosperity Fund: subsidy control guidance can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-subsidy-control-7#full-publication-update-history

*This guidance provides information **for LLAs and applicants** on subsidy control in respect of the UKSPF.*

Q96. Procurement of consultancy - what would be subject to UK Subsidy Control?

It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure they are compliant with Subsidy Control and that their processes and recording are compliant with Subsidy Control.

The published UK Shared Prosperity Fund: subsidy control guidance can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-subsidy-control-7#full-publication-update-history

This guidance provides information **for LLAs and applicants** *on subsidy control in respect of the UKSPF.*

The overarching public procurement guidance within section 7.6.2 of the Prospectus launched on 13 April 2022 remains applicable to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

Businesses are required to follow procurement rules when purchasing goods and services with the support of a UKSPF grant, as set out in the UKSPF procurement guidance UK Shared Prosperity Fund: procurement (8) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-procurement-8

Appendix A - Summary of aims, objectives and proposed delivery for each of the 4 Lots, as specified in the call specification for the Supporting Local Business Open Call (TVCA UKSPFSLB002)

LOT 3 – DIGITAL ADOPTION	
Aim	To enable businesses to start, scale and growth through digital adoption, using technology to reduce inefficiencies and cut waste, increase sales growth and new market opportunities, overcome capacity and resource issues, boost competitiveness, and increase resilience, agility and innovation.
Objectives	1. Comprehensive support to enable businesses to maximise the opportunities of digital adoption. 2. Enable businesses to improve efficiency and productivity via digital adoption. 3. Enable businesses to introduce new to market/business products and services via digital adoption. 4. Increase business sustainability via digital adoption. 5. Increase the number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes. 6. In addition to supporting existing businesses, the programme will align strongly with business start-up support to ensure thinking regarding digital opportunities are a key component of new business creation.
Delivery	In addition to the standard delivery expectations regarding online support, a programme of events, smaller cohort support and a level of targeting 1-to-1 support, we would also like to pilot a financial support scheme.
LOT 4 – SECURING INVESTMENT	
Aim	To enable businesses to be investor ready to secure finance for business start-up, scale-up and growth.
Objectives	1. Equip businesses with the know-how to successfully attract investment. 2. Enable businesses to be 'investor ready', increasing their understanding regarding how to attract potential investors. 3. Practical advice and guidance to businesses on investment strategies to raise finance. 4. Support businesses in developing their investment 'slide-deck'. 5. Increase know-how regarding different investment strategies and how to attract the right type of investment. 6. Connect businesses to potential investors. 7. Build a network of investors for Tees Valley businesses to access. 8. Ensure investor readiness is embedded in the thinking of new entrepreneurs.
Delivery	In addition to the standard delivery expectations regarding online support, a programme of events, smaller cohort support and a level of targeting 1-to-1 support, we welcome innovative proposals.

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LOT 6 – SUPPLY CHAIN	
Aim	Enable businesses to start, scale and grow through supply chain opportunities.
Objectives	1. Maximise the supply chain opportunities arising from the significant inward investment taking place across Tees Valley. 2. Maximise the wider UK and international supply chain opportunities for the local Tees Valley business community. 3. Awareness raising across the business community regarding supply chain opportunities. 4. Stimulate innovation and product development to enter new supply chain opportunities e.g., 'supply chain innovation challenges'. 5. Provide contracting and procurement advice. 6. Align strongly with the business start-up activities to ensure supply chain opportunities are embedded in the thinking of potential / new entrepreneurs.
Delivery	In addition to the standard delivery expectations regarding online support, a programme of events, smaller cohort support and a level of targeting 1-to-1 support we would welcome innovative proposals.
LOT 7 – NET ZERO	
Aim	To enable businesses to implement net zero transitions
Objectives	1. Provide practical advice, guidance, and information to enable businesses to develop and deliver net zero plans. 2. Businesses to reduce energy costs and carbon emissions. 3. Improve awareness of net zero and how businesses can work towards and achieve it. 4. Provide information, advice, and support regarding the financing of net zero investment. 5. Improve awareness of current and future regularity and legislative requirements regarding carbon emissions and net zero. 6. Provide tailored information, advice and support that is specific to individual business sectors. 7. Provide financial support to businesses to encourage net zero investment.
Delivery	In addition to the standard delivery expectations regarding online support, a programme of events, smaller cohort support and a level of targeting 1-to-1 support, we would also like to pilot a financial support scheme.