

The logo consists of a red arrow pointing to the right, with the text "Solutions for Business" written in white inside it. Below the red arrow is a black arrow pointing to the right, which is partially obscured by the red one.

**Solutions  
for Business**

Solutions for Business  
Local Enterprise Partnership  
Good Practice Guide

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## Introduction

For most businesses it is the private sector which can best provide the most professional customer focussed help for small firms and the government's role is to facilitate that help and make the market work better for business. The government is continuing to drive a simpler approach to the support that it offers and provide a framework businesses can understand and navigate.

We have simplified the Government funded offer for business improvement by introducing a streamlined Solutions for Business (SfB) portfolio with a much clearer focus on improving business performance and growth. The portfolio will be targeted at activities where a Government lead is required, for example, on supporting complex trade deals and challenging technology developments. The [SfB page](#) on the BIS website provides information on all of the products within the Solutions for Business Portfolio.

Local enterprise partnerships have a very important role in supporting enterprise and businesses in their areas. Their role in bringing together public and private partners, under business leadership and at a local level, means that they will be well placed to develop strategies and take action on a range of issues.

Local enterprise partnerships will be able to harness local businesses and partners to support enterprise activities and respond to local demand.

### Aim of the Good Practice Guide

The Government made a commitment in [Local Growth: Realising Every Place's Potential](#) to share work that has already been undertaken with business on the Solutions for Business portfolio to assist those developing business improvement activity locally. This saves local enterprise partnerships having to develop these materials for themselves and will also help the broader business community by ensuring more consistency in the way such help is offered and described.

The aim of this on-line Good Practice Guide is to make materials available and share work that has already been carried out with business on the Solution for Business portfolio. This guide includes information that can easily adapted and used by local enterprise partnerships and other organisations who are designing or delivering business improvement activity.

For further information regarding this good practice guide, access to our branding templates or product descriptors, please contact the SfB team at [SfB@bis.gov.uk](mailto:SfB@bis.gov.uk)

# PROTOCOLS THAT WILL HELP YOU DESIGN AND DELIVER BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT

## Product Design

Product design is the protocol which ensures that publicly funded business improvement activity is delivered in a consistent way. When business improvement activity is being designed this should be undertaken through a collaborative process, making use of a product design team comprising key interested parties. The product's design should be captured in a Product Descriptor which sets out key features of the product such as eligibility, how it can be accessed, levels of support and customer journey in one concise document. For access to SfB product descriptors please email [SfB@bis.gov.uk](mailto:SfB@bis.gov.uk)

When planning to deliver business improvement activity the first consideration should be whether one of the existing SfB Product Descriptors is appropriate. Where local enterprise partnerships wish to develop new interventions, outside the scope of existing descriptors, it is recommended that this covers the core components of existing product descriptors as these have been tested by business, and found to be useful.

## Market Failure Rationale

When making funds available for business improvement activity, government has to ensure that where it intervenes this is justified by a clear and evidenced market failure rationale. This protocol means that government activity is targeted at only those areas where it can have an effect and minimises the risk that it crowds out potential solutions from other parties. Where a market failure outside the scope of those already identified in the portfolio has been identified, we recommend this should be evidenced and tested as part of the product development process.

## Branding

The Solutions for Business portfolio was created to address the criticism from business that the many forms of support, at national, regional and local levels confused the customer and put them off seeking help. Customers and delivery partners felt that the new streamlined publicly funded portfolio should be complemented by a rationalisation of the number of publicly funded business facing brands visible in the market. The branding which is used will vary by product but typically those products in the national portfolio funded by central government will use the full SfB brand. Local enterprise partnerships are free to use the SfB brand for products that they and their delivery partners develop including co-branding across the key access channels. For access to the SfB image library please email [SfB@bis.gov.uk](mailto:SfB@bis.gov.uk)

## **Performance Measurement**

When public money is spent on business improvement activities, government and the public expect information about the outcomes and impacts that any expenditure achieves. The products within the portfolio should be assessed in an appropriate and streamlined way, against an agreed range of performance indicators.

# KEY INFORMATION PROVIDED IN PRODUCT DESCRIPTORS

Key information that is provided in product descriptors of the help being made available includes:

## Rationale

A brief description of the market failure that is being addressed and why spending has been chosen to address the market failure as opposed to other possible interventions such as, for example, information campaigns, regulation/deregulation or taxation measures.

Details should be defined on how the product will provide a net economic benefit through:

- Additionality or
- Acceleration of activities which produce net economic benefits;
- Delivering benefits beyond those for an individual business or group of businesses

## Product Description

A description of the assistance to be provided to businesses.

## Eligibility Criteria

A description of the eligibility criteria applied to potential recipients.

## Delivery

A description of how the product will be delivered to eligible businesses.

This description should include:

- Delivery methods, e.g. online, face to face, phone etc
- Any oversight or governance arrangements for the product.

## **Branding**

A description of what style of SfB branding the product will follow. The product can be branded and presented visually in line with the overall SfB branding framework, or can adopt a light touch branding approach which would use the SfB logo only as an endorsement.

## **Cost Recovery**

A description of what measures, if any, are in place to recover the full or partial cost of assistance provided to an individual business.

## **Monitoring**

A description of monitoring data being collected, and how it will be collected.

## **Evaluation**

A description of the evaluation framework for the product. This should be consistent with the [BIS Evaluation Strategy](#) and Treasury guidance known as the [Green Book](#) .

This description should include how evaluations will answer the following questions:

- Does the product remain appropriate, i.e. does the market failure it was designed to address remain and does the product continue to be the most appropriate way of addressing that market failure?
- Is the product effective and does it continue to achieve its objectives?
- Is the product efficient and does it continue to achieve its objectives at a lower cost than other possible government interventions?

## **Equality Act 2010**

Confirmation that the product complies with the Equality Act 2010.

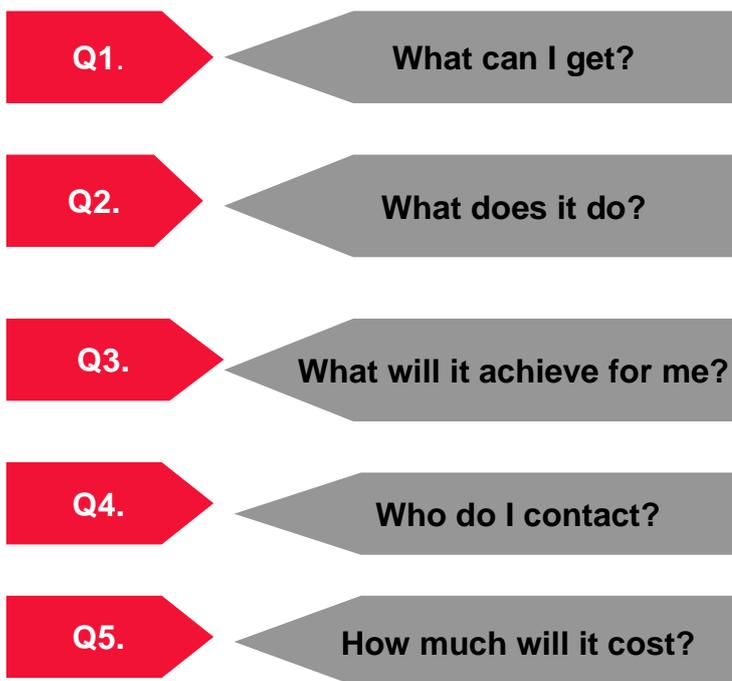
## **State Aid Clearance**

Confirmation that the product complies with EU State Aid regulations.

## SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES (SME) TEST

The SME test is designed to be used when thinking about how to engage SMEs. It is a simple tool which allows you to test whether your business improvement product is clear to the target audience at both the design and promoting the business improvement product stages.

### Does the product pass the SME Test?



## **CAPTURING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

In developing the SfB portfolio we have looked for ways of capturing the customer perspective when designing business improvement schemes and assessing delivery particularly customer satisfaction. Customer insight includes a range of methods from customer satisfaction surveys to customer journey mapping which set out the end to end customer journey.

We want to share what we know about our customers to maximise its value including our recent [research](#).

Customer insight has helped us and our delivery partners design, test, modify and deliver business improvement which is better and more effective for businesses.

Customer journey mapping is a vital element of understanding business improvement activity provided from the businesses perspective and has been used successfully in the design and the delivery of the SfB portfolio.

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