**UK Futures Programme**

**Frequently Asked Questions – Developing Leadership and Entrepreneurship skills in small firms**

These questions and answers are specific to the ‘Developing Leadership and Entrepreneurship skills in small firms’ competition. These should be read in conjunction with the [Programme level](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/330521/Programme_Level_FAQ.docx) FAQs.

**Please note: once you start completing the full application form you have 28 days or until midday 30 April 2015, whichever is soonest to complete and submit your application form. If you do not submit within this period it would result in the deletion of your application form and associated data.**

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| **Question** | | **Answer** |
| 1 | Can I fill in the PDF application form and submit that by email? | No, the application form needs to be filled in and submitted online. You need to register to gain access to the online application form. By all means use the PDF whilst compiling your application but email applications will not be accepted. |
| 2 | Will the videos be available online anywhere? | Yes the four short webinar videos are available here: [YouTube Videos](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_rxauYNgX_U&list=PLBKSiHxV0EKYnMXNtOtyIdJEK2tQ2uBhT)   1. An overview of UK Futures Programme by Nigel Whitehead (UKCES Commissioner) 2. An overview of **Developing Leadership and Entrepreneurship skills in small firms** by Julie Kenny (UKCES Commissioner and strategic lead for the competition) 3. Details about **Developing Leadership and Entrepreneurship skills in small firms** by Katherine Cottrell (UKCES executive lead for competition) 4. How to complete the finance annex by Karen Cuckson (UKCES finance team) |
| 3 | Is it possible to send participants the relevant links please? | [Competition Brief](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukces-futures-programme-leadership-and-entrepreneurship-in-small-firms-competition-brief)  [Competition Press Release](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-fund-launched-to-boost-productivity-of-small-firms)  [YouTube Videos](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_rxauYNgX_U&list=PLBKSiHxV0EKYnMXNtOtyIdJEK2tQ2uBhT)  (Registration for the) [Online Application Form](https://adobeformscentral.com/?f=ayAYrj8sr3wSpnlNpDJ9WQ)  [Complete Application Guidance Document](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukces-futures-programme-guidance-documents-printer-friendly)  [Example Application form](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414476/Comp_5_SAMPLE_app_form.doc) |
| 4 | How can we raise any future questions with you? | If you have any further questions please feel free to contact us on the following email address [Enquiries.FuturesProgramme@ukces.org.uk](mailto:Enquiries.FuturesProgramme@ukces.org.uk) |
| 5 | How much testing will I have to do? I know what I want to implement and just want to get on with it? | The Futures Programme is about learning ‘what works’, this is to benefit both the broader Programme but also individual projects. Testing what you are doing along the way, rather than waiting until the end, can give you a better project with a more sustainable future, because you can adapt as you go.  [Testing and Shared Learning Guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/363951/14.10.15._Testing_and_shared_learning_V4.pdf) |
| 6 | How competitive is the Futures Programme, what are my chances of being awarded funding? | This is difficult to answer. The number of projects that will be successful in gaining funding will be limited to the overall budget of £1.5 million for this competition. We are looking for a number of projects which will enable us to test and learn from solutions that address the challenges outlined in the Competition brief. The opportunity of being awarded funding depends on how many applications are received and the quality of the applications and ideas. The better the quality of your application and idea, the better chance you will have of being awarded funding. |
| 7 | Where will the interviews be? | The interviews will take place in London |
| 8 | You mentioned that the projects look to engage small numbers of firms, what sort of numbers do you envision to be appropriate? | To clarify, it is a small number of projects engaging with small firms rather than projects only engaging with a small number of firms |
|  | **Why Leadership and Entrepreneurship?** |  |
| 9 | For us to enrol small firms and get them interested in developing leadership skills, what evidence do you have that leadership skills really do make a difference to the success of small firms? | We have drawn on a recent report by BIS on Leadership and Management Skills and their findings of the impact of leadership and entrepreneurship skills. These are the definitions we have used. I would also suggest you have a look at the Literature Review we published alongside the brief.  See report link  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/leadership-and-management-skills-in-small-and-medium-sized-businesses>  And competition brief link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukces-futures-programme-leadership-and-entrepreneurship-in-small-firms-competition-brief> |
| 10 | You've spoken a lot about leadership skills can you discuss a little more about your understanding on entrepreneurial skills and what you are looking for in the bid | See above link to competition brief |
| 11 | What evidence is there of demand for this kind of provision from the businesses themselves? (We may know they need it, but do they?). | The evidence does show that many businesses who are more successful have highly developed skills in these areas.  But one of the things we want to test is exactly what you say.  DO small firms want this support if it is delivered in a different way or under a different guise?  And if not, why?  That is an important part of the learning - i.e. who wants it, why they want it, how it should be delivered.  And if they don't find it useful then why not?  We do appreciate that not all small firms want to grow, which is why we're not focussing on that for this competition |
| 12 | Please can you comment further about the entrepreneurship part of the bid, as leadership has been mentioned a lot? | Please refer to competition brief: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukces-futures-programme-leadership-and-entrepreneurship-in-small-firms-competition-brief> |
| 13 | Is the programme based on developing the leadership skills of current leaders in small firms or future leader’s e.g. new employees in small firms? | It is more likely to be current leaders since we are looking for a more immediate impact than might be expected with new recruits not at the management level. |
| 14 | To what extent will formal LEP support for an application be an advantage on an application? | We would be looking for the application to show the level of meaningful support being given by any partner of the project |
| 15 | Are there any limits on the use of sub-contractors to support specific delivery activities? | No limits on subcontractors, but we would need to see what value they bring to the proposal and what services they offer.  So if you think subcontractors add value, then that is fine, but we'd need to understand what they bring to the project |
|  | **Types of bid** |  |
| 16 | Please can you clarify what you mean by "trial alternative solutions for small firms" (in slides) as I am not clear? | What we mean is, if you want to try more than one approach to either engaging with small firms or providing more than one type of service to them, then we'd be interested in seeing that in proposals.  As the programme is all about learning what works and what doesn't, if you want to explore alternative options in your proposal then there is that option |
| 17 | Can one anchor org submit more than one (different) proposal? | We wouldn't expect multiple bids from the same anchor institution.  If however you wanted to test multiple approaches to delivering something to your small firms then you could look to test those within one application. I would suggest you speak with one of our associates about your idea to help shape your proposal if you have several ideas |
| 18 | Could two separate bids be made? | If the applications are related we would be expecting the "whole story" to be presented in one application. If the projects are unrelated we would welcome two separate applications. |
| 19 | In additional to sectoral delivery, can the project target a specific size of business e.g. 1 - 10 staff?  Are there any sectors that you would be keener on - or those that you would not? For example, in Cornwall there are a large number of SMEs associated with the successful deliver of tourism (A £1.1bn per year industry in the Duchy) could we test with them? | No, we have not targeted by sector nor by specific size of employer. Within the geographical and size parameters in the competition brief, we are open to bids telling us what the problem is that they want to address or the opportunity they want to capitalise on. This could include a focus on businesses in a particular sector if that is a crucial need in your area. |
| 20 | Can I put in a bid to conduct research on the issues in these sectors? | Bids for research are out of scope for this competition. We are inviting applications for developing solutions, piloting solutions, and scaling up solutions to the issues identified within the competition brief. |
| 21 | Would you recommend or prefer a specific range of partners within project team? | You (or the organisation leading the proposal) are best placed to know who should be involved in your project. Whoever you think will strengthen your proposal, you should include. From our point of view, it is important that the organisation leading the proposal has identified why particular partners are involved and has a strong rationale for what they will add to the project. All projects should be led by Anchor Institutions with a range of employers engaged throughout the project. |
| 22 | How many partners should be in the proposal | There is no fixed number of partners. It is a matter of making sure that the partners involved in the project make a valuable contribution. We are looking for quality over quantity. |
| 23 | What is the duration of the project | We envisage that the successful projects will commence in August 2015 and complete August 2016. |
| 24 | I have already begun testing some ideas within my business, would I still be eligible to submit a proposal to upscale these pilots? | Absolutely, if your solution is already showing signs of impact to small firms, this will only strengthen your proposal. |
| 25 | I have a couple of innovative ideas that I would like to test but I’m not sure they will work; can I still submit a proposal? | Yes, the UK Futures Programme is all about testing out solutions to see what works, what doesn’t, and why. If the potential for impact is there we will welcome these kinds of proposals. |
| 26 | I ideally would like to do some more research before I develop ideas / solutions is that ok? | As part of this competition we would specifically like to see development proposals rather than research based proposals. You could build ‘research’ into the development of a solution and test this through the development. |
| 27 | Can proposals include a mixture of technical training with leadership/entrepreneurship training/coaching? Or would this be out of scope? | Our focus is leadership/entrepreneurship, and we have limited resources, so we would not include technical training. |
| 28 | Can projects already be underway or do they have to be new ones? | We prefer new and innovative ideas but there may be scope for existing projects to be scaled up or tried out in a new setting or in a new way. |
| 29 | Is there scope to use this competition to further develop a much smaller pilot already in existence? So very much looking at the learning and evaluation and scaling up? | Yes very much.  If you have something that you wish to pilot in a new area or scale up in any way, then that would fit this competition |
| 30 | How set in stone does the proposal need to be i.e. outlining all the activities for the project duration? Given that part of the project will be to develop and test new activities, some of those activities might not be foreseen at the proposal submission stage in any level of detail. | We do accept that this might be the case, but we want to see why it is justified that you are not able to specify all activities. What you do need to do is give a clear understanding of what those activities might be and how they will address the problem you are seeking. However, we are expecting a high number of applicants at the moment, and given that we have a very limited time period to progress this competition, you would need a very strong rounded application. |
|  | **Funding** |  |
| 31 | Does the match funding have to come from the Anchor organisation or from the businesses we are engaging with? I.e. their time involved with the project/provision provided? | Due to the nature of this competition we would expect some of the funding to come from the anchor institution themselves but would also expect some of the contribution to come from the small businesses involved in the project.  The small business contribution is likely to be in kind rather than cash. |
| 32 | Can I clarify please that it would be OK to charge small businesses to receive leadership and entrepreneurial support or do you anticipate this being provided as a free service? | The key thing is that the support is seen as valuable to the small firms.  This needs to be considered as part of the model you are proposing.  It may be that the small firms would see this as valuable and would be willing to pay.  This needs to be considered as part of the sustainability of your model. |
| 33 | How would we view a charged for service? Would that be useful to pilot? Trying to encourage behaviour change and also help clients to value the services being offered is sometimes easier if they have a price attached. | Absolutely. There would be questions about the sustainability about anything that is piloted as free of charge - what would happen when the funding ran out? What has really been proven if what was provided was free of charge? |
| 34 | Is there a set contribution from private/public sector required? | There is no set contribution from private/public sector.  In your application you need to be able to explain why the balance you propose is appropriate to your project. |
| 35 | Do we need to be in a position to fully evidence match funding by the deadline? | You need to be able to evidence your match funding via the financial spreadsheet.  You need to be able to identify the amounts of funding, who is providing them and what they will be used for.  You can then indicate whether this is projected or committed. |
| 36 | What is the expected ratio of co-investment? | We don't have a set expected ratio of co-investment. Please see our guidance on public and private contributions. Broadly, the closer to market, the lower level of public investment we expect. We are also looking at the quality of contribution and employer engagement, how they are involved in shaping what you do. |
| 37 | Is there a minimum % of matched investment that we are expected to put into the project? | No there is no minimum amount of investment required but you need to be able to show that the employer contributions are appropriate to the type of project. |
| 38 | Does our investment need to be cash or can it be in kind? | It can be in kind, in cash or both but again needs to be appropriate to the type of project. |
| 39 | What would be considered public sector contributions? | The public sector contributions we refer to are from UKCES. You can also provide other sources of public funding such as funding from other government departments. |
| 40 | Is there any information on contributions both private and public and cash and in kind, could you give an example of one way in which this might work, a way in which you might expect to see this reflected in a proposal perhaps? | On our website there is a guidance document on Public and Private Contributions. Your private contribution will be made up of both cash and in-kind investment. Again, this is covered in that guidance document, particularly with regard to what we will look for in terms of quality investment. |
| 41 | Given the maximum level of investment for each project is £200,000 and the total awards pot is £1.6m, is there an indicative number of projects you expect to fund across the 7 eligible geographic areas | You're right, we're only looking at a small number of successful projects.  However, we would not expect all proposals to request £200k, we would expect some projects to request less than £200k |
| 42 | Are you working on a Full Cost Recovery methodology for project funding, in terms of eligible expenditure rather than claw back. I guess what is, or is not, eligible in terms of expenditure. | If your question is asking 'will we seek to recover money for projects which fail', it will depend on the reason why it fails. We want to learn what works and what doesn't, some things won't work but they have been attempted as expected in the contract. And that's fine but we will manage contracts otherwise in the usual way and will only pay on delivery of agreed outputs.  Please have a look at the Public and Private Contributions guidance and the financial spreadsheet application form. |
| 43 | Is the co-investment ratio set or advised or does the bid just need to justify the proposed ratio? | The co-investment ratio is not set it needs to be appropriate to the project and explained in the application |
| 44 | Would this funding count towards the 150k De Minimis cap? | Please take a look at the application form as this covers state aid implications.  It would be you’re responsibly to check that you are state aid compliment.  Without knowing your situation we wouldn't be able to comment on specific organisations |
| 45 | Are all employers expected to make a cash contribution, or is a mix of cash/in-kind contributions acceptable. Thinking here of an employer who might be able to contribute a larger amount of their time to the development/steering of the project. | Contributions can be cash, in kind or a combination of both for exactly the reason you have raised.  It just needs to be illustrated at an appropriate level for your project |
|  | **Small Firm Engagement** |  |
| 46 | How much evidence of engagement is required at application stage? We are already working with small businesses and have evidence of need. | You would need to tell us who you have spoken to and small firms can provide evidence that they would find the solution beneficial |
| 47 | Would you like to see evidence of engagement from beneficiaries in the form of letters of support? | No, that isn't necessary. We trust in the information you provide in your application form. |
| 48 | Can you indicate the flexibility available in allowing us to also work with larger firms in providing the role models needed for small firms? | In answer to your question about larger firms, it would likely be very beneficial to have them acting as role models that sounds potentially powerful however the beneficiaries need to be small firms. |
| 49 | Looking at the need to demonstrate a contribution to productivity gains? Given the short time scale of the project, what sort of gains are you looking to have projects contribute to and measure? | In answer to question about measuring productivity, as part of the application form, we ask for you to describe the 'Potential for Impact' and a Logic Chain - which shows the steps you will take and how that would have an impact on productivity. Your inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes must have a realistic chance of achieving improvements to productivity. We know that 12 months is not sufficient to demonstrate that impact, but you must show a strong link from problem to activity to achieving change. |
| 50 | Do you need to know the specific names of beneficiaries at bid stage or just the types of business/ likely target groups? | We are keen to see that you have secured some engagement from beneficiaries in developing your proposal, who may be considered as representative of your target group. |
| 51 | Is there any restrictions from the competition on IPR? | I assume you mean Intellectual Property Right? Please see section 8 of the 'Introduction' document. If not, let me know! |
| 52 | We are looking at setting up a project in one of your target areas, delivered from a local and well established office in that area. However our head office is based outside of the target areas. Can you please clarify if we would qualify as an anchor institution? | If your local office can demonstrate the qualities we are looking for in an anchor institution within their community then that should be fine. |
| 53 | Have you got definitions of regions, i.e. what is the scope of the NE, NW etc | We are using definitions used by the Office for National Statistics to define these geographies. |
| 54 | Leadership and management skills are critical for social enterprises looking to access social investment to scale up their operations, but social entrepreneurs often lack those too. In order to build capacity in social enterprises can this funding be used to increase their productivity/social impact? | On social enterprises - we would be looking for you to describe why that target group will help address the longer term success measures on page 4 of the comp brief and how your activity will secure it. This is in the Potential for Impact section and Logic Chain. |
| 55 | Can small firms be part of the project delivery team supporting the anchor institutions? | We emphasise the importance of involving small firms in your planning and delivery. If beneficiaries are represented on the project delivery team, that ought to deliver a stronger project. |
| 56 | To what extent will you accept the use of large firms to support the development of Leadership skills within small firms?  . | The proposing organisation needs to show how they demonstrate their significant role in the local economy - as in page 4 of the brief. Large employers can play a critical role in supporting smaller firms, and we will be interested to see how that plays out in applications |
| 57 | How much history evidence will be required that shows work on going with the SMEs selected and on the issue to be addressed with the SMEs from that sector? | There is no blanket answer to this. You need to demonstrate you meet our requirements of being an anchor institute that would require some evidence of engagement with SMEs.  We would also look for levels of commitment from the SMEs you seek to engage. If you're a strong anchor, looking to expand into new relationships or address new problems, then you should be able to demonstrate the relationships you have developed in pulling together the application and the knowledge/experience that would enable you to deliver that solution in new markets. |
|  | **Geographic focus** |  |
| 58 | The call specifies regional bids as being more attractive - can you confirm this? It may be difficult given the funding to cover a whole region | We would not expect your proposal to cover the whole of the region that we've identified as being in scope.  We would leave it to you to decide what 'local' means to you and your small firms.  So for example, you might want to focus on one or two areas within that region as a whole.  What we'd look for is for you to tell us who you want to focus your support on, and where about in the region that support will be delivered - i.e. what is local for you and your small firms |
| 59 | So Sub-regional bids would be OK? What I mean is that there are often pockets within a region where the behaviour changes would have greatest impact. | Absolutely, bids do not have to cover whole regions, it has just been a way of defining the scope.  We would not expect your proposal to cover the whole of the region that we've identified as being in scope.  We would leave it to you to decide what 'local' means to you and your small firms.  So for example, you might want to focus on one or two areas within that region as a whole.  What we'd look for is for you to tell us who you want to focus your support on, and where about in the region that support will be delivered - i.e. what is local for you and your small firms |
| 60 | Why are you only focussing on certain areas of the UK for this competition? | Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, South West England, North West England, North East England, and Yorkshire and Humberside all currently rank below the UK average in terms of productivity. We are interested in identifying ways to help boost productivity and create prosperous local communities through offering support to small firms. |
| 61 | Does the community need to be defined geographically, or can it be via other parameters? | Yes you would need to define your community geographically.  We are interested in locally led anchors, so please focus on a geographic definition |
| 62 | Would a 1 nation based project be acceptable? | This competition is specifically focused on proposals from: Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, South West England, North West England, North East England, and Yorkshire and Humberside. The countries and these English regions currently rank below the UK average in terms of productivity. We are looking for proposals which focus on these areas in particular, and from anchor institutions that play a role in communities within those areas. A nation based project would need to demonstrate that it is from an anchor that plays a strong role in their community and will help small firms based locally |
|  | **Anchor definitions** |  |
| 63 | Can you provide more information on what you count as an ‘anchor institution’? | ‘Anchor institution’ describes an organisation that play a strong, strategic and committed role in a particular community. They may not call themselves an ‘anchor’ in fact they often won’t. But they will have a reputation and credibility as a significance presence in that area. We have written a [blog](https://ukces.blog.gov.uk/2015/03/19/ukces-explains-what-is-an-anchor-institution/) which provided some further information about this description |
| 64 | I am a small employer can I put in a single proposal on my own or do I need to join a consortium? | The competition invites applications only from Anchor Institutions, please see description in answer below to see if you would qualify for this particular programme |
| 65 | You mentioned a few criteria on what kind of contribution to area you were expecting to see from the anchor institution - please could you repeat those points - providing employment and... | We would look for anchor that make some strategic contribution to their local economy.  So that could be through providing employment, bringing investment to your community (either in terms of business or people), you might be a leader in your community, or publically represent your community.  What is key is you have: Influence, a strong reputation, are well known and credible amongst businesses in your area |
| 66 | Anchor institution. Would a Chamber of Commerce fulfil your definition? | A Chamber of Commerce could be an anchor institution.  The focus is what you/they would be doing in terms of supporting small firms in the area of leadership and entrepreneurship skills |
| 67 | Would a Further Education College be an anchor institution? | Yes a FE college could be an anchor institution |
| 68 | If more than one anchor institution participates in a bid will any subsequent delivery contract be with a single 'prime' anchor organisation or will the anchor organisations need to form a consortium? | We would contract with a single anchor institution, but you might wish to work with other anchors to deliver your bid.  In which case we'd just want to understand the role of each organisation in your bid and how you would work together |
| 69 | If two organisations want to put in a bid together (as one) is it ok if only one is an anchor institution in the geographic area and the other is a L&D business in a totally different part of the country (say London?) | The partnership sounds ok, if the beneficiaries and the anchor are in the primary area. |
|  | **UKCES Support** |  |
| 70 | In your presentation you mentioned that you would be seeking to "actively engage with every project" - could you give some examples of what that might look like? | We have regular contact with our projects, attend Steering Groups or other meetings/events/activities. We provide input based on our experience of working in this area for a number of years, we make connections to research or to stakeholders to support your projects where that would add value. This is something which successful applicants will discuss with their Relationship Manager. Katherine Cottrell would also have a role in supporting shared learning between the projects. Identifying common barriers, for example, and supporting projects to consider ways of addressing them, for example, through our Innovation Labs which we will hold during the course of the competition. Current projects have found this level of support surprising but helpful. We want to try and support as best we can each project, but we are also looking to learn as much as we can from each project, so that we can inform broader policy and practice and Katherine has a critical role in that. |
| 71 | Will we need to submit monthly progress reports to UKCES when the projects are up and running? | No, the monitoring arrangements will be light touch, and agreed with your relationship manager who will be in regular contact with you throughout the project. Progress reporting is likely to be quarterly. We are much more focussed on co-creation and supporting your projects through development. |
| 72 | The impact of the project I am considering might not be seen within the 12 months that the project will run for. Will I be penalised for this? | Not at all, we expect that some of the measurable impact of these projects may take longer to be seen. As such we envisage conducting evaluations at a later date once the projects have concluded. |
|  | **Testing and Learning** |  |
| 73 | Will we be able to share learning with/from the other pilot’s area to look at cross regional applications? As a University I’m keen we share (and test) learning and insight as widely as possible. | We really want to encourage the successful projects to work together to share learning and insight! We have an inception meeting with successful projects as a basic introduction and initial opportunity to connect with each other. We will hold 2 Innovation Labs through the course of the projects where you get to engage and we seek to draw out the wider learning so we can see how our learning can apply beyond the projects themselves. And we have a secure extranet site.  However, I note your question refers to 'cross regional applications' and I am not sure what you mean by that or if I have misinterpreted your questions? If so please contact [Enquiries.FuturesProgramme@ukces.org.uk](mailto:Enquiries.FuturesProgramme@ukces.org.uk) so the answer can be amended. |
| 74 | Do I have to test and share my learning with wider employer groups? | Yes, all successful applicants will be expected to attend the Innovation Labs and share their learning. |
| 75 | In any proposed project, does the anchor institution set the KPIs or do KPIs feed into a wider UKCES programme wide set of KPIs | We are not prescribing KPIs. We want you to set out in your application form your *Potential for Impact* and *Logic chain*. We want to ensure that what you propose to do and to test within your project will address the specific problems you identify. Where we identify similar issues, we will encourage projects to share the KPIs they are using so that each can learn from others. It may trigger ideas of KPIs you've not thought of before. We do require all successful projects to complete a 'Testing Plan', which highlights how you will test your logic chain and how you will test the development of your innovative products or innovative methods. See the Guidance on testing and shared learning. |
| 76 | How will you be looking to measure the success of the projects? | The 2 main measures of success will be:   * Improved growth, turnover or productivity of small firms * Increased productivity within the local community   These will be monitored through the projects and through the evaluation of the competition. |
| 77 | How will you evaluate the impact that the projects have made? | We will evaluate the impact at the end of the competition through a competition evaluation. However, the impact against the two success measures identified above may take longer than the lifetime of the funded project. As such we may need to approach employers following the completion on the projects to obtain participant details to track pay, bottom line profits, and productivity etc. |