

Request for Quote

RFQ Ref	PR2108
RFQ Name	SEMLEP Business Survey 2023
Issue of Specification	Friday 9 th June 2023
Closing date	Friday 28th July 2023 - 12pm Midday

1. About us

1.1. The South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) has a central role in determining local economic priorities and securing investment to support business innovation and growth. To do this we link together the public and private sectors with academia to coordinate housing, transport, commercial development, energy infrastructure and raise workforce skills, in line with employers' needs, for the benefit of the wider economic area. We prioritise driving up productivity, creating jobs and promoting long-term, sustainable growth.

1.2. SEMLEP has three main roles in delivering strategic economic growth.

- 1.2.1. Setting the strategic direction for the area's future economic opportunities, challenges and priorities.
- 1.2.2. Direct intervention to increase growth. We are responsible for securing and overseeing the spend of two main sources of growth funding as well as coordinating business support through our Growth Hub
- 1.2.3. Facilitating growth by convening partners to assist cross-boundary collaboration on short and long-term economic issues.

1.3. The South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) was set up in May 2011 as one of 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) in England. As private public partnerships leading economic growth, LEPs play a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities that drive innovation, growth and the creation of local jobs. Our [Local Industrial Strategy for the South East Midlands](#) (LIS) was published in 2019, setting out a series of commitments to support sustainable long term economic growth in the region. In 2020, in response to the COVID pandemic, we published an [Economic Recovery Strategy](#), which set out both shorter-term actions to help stabilise the local economy, and also how these align with the longer-term commitments of the LIS. This is supported by a monthly updated evidence base, informing how our short term approach can be tweaked as appropriate. More information can be found on our website www.semlep.com.

1.4. We have many partners including six local authorities, local businesses, business organisations and many other private and public organisations, covering a region of some 1.8m people. SEMLEP also has a specific business support arm: SEMLEP's Growth Hub.

- 1.5. SEMLEP is formed as a company limited by guarantee and is overseen by the Department for housing, Levelling-up and Communities and the Department for Business and Trade.

Overview

- 1.6. SEMLEP is inviting bids to undertake a comprehensive business survey within the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) area. This encompasses the following local authority areas: Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes, and the new unitary authorities of North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire (which were previously divided into seven district councils, under Northamptonshire County Council).
- 1.7. The survey will need to identify the economic challenges and opportunities facing businesses in the area. This information will be used to inform SEMLEP and local authority approaches to economic recovery and the development and delivery of economic development activities.
- 1.8. In responding to this tender, applicants should provide costs for undertaking the survey and writing a detailed survey report and summary for SEMLEP, with some breakdown at local authority level. Applicants should also indicate costs for additional boosted surveys and reports in councils who wish to take part (more detail below).

2. Background

- 2.1. The findings of the survey will be a key tool for SEMLEP, local authority and other partners in monitoring local economic conditions and developing and delivering initiatives targeted to business needs. This survey will be particularly focused on monitoring the economic impacts of high inflation and supply chain disruption experienced since the 2021 survey, as well as exploring the barriers businesses face when accessing grant funding and workplace health measures.
- 2.2. SEMLEP and its partners undertook similar surveys in previous years which will form the basis of a questionnaire for this survey (see additional information). Some changes will be made to the most recent (2021) questionnaire in conjunction with the chosen provider, SEMLEP and additional participating authorities; however, we still wish to retain a high level of comparability with previous surveys, to allow us to understand trends over time. This will require the methodology to be consistent with these past surveys, interviewing a random sample of local businesses, weighted by sector and size. A copy of the 2021 survey can be found [here](#) for reference.

3. Key requirements

- 3.1. SEMLEP seeks experienced professionals to undertake – and write up the findings of – a robust business survey to identify business needs and economic conditions within the South East Midlands, and who can extend this survey for specific local authorities who wish to take up this option (this would involve surveying a larger number of businesses in the LAs in question, and potentially including a few additional LA-specific survey questions too, as well as writing an LA-specific report. The LA would pay extra for this; applicants should set out how much they would charge).
- 3.2. The questionnaire used in the last survey is attached; as mentioned above, some changes to the questions are likely to be made for the 2023 survey.

- 3.3. The survey methodology should be comparable with the surveys undertaken in 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2021 to allow for comparison of core questions over time. The survey should be based on:
- A stratified sample of random businesses, stratified by sector, number of employees and local authority area
 - A questionnaire of up to 60 core questions across the area, with up to five extra questions specific to each additional participating authority
 - At least 1,400 interviews conducted over telephone across the South East Midlands, similar to previous surveys. We would require the number of interviews in each local authority area to be weighted to reflect the size of the business population in those areas.
 - Any business who wants to provide their views should be able to do so. This could be facilitated by providing an online version of the questionnaire, or by listing a contact point (for interested businesses to contact the survey team) in relevant SEMLEP communications.
- 3.4. The provider will be required to source a robust business database from which to select appropriate business contact details for telephone interviews.
- 3.5. It is currently expected that the new survey will need to achieve, on average, 230 completed interviews in each local authority area. The consultant must also be able to demonstrate the ability to increase the sample size where required. For reference, the 2021 SEMLEP business Survey had over 1,800 responses, including the boosted samples paid for by 4 of the local authorities, and we would expect the provider to be able to match this level of interviews.
- 3.6. The provider is to advise on this response level, in terms of statistical validity, and recommend any alternatives, if necessary, to meet the objectives of analysis at the SEMLEP level and provide a reliable baseline and comparison between its separate authorities. Any views from businesses who actively choose to take part in the survey (either through an online survey or by contacting the survey team, as relevant) will need to be integrated with the wider findings, to ensure statistical reliability is maintained.
- 3.7. In addition to the core SEMLEP analysis, the provider should be able to boost surveys locally, in blocks of 50, up to 250 telephone surveys. This would be funded through individual local authorities who wished to increase the sample size locally. An additional local authority specific report should also be produced for participating authorities. In previous surveys, several local authorities have expressed an interest in surveying additional businesses in each of their respective areas and have asked five unique questions to those businesses. Please include a price per additional report.
- 3.8. The provider will be required to demonstrate the ability to deliver the required service quality and to deliver within timescales. Please provide a timetable of key dates and a workplan showing the number of days required for each of the key tasks as set out below.
- 3.9. Please outline the resources and technical ability to carry out the service. This includes providing information on the workforce to be employed for performance of the service and level of experience, professional certification, and level of resources to be used. The proposal needs to show the social value of the contract and how your business contributes to the society and community in which you operate.

Reports

3.10. The successful provider will be required to collate and analyse responses into a detailed report and summary.

3.11. Written reports including detailed analysis of the results from the survey should be provided to SEMLEP and each additional participating council. This will need to include:

- Changes over time to previous business surveys, where applicable
- Comparison to any other comparable survey data (e.g. British Chamber of Commerce survey, BEIS England Business Survey, UKCES Employer Skills Survey)
- Any issues facing differing types of business, such as by sector, age, or rate of growth.
- Differences by geography, for example between local authority areas. These will be developed in agreement with the chosen provider.
- Breakdown of survey results by our four showcase sectors, to allow for comparability with previous surveys. These are: High Performance Technology, Manufacturing Advanced Technology, Logistics and Cultural and Creative.
- Executive Summary of the Survey results highlighting the key findings.

3.12. The provider should provide an electronic copy of the final report, along with all relevant data tables produced in the analysis (including the raw survey data in Excel format). SEMLEP and local authorities may also ask for a (likely virtual) presentation of the results.

3.13. The provider should be able to complete the work in line with this suggested timescale:

- Inception Meeting – early August 2023
- Scoping – August 2023
- Interviews – early September-October 2023
- First results – by November 2023
- Full report and presentation – by December 2023

3.14. SEMLEP and its local authority partners wish to retain any ongoing rights to any surveys developed and information obtained, including the supply of data collected.

4. Deliverable Timescales

4.1. Below is an indication of this Quote timeline, this may change and SEMLEP will not be liable for any changes.

RFQ issued	Friday 9 th June 2023
Closing date for quotes	Friday 28 th July 2023 - 12pm Midday
Interviews or appointment of supplier	Friday 4 th August 2023
Contract start date	Monday 14 th August 2023
Contract end date	Friday 15 th December 2023

5. Budget

The maximum budget for the SEMLEP Business Survey is £35,000 including VAT. It is expected that if local authorities from the SEMLEP area wish to boost their surveys, they will pay for this themselves. A price is to be given for these additional surveys and reports; in previous years, this has been provided at around the £4,000 mark per local authority.

6. Selection and Award Criteria

This RfQ application has a two-stage process: Part A and Part B. The first stage will assess Part A in accordance with the Selection Criteria that assesses the ability of the tenderer to perform a contract based on qualitative information related to the economic and financial standing of the applicant, suitability, equalities and insurance. If the application passes stage one that is Part A, it will be assessed under the Award Criteria “Part B”, stage two.

Stage One - Selection Criteria

Section 3 to 5 of the application form is Part A. Questions 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7 are pass / reject. If you fail these questions, your application will be rejected.

Stage Two - Award Criteria

If your application passes on “Part A” it will progress to “Part B” that is the Award Criteria. The applications will be scored under the Award Criteria set out in Annex 1.

7. RFQ responses

Please note that your response must include:

- **SEMLEP’s RFQ Application Form fully completed**
- **Any additional information you wish to provide to support your response. Please keep additional information to no more than 3 A4 pages**
- All prices quoted shall be fixed and firm and shall apply for the full duration of the contract.
- All costs are deemed to include expenses and any other on-cost.
- All prices quoted shall be inclusive of Value Added Tax (VAT)
- The quotation response must be on SEMLEP’s Request for Quotation Application Form
- Any queries regarding completion of the response please email procurement@semlep.com or contact us on 01234 436100
- Please send your completed forms and any supporting information electronically to procurement@semlep.com with the name of the tender in the subject header. Please note we **do not** want hard copies to be sent in the post.

Annex 1: AWARD CRITERIA EVALUATION

Criteria	Score	Score	Score	Weighting (%)
Price: It is necessary to illustrate the value for money in the proposal and how your proposal will deliver the best value per £ of public funds.	Exceptional, covered thoroughly, prices are very good and better than other suppliers. Score 8-10	Average. Brief covered adequately; Prices are reasonable. Score 4-7	Bidder meets or does not meet requirements of brief. Score 0-3	40%
Ability to deliver the required service quality and within timescales: Outlines what is to be delivered and how will be delivered.	Exceptional, covered thoroughly, Score 8-10	Average. Brief covered adequately, Score 4-7	Bidder meets or does not meet requirements of brief. Score 0-3	30%
Quality of delivery: Provide details about the quality of delivery indicating key members of the team that will be working on the project and relevant experience	Exceptional, covered thoroughly, have provided satisfactory information about the key members that will be involved on the project delivery and their relevant experience compared to the requirements of the brief. Has provided very good response, covering all the key deliverables 8-10	Average. Has provided adequate / fair information regarding the key members that will be involved on the project delivery and their relevant experience compared to the requirements of the brief 4 -7	Poor, have not provided satisfactory information 0-3	20%
Social Value: The proposal needs to show the social value of the contract and how your business contributes to the society and community in which you operate.	Exceptional, covered thoroughly, providing apprenticeship and placements, helping local charities and other community work. Score 8-10	Average. Brief covered adequately, Do community and charity work but do not provide apprenticeship / placements or vice versa. Score 4-7	Does not meet requirements of brief. Score 0-3	10%

Criteria	Score	Score	Score	Weighting (%)
			Total	100%