

Invitation to Tender

An Evaluation of Creative UK's Investment Programmes 2017 - 2021

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1. Tender Summary

Invitation to Tender	
Project title	Creative UK's Investment Programmes 2017 - 2021
Reference	CreativeUK12-2021
Issued by	Amanda Stevens Head of Research & Impact, Creative UK
Available budget	£15,000 excl. VAT
Date of issue	Friday 7th January 2022
Deadline for clarifications/questions	Friday 28 th January 2022 at 12:00 hrs
Contact details	For queries, please contact: Amanda Stevens, Head of Research & Impact, Creative UK Email: amanda.stevens@wearecreative.uk
Submission deadline for prospective tenderers	Tuesday 8th February 2022 at 12:00 hrs
Documentation required	Tender response sent via email to: amanda.stevens@wearecreative.uk
Terms and conditions	Creative UK's Standard Terms & Conditions of Contract for Services shall apply.

2. About Us

In 2021 Creative England and Creative Industries Federation joined forces to become **Creative UK**. At Creative UK, we believe that talent is everywhere, but opportunity is not. That's why we build programmes that create opportunities for talent to access the best support and reach the next stage in their creative entrepreneurial journey. Creative UK is working to build the right environment for the future of the creative industries by helping creative businesses raise their ambition, create jobs, grow turnover and build the confidence and networks they need to be truly innovative. **We invest, connect, mentor, advocate and collaborate at all levels of the industry, from individuals and small independents to large internationals, creating the right conditions for success.**

We are firm believers that investing in people and their businesses means investing in the UK as a world leader in creativity and innovation. Part of our unique offer includes providing expert resources and financial opportunities that are tailor-made for the Creative Industries, offering bespoke investments, access to funding, loans, and growth mentoring.

3. Context

Access to finance is a crucial mechanism to enable any business to grow, however creative businesses and entrepreneurs often experience difficulties accessing the finance they need to develop and realise their growth plans. A significant proportion of UK creative businesses are micro-enterprises: Made up of fewer than five staff and with turnover of less than £500k, they are often perceived to be high risk by mainstream lenders. Creative entrepreneurs are three times more likely to use their own money, or investment from family and friends, compared to SMEs in general.

Our financial offer addresses the market failure that prevents small creative businesses from getting the early finance they need to scale-up. As a specialist investor with sector-specific knowledge, we invest in businesses earlier than traditional venture capitalists. In doing so, we are building a pipeline of businesses that are growing to become strong candidates for further investment. Our bespoke offer to creative industries businesses has been comprised of the following flagship programmes:

- **Creative Growth Finance Debt Fund (CGF)** - Offers loans of £100,000 – £500,000 and a straightforward application process, providing creative businesses with investment, whether for working capital or for long-term business growth. This landmark scheme is delivered in partnership with Triodos Bank, providing vital scale up finance to the UK's most promising creative businesses. Over the course of the 2020/21 financial year, we awarded over £3.2 million in loans to help creative businesses to grow through the Creative Growth Finance Fund
- **RGF Loan Fund:** Now closed, the RGF loan fund made investments of up to £250k into roughly 120 companies worth over £10m in total. The loan portfolio is now almost recouped and some of the companies have gone on to benefit from CGF fund too.
- **Equity Investment Fund** - Invests in companies with high-growth potential that are looking to raise growth capital to invest in new products, services, jobs or markets, but are experiencing difficulties in accessing finance due to high levels of risk or uncertainty around the outcome of their propositions

4. Capturing our impact

In 2018, specialist advisory firm *The Good Economy* produced an evaluation of the performance and impact of our investment and finance programmes over the period between October 2012 and September 2017. Focussing on our loans and equity offer, a selection of key findings from the study are outlined below:



Since *The Good Economy* produced their findings, Creative UK's investment offer has evolved significantly, and we are now seeking to commission a follow-up evaluation to explore the performance of our investment and finance programmes, and their value and impact upon businesses supported.

The aim is for this newly commissioned work to be **broadly comparable to the original evaluation undertaken by *The Good Economy*, and to focus specifically on evaluating the Creative Growth Debt Fund, RGF Loan Fund and Equity Investment Programme.** The evaluation will need to be based across the following key themes:

- Investee profiling: Briefly mapping product take-up by key demographics to explore diversity across loan applicants;
- Demand for Creative UK investment: Highlighting the level of demand by tracking the number of all applications made to the programme year on year between 2017 and 2021;
- Business growth, survivability and sustainability
- Mobilisation of additional commercial investment
- Job creation and safeguarding
- International trade/exports

- Fostering innovation
- Level of investment across the regions, and how this supports the growth/development of creative clusters
 - How investment is distributed across the regions, briefly outlining how investment in businesses in the most deprived areas will be supporting inclusive growth and levelling up.

Following on from the previous evaluation, **this piece should cover the period from October 2017 – September 2021.**

4.1 Approach/Design

In this section we provide a brief outline of the key themes we expect the study to explore and the key respondents that will need to be engaged.

Please note: the approach adopted by consultants should be broadly comparable and benchmarkable against the evaluation previously undertaken by *The Good Economy*. [The evaluation report can be found here](#) and we advise consultants to refer to this to support the design of their methodology.

We expect consultants to build upon the following methodology:

- **Inception Phase:** A brief phase to inform the design of the research and final outputs. A project inception meeting will be set between the appointed consultants and Creative UK at the very start of this project. This meeting will be an opportunity to firm up any outstanding issues around the project brief, and to identify key areas for exploration as well as any areas where the methodology might be further tightened or altered. To help support the design of the research and the final outputs, Creative UK will share any relevant data/information that we hold on our investment and finance programmes with the appointed consultants and will signpost them onto relevant external sources that we are aware of. **Consultants are required to produce a short Project Initiation Document (PID)** outlining all project deliverables and milestones and documenting any modifications to the methodology from their original proposal.
- **Theory of Change:** Consultants will be expected to develop a retrospective Theory of Change to provide an evaluative framework against which the impact of Creative UK's investment and finance delivery can be based.
- **Secondary Analysis:** Consultants should undertake a comprehensive review of Creative UK's investment and finance programme data and a review of key literature to assess the impact of our investment and finance offer across the key themes listed above.
- **20 - 25 depth interviews with investee businesses:** Consultants should undertake a series of semi-structured, in-depth interviews with investee businesses to gather insight and feedback on the application and investment process, on information made available through the process, and on the impact of investment support on their businesses/business growth. One of the elements that makes Creative UK's investment and finance programmes unique, is they offer bespoke business support that **as well as** finance. The interviews should also draw out the difference and impact that this support has made for investee businesses
- **8 Light-Touch Case Studies:** Consultants should use insights from the interviews with investee businesses to form a series of brief case studies to demonstrate the impact of investment and bespoke support from Creative UK. As well as being informed by qualitative findings, the case

studies should be complemented with documentary sources where possible (e.g. annual reports, brief findings from web-based research etc.) to form the case studies. Consultants should also request that case study respondents share/signpost them on to further sources of information to inform the case studies. Each case study should be a maximum of 250 words long.

Creative UK will work closely with the appointed consultants throughout: We will supply programme and applicant data, provide contact details for investee businesses for interviews and case studies, help with interview/case study set-up and support with discussion guide design.

5. Outputs

The key outputs that we require are:

- A brief **Project Initiation Document (PID)** – consolidating the original proposal and any subsequent amendments to the deliverables, methodology etc as discussed at the project initiation meeting.
- A **top-line summary of headline findings from the secondary data analysis** (max. 2 pages)
- A short, **summary report of headline findings** (max.6 pages) bringing together notable insights/themes from the interviews
- An **informal, remote debrief presentation** with the Creative UK project team and a small number of our colleagues from across the business to discuss the guidance document.
- The **main output required will be the final evaluation report** bringing together all primary and secondary insights from across the evaluation and drawing out trends and conclusions around the performance and impact of Creative UK's investment and finance programmes over time.

6. Budget

The budget available for this project is **up to £15,000 (excl. VAT)**. Consultants are asked to provide a cost outline for delivery of this project at **three budget ranges: At £10,000, £12,500 and at £15,000.** Tenderers are required to provide a clear outline of what they are able to deliver at each of the three budget ranges.

7. Timetable

Given the constrained timeframe for this project we require tenderers to submit comprehensive but brief proposals. Proposals should be **no longer than 10 pages long**, outlining tenderers' approach to the project as well as a full breakdown of costs. Please note, we expect work to make a start on the research as soon as the contract is awarded.

We have included timings for an **afternoon inception meeting** with the appointed consultants to run on **15th, 16th or 17th February 2022**, and therefore request that tenderers keep these date free.

It is essential that all research fieldwork and outputs are delivered no later than Monday 4th April 2022. The following timings are set out for the project:

Date	Task
08/02/22 (noon)	Deadline for proposal submissions
11/02/22	Consultants appointed
15 -17/02/22 (PM) <i>exact day and time</i> <i>TBC</i>	Project initiation meeting with Creative UK project team
21/02/22	PID finalised and submitted
23/02/22	Evaluation design/fieldwork/analysis begins
14/03/22	Summary of headline findings from secondary analysis submitted to Creative UK
w/c 04/04/22	Summary of headline findings from interviews submitted to Creative UK
w/c 18/04/22	Final evaluation report submitted to Creative UK
1st week May 2022 <i>exact day and time</i> <i>TBC</i>	Informal debrief to Creative UK project team and wider colleagues

Tenderers are required to set out a detailed timetable and programme of work demonstrating how they will meet the project objectives and deliver the project outputs within the required timeframe. Tenderers should identify any anticipated difficulties or constraints in meeting this timetable and are invited to propose solutions for overcoming these.

Creative UK will require consultants to share drafts of all outputs and research tools produced throughout the duration project.

7. Project Team

Tenderers must have a strong research track record. They must also demonstrate expertise and a sound national and regional knowledge base of the creative industries. The team should also demonstrate a good track record and established expertise in the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, and desk research. Additionally, potential contractors should demonstrate a record of managing and successfully delivering high-quality research within time constraints.

The tender should name the key members of the proposed team for delivering the work, their respective roles and relevant experience. A Project Manager should be nominated, and evidence should be provided of that person's track record of delivering work on time.

8. Risk Assessment & Quality Assurance

While it would be unrealistic to plan for every contingency, there are some risks that would pose a more serious threat to the successful completion of the research than others. Tenderers are required to describe any risks that might prevent or delay the achievement of the project objectives, and for each risk identified should:

- Assess the likelihood of each risk occurring.
- Assess the likely impact on the project.
- Identify the risk owner.
- Outline any steps that will be taken to minimise / avoid the risk, and
- Discuss procedures for monitoring / managing the risk.

Tenderers are required to outline their quality assurance procedures. This should include details on any professional codes conduct adhered to, membership of any professional associations etc.

9. Price, Schedule of Firm Price and Payment

The contract will be let on a Firm Price basis. As such, tenderers are encouraged to base their costings on careful consideration of the proposed methods.

- Tenderers are required to provide details of the number of days that would be spent by each member of the research team on the study, their grade and daily rate.
- Tenderers should provide costings exclusive of VAT and state whether VAT would be charged.
- Details of non-staff costs (including travel and subsistence) should also be provided.
- Invoicing arrangements will be linked to the satisfactory achievement of jointly agreed milestones. As such, tenderers are invited to make suggestions regarding appropriate milestone payments.

10. Tender Evaluation Criteria

Tenders will be evaluated on the extent to which they:

- Demonstrate value for money.
- Display a clear understanding of both the project requirements and policy context.
- Present an appropriate approach to this work, identifying potential problems.
- Assemble an appropriate project team (including policy familiarity, methodological expertise, and project management experience)
- Propose sound project management arrangements (including ethics, risk management and quality assurance)
- Provide appropriate outputs and ensure that these are in line with the requirements of this research brief.
- Display the capacity to meet the project timetable.
- Overall clarity of the proposal and outlined approach.

11. Submission of Tenders

Tenderers are invited to submit proposals by **Friday 21st January 2022 at 12:00 hrs.** Proposals submitted after this deadline will not be accepted. Guidance on submissions is outlined in **Appendix A.**

Appendix A

SUGGESTED TENDER CONTENT

To aid comparisons and promote fair competition, please make sure that your tender follows the format outlined below. Proposals should be written in plain English and should not exceed 10 pages (excluding annexes).

Summary Statement

This should be a summary of your research proposal that would be easily understood by non-specialists. If your proposal is successful, this summary (including any agreed amendments) may be published on the Creative UK website.

Contact Details

Provide contact details for the person within your organisation who will act as first point of contact during the tendering process. You should include title; name; position held; telephone and fax numbers; email and postal addresses.

Background

Outline your understanding of the policy / research context and your perception of the key issues and challenges involved in this project.

Proposed Approach / Methods

Describe your proposed approach to achieving the project objectives and responding to the research questions outlined in the Research Brief.

Project Outputs

Provide an outline of all project outputs. You are expected to identify key audience groups and explain how you will ensure that the chosen style and format will maximise knowledge transfer.

Timetable and Programme of Work

Describe the programme of work, demonstrating how you will meet the project objectives and deliver the project outputs within the required timeframe. This must identify the main tasks and key milestones that should be used to monitor progress and payments. It is recommended that you illustrate your programme of work with a summary table or Gantt chart and also include a more detailed table that identifies the number of person days allocated to each key task (see Table 1).

Table 1: Person Days per Task

Task	Person Days			Total
	Person 1	Person 2	Etc.	
Task 1				
Task 2				
Etc.				

Proposed Team

Include a summary statement that explains why your proposed team has the appropriate skills and expertise to successfully undertake the project. You should name all the members of the proposed team and outline their respective roles and relevant expertise. You are also required to submit short CVs (no longer than 2 pages) for each member of the proposed team. Any sub-contractors or associates who may be employed to undertake any sections of the research should be separately identified, along with their respective roles and how they will be managed. The main contractor will be responsible for the delivery of any sub-contractors.

Project Management

You should identify the individual(s) who will have overall management responsibility for the research (Project Director) and nominate a representative for day-to-day contact with Creative UK. You should also outline how you plan to keep us informed of progress made and of any difficulties encountered, as well as the level of input and guidance that you will require from Creative UK.

Quality Assurance

Outline the procedures that you will operate for quality assurance. You should provide details of any professional codes of conduct adhered to and/or membership of any professional associations.

Risk Assessment

Describe any risks that might prevent or delay the achievement of project objectives, including an assessment of the likelihood of each risk occurring, the likely impact on the project, and any steps that will be taken to minimise / avoid the risk.

Additional Information

Use this section (or an appendix) to provide any additional information to support your bid.

Pricing Schedule

You are required to submit a detailed outline of costs.