

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (SEEDA)
Invitation to Tender**

**Evaluation of the
Continuing Employment Support Service (CESS)
(Project reference: SE23900)**

SEEDA/BD/APR/2010/04

1. Background

SEEDA is one of 9 Regional Development Agencies across the UK. We are responsible for the sustainable economic development and prosperity of the South East of England. We work at a local, national and international level to attract inward investment, to help South East businesses reach their full potential and to win practical support from a range of partners

2. Project

The Continuing Employment Support Service (CESS) is a joint initiative between SEEDA and Jobcentre Plus. Operating in the South East since 2003 with a team of 6 brokers covering the whole South East region, CESS aims to meet the needs of all those affected by redundancy, ensuring, wherever possible, that they are ready and able to move into new employment. CESS helps any company downsizing or unable to continue trading during the recession. It provides a rapid, coherent and effective service to people under threat of redundancy whilst they are still in work. CESS brokers have extensive experience of the labour market and offer information, advice and guidance tailored to meet the needs of employers and affected employees. The brokers also act as a gateway by 'brokering' in the services of other partners who may be able to help either the employers or employees.

Impending redundancies are notified to CESS by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills and within 24 hours of being notified, CESS brokers contact a company to offer support. The service also tracks the media, for news of potential job losses, and works with partners, employers and extensive networks who alert the service to businesses making redundancies.

CESS acts as a simple, single point of contact for employers and employees helping them to access a wide range of fully-funded support, advice and guidance to help individuals return to work as quickly as possible. Working with the employers, the CESS brokers soon establish the needs of the company, and the staff at risk of redundancy, and put together a bespoke package of support from a range of partners including:

- Jobcentre Plus
- Nextstep
- Business Link and Train to Gain
- Skills Funding Agency (SFA)
- Colleges
- Trade Unions
- Consumer Financial Education Body (CFEB – previously part of the FSA)
- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- Advice Conciliation and Arbitration service (ACAS)

New partners who have recently joined the “service” include the NHS Credit Crunch Stress Line and Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services (IAPT).

Details of the services offered by our partners are shown at Appendix 1.

3. Requirement

SEEDA seeks to engage consultants to undertake an evaluation of the CESS project.

3.1. Specific objectives for the evaluation are:

3.1.1. Review and assess the project rationale, design and processes taking into account:

- The rationale for the service and the existing evidence;
- Lessons learned from the design to improve the project;
- Its relevance to the contextual conditions – challenges and/or opportunities and
- The market and/or institutional failures it was designed to address;
- The effectiveness of a brokerage model and
- The effectiveness of working in partnership with Jobcentre Plus and other key agencies.

3.1.2. Review and assess the service delivery taking into account:

- The effectiveness of the service being offered to employers and employees and the extent to which employers take up the range of services offered through CESS;
- The methods used to identify potential companies making people redundant and how effective CESS is at encouraging companies to use the service;
- How effectively CESS is resourced;
- The degree of integration CESS has with other SEEDA, Jobcentre Plus and other agencies’ business support activities and
- What, if any, other fully-funded services might be offered through CESS that would bring added value to employers and employees.

3.1.3. **Evaluate the project outputs and outcomes** taking account of:

- Project performance: what are the gross and net attributable outputs and what is the net economic and overall impact that the programme has achieved as a result of delivering these outputs, following the additionality logic chain. The gross outputs to be adjusted for additionality factors (deadweight, displacement, leakage, substitution and multipliers) and the extent to which they are different from expectations and the reason for any significant variance;
- What are the outcomes from the project and any strategic added value against the original objectives;
- What are the wider and unintended effects?
- What would have been achieved without the service – the counterfactual;
- The positive and negative aspects of CESS;
- Overall value for money and
- The contribution the project makes towards strategic added value (see Appendix 2) and the Regional Economic Strategy.

3.1.4. **Recommend** whether any part of the CESS service should be retained post 31 March 2011 and suggest options for what this service should be and how it should be resourced, managed and funded.

3.1.5. **Recommend** ways in which SEEDA/Jobcentre Plus may be able to track tangible job outcomes for those supported through CESS and suggest any other suitable performance measures that could be adopted.

3.1.6. **Identify an effective exit strategy for SEEDA** from the project, including risks, opportunities and mitigating actions that may be needed to protect the outcomes for the future.

3.1.7. **Devise an evaluation dissemination strategy** in line with SEEDA's guidelines (see Appendix 3). However, consultants should not feel constrained by these guidelines as we welcome innovative suggestions.

3.2. Skills and experience

The project requires the organisation/consultancy to have the following skills and experience:

- Knowledge and understanding of the issues and challenges relating to businesses in the South East region of England;
- Knowledge and understanding of the need to provide support to businesses during the recession and how this fits with Government's remit to provide additional support to business during the economic downturn;
- Knowledge and understanding about redundancy support programmes;

- Knowledge about business support activities being provided by other public sector agencies in the South East;
- Proven track record in undertaking primary and secondary research and data analysis;
- Proven track record in undertaking project evaluations and
- Clear written communication.

3.3. Deliverables

A final report and presentation detailing:

- rationale for evaluation design;
- systematic analysis of qualitative and quantitative information to address the evaluation objectives/questions;
- key findings following logically from the analysis;
- clear and impartial conclusions;
- recommendations for how the project can be improved (if applicable)
- recommendations for which components of the CESS service, if any, should be retained post 31 March 2010 with options for how these components should be resourced, funded and managed;
- an exit strategy from CESS for SEEDA;
- an evaluation dissemination strategy and
- an assessment of whether SEEDA's investment has represented good value for money.

A draft report should be issued for consultation prior to the final report.

4. Methodology

We require proposals from consultants on how best this evaluation should be approached, but we would expect to see both a qualitative and quantitative approach which may include:

- Surveys with key partners (including service delivery partners), employers and employees
- Case studies
- Literature and document reviews
- Statistical analysis (primary and secondary data)

5. Timing

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Deadline for receipt of tenders | 12 noon 10 June 2010 |
| Interview/presentation | w/c 14 June |
| Inception meeting | w/c 21 June |
| Work to commence | 28 June |
| 1 st Draft report/initial conclusions | 20 August |
| Final report (anticipated date) and presentation | 3 September |

6. Tender Response

Please provide one bound copy and 2 unbound copies of your tender.

Tenders must include:

- Completed Form of Offer
- Detailed breakdown of costs supporting the Form of Offer
- Methodology statement & timescales
- Most recent company accounts or equivalent
- Evidence of related experience
- Details of key contacts and the proposed consultant who will undertake the activities described above
- Names of two referees

Tenderers must state if any of their proposed solution requires the use of sub-contractors. SEEDA reserves the right to reject the use of any particular sub-contractor.

6.1 IMPORTANT Instructions for Submission of Tenders

Please follow these instructions carefully as non-compliant tenders will not be accepted.

- Your tender must be returned to the Procurement Team in a plain envelope using only the label provided (downloadable from the SEEDA's website) and with no means of identifying the tenderer.
- Tenders must be returned no later than the due date and time above. (Tenders received after this time will not be accepted. If you are relying on couriers or the postal service, please send well in advance. No reasons will be accepted for missing the deadline.)
- Electronic submissions (email) will not be accepted.
- Fax submissions will only be accepted by arrangement with the Procurement Team on the morning of the due date, and must be followed by hardcopies within one working day.
- Tenders must include the signed and completed Form of Offer.

Please ensure that you have included all information requested in this specification.

7. Tender Selection

SEEDA reserves the right to exclude a tender from the evaluation for any one of the following reasons:

- Does not include all information requested in the **Tender Response** section above.
- Does not meet budget requirements.

- Does not demonstrate capacity to perform the required work

8. Contract Award

SEEDA considers that this contract may be suitable for economic operators that are small or medium enterprises (SMEs). However, any selection of tenderers will be based solely on the criteria set out for the procurement.

The contract will be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender, and tenders will be evaluated on a percentage weighted criteria:

- Price (15%)
- Quality of tender (15%)
- Methodology (25%)
- Quality of the proposed team (25%)
- Understanding of the requirement (20%)

9. Terms & Conditions

The contract will be awarded on the basis of SEEDA's terms and conditions of contract and a copy of this can be found on the SEEDA website at: <http://www.seeda.co.uk/Procurement/>.

SEEDA reserves the right to award the contract for all or any part of a tender, or not to award the contract. SEEDA also reserves the right to award the contract to more than one supplier.

10. Freedom of Information Act 2000

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, SEEDA must reserve the general right to disclose either information about your tender or the tender itself, including your price or range of prices, once a contract is awarded. However, you may request that certain information is not disclosed if to do so would prejudice your legitimate commercial interests.

Requests for non-disclosure must accompany your tender and include a clear and substantive justification together with a time limit when any confidential information could be disclosed – this is not normally expected to be more than 7 years. It would be helpful, if appropriate, if you could keep the areas that you consider should not be disclosed separate from the other areas of your tender.

11. Further information

Please direct any questions or requests for further information to:

Fiona Wickins
CESS Manager,
Business Services & Engagement Team,

SEEDA, Cross Lanes, Guildford GU1 1YA.
Telephone: 01483 470102 e-mail: fonawickins@seeda.co.uk.

CONTINUING EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SERVICE (CESS)

providing redundancy support in the South East

What is CESS?

The Continuing Employment Support Service (CESS) is a joint initiative between SEEDA and Jobcentre Plus and other partners. Operating in the South East since 2003, with a team of Brokers covering the whole region, CESS aims to meet the needs of all those affected by redundancy, ensuring, wherever possible, that they are ready and able to move into new employment. CESS can help any company downsizing or unable to continue trading during the recession. It provides a rapid, coherent and effective service to people under threat of redundancy whilst they are still in work.

What can CESS offer?

Firstly, you'll have the services of a dedicated CESS Broker who can give your employees free advice and guidance about claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and information about other state benefits such as income support and housing and council tax benefits. Your CESS Broker can also give advice about finding another job and they can offer you a range of other services through our associate partners:

➤ **Consumer Financial Education Body (CFEB)**

CFEB can run redundancy seminars at your premises, to cover basic financial planning and budgeting, borrowing – long-term and short-term - insurance, saving and investing, financial support and benefits and planning for retirement. Each employee receives a free, comprehensive guide.

CFEB can deliver as many presentations as you need to reach your workforce. The presentations are fully-funded by Government so there is no cost to the employer, but CFEB do ask for a minimum of 10 of employees per presentation.

Alternatively, individuals can access help via: www.cfebuk.org.uk

➤ **Train to Gain [Train to Gain is a free national service designed to help your business get the training it needs to succeed].**

Following enhancements introduced in August 2008 all businesses now have access to quality-assured, impartial and independent advice from skills brokers who will:

- Help to identify skills needs at all levels of your business so that you can make the right, informed choices as part of a wider business needs analysis
- identify and source high quality vocational skills training, including apprenticeships, delivered at a time and place to suit you, from a wide range of colleges and training providers

Train to Gain will also support individuals who have either had a notice of redundancy or are moving into work from unemployment. On top of the core Train to Gain offer, eligible individuals are now also able to access full funding for qualifications at Level 2 or Level 3 regardless of their previous qualifications.

Most local colleges will be able to provide detailed information about the funded courses on offer or alternatively, your CESS Broker can put you in touch with a local Train to Gain Adviser.

➤ **Business Link**

Business Link is the primary access channel for all business support in the South East and is able to provide **fully-funded workshops on-site** for people thinking about starting up a business. Business Link provide a tailored workshop programme to meet the specific needs of employees and will aim (where possible) to provide a facilitator who has a background appropriate to those attending the workshops. Although the workshop is free, Business Link does require at least 10 people to attend their presentation.

Alternatively, individuals can enrol on a free half day workshop 'Foundations for Success' which introduces people to what's involved in starting a business. Guided by experienced, professional facilitators the three hour workshops provide essential training. Each workshop forms an integral part of the journey to starting up and gives a solid base on which to build a business. Further information can be found at: www.foundationsforsuccess.co.uk

➤ **nextstep**

nextstep is a free government funded service that offers face-to-face help and support about training, learning and the world of work. Just about everybody needs help with finding or changing their job and improving their skills, at some point in their lives. Your personal nextstep adviser will talk with individual employees to help build confidence and plan their future by linking an individual's personal interests and skills to a job or career. The nextstep adviser will also help individuals to:

- understand the job market
- search and apply for jobs
- find funding to support any learning

- develop a CV
- improve interview and presentation skills

Further information can be found at: www.direct.gov.uk/nextstep

➤ **Response to Redundancy Training (R2R)**

Funded by the Skills Funding Agency and European Funding, R2R training offers high quality training provision to individuals under threat / notice of redundancy to enable them to continue working. Training is responsive to individuals needs and bespoke programmes can be developed in order to suit, whether it involves refreshing current skills or learning new ones. It is supplied by a number of specialist training providers across the South East. Sample courses include:

- Core Skills – Literacy and Numeracy
- Information Technology
- Business Administration
- Customer Service
- Professional Training
- Supervising
- Sales
- Retail
- Health and Safety
- Hospitality
- Food Safety
- Specialist support for managers and executives

Bespoke programmes can also be developed in order to suit the specific needs of your workforce and local labour market conditions.

➤ **ACAS [Advice Conciliation and Arbitration Service]**

ACAS has been advising and assisting employers since 1975. Experience shows that during times of economic difficulty employers need to understand how to deal with change effectively through communicating and consulting with employees who may feel under pressure and concerned about their future. It is important that correct procedures are followed to help protect businesses and employees at this time. ACAS can offer **free** training for company and employee representatives in how to consult effectively if referred to ACAS via your CESS Broker.

In addition, the national Helpline handles calls from employers and employees and can deal with enquiries about lay-offs, redundancies or business transfers. More detailed advice is available from senior advisors who can act as a critical friend and highlight potential risks and perhaps offer alternative solutions. On-line advice and guidance is also available at: www.acas.org.uk

➤ **HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC)**

HMRC run a range of fully-funded, off-site workshops for employers and employees covering a variety of tax related issues. These include Tax, National Insurance Contributions, VAT, Statutory Sick Pay and Statutory Maternity Pay, completing Tax Returns, and general information about tax and expenses. They can also provide tax advice to individuals about tax credits and tax in relation to business start-ups/becoming self-employed. HMRC also can provide on-site workshops where there are 10 or more employees involved. Further information can be found at: www.hmrc.gov.uk/ukbst

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE SERVICES, OR TO ARRANGE FOR THESE SERVICES TO BE DELIVERED AT YOUR WORKPLACE, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR CESS BROKER.

CESS is a joint partnership initiative between SEEDA and Jobcentre Plus to meet the needs of all those affected by redundancy.

STRATEGIC ADDED VALUE (SAV)

SEEDA does not have a large budget so we need to know our resources are being used in a strategic way. As part of any programme/project evaluation, the contribution towards SEEDA strategic role should be measured in terms of Strategic Added Value. There are 4 categories that can be used to measure Strategic Added Value – see below. A programme/project does not have to demonstrate each of these 4 categories – but it will need to relate to at least one SAV category.

| SAV Category | Explanation |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Initiative | <p>Describe how the project demonstrates leadership in identifying regional development needs and coming up with solutions to address those needs. Or where the project takes the initiative in addressing issues which are preventing the regional economy from achieving its full potential that no one else is able/willing to tackle.</p> |
| <p>Influence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National • Regional | <p>Describe how the project has been able to influence or bend mainstream policies and programmes in ways that will benefit the regional economy and how, if appropriate, the project may influence national policies/programmes.</p> |
| <p>Catalyst/Leverage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment | <p>How has SEEDA's pump priming funding been used to lever significant investment in the region in the future.</p> |
| <p>Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordination • Partnership • Information exchange • Capacity building | <p>Describe how the project has taken action to improve the way that stakeholders engage with each other or with their client base. For example, through more joined-up working (co-ordination and partnership) or by delivering better quality services through better training, information exchange or networking.</p> |

SEEDA EVALUATION DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

Dissemination is an essential part of conducting evaluations. Evaluations ensure that learning is shared, with evaluation findings offering a valuable opportunity to influence and make positive improvements to future interventions. Partners can learn, through evaluations, what processes and/or activities worked against original objectives and adopt good practice accordingly. In addition, by disseminating evaluation findings, outcomes are amalgamated which clearly demonstrate overall impact. Evaluations also work to retrieve information which judges project/programme value for money and enables future benchmarking.

Funding for future interventions across the Agency will not be forthcoming without evaluation findings being disseminated which ultimately provide the evidence that projects and programmes are effective, efficient, sustainable and relevant.

Accordingly SEEDA has developed a dissemination strategy, with 5 key requirements:

1. Dissemination plans will be built into all stages of the project/programme lifecycle, including at Terms of Reference and Proposal stages and within related project proposal/appraisal forms. Evaluation Framework Panel members have been instructed to inform the Programme Evaluation Manager of each evaluation assignment being undertaken and to discuss dissemination plans at an early stage with their SEEDA representatives. Specifications for evaluation work are to include a requirement to produce a dissemination plan as part of the final report.
2. All evaluation reports will be disseminated by the Project Manager or SEEDA representative responsible for the evaluation. Recipients of evaluation reports should include key SEEDA colleagues including

members of the Continuous Improvement Board, Executive Board, PAB as well as externally to related partners, stakeholders, other RDAs (where the areas of interest are linked) and relevant colleagues within SEERA and GOSE. Final evaluation reports (including the Executive Summary) will be forwarded by email to the Programme Evaluation Manager.

3. As well as disseminating reports, managers responsible for the evaluation will showcase evaluation findings and recommendations either wholly or as a part of a specific internal or external event, conference or workshop. Other mediums for disseminating findings include submitting evaluation briefings through South East View and on SEEDA's Intranet. Staff should consult the document 'Disseminating Evaluations' within the Evaluation Library for further ideas of how best to disseminate evaluation reports. The Programme Evaluation Manager should be kept informed of all dissemination activities, as they will also be conducting their own, according to point 4 below.
4. The Programme Evaluation Manager will submit evaluation findings as part of SEEDA's six monthly reports to DTI and at key Executive Board/Project Advisory Board meetings. In addition, the Programme Evaluation Manager will publish a sample of evaluation reports and key lessons learnt – including case studies - (linked to SEEDA's Corporate Plan and/or RES/Divisional objectives) on the Intranet Guidance Centre, within the Evaluation Library. To complement the information available on the Intranet Guidance Centre, an Evaluation Bulletin will be disseminated to all staff quarterly from May 2007.
5. All the RDAs have submitted *Programme Evaluation* Delivery Plans to DTI (April 2007) as part of the Impact Evaluation Framework (IEF) implementation plan. These plans list all programme evaluations that have been undertaken, are currently underway or are due over the next few years, linked to their RES objective. SEEDA's *Programme* and *Project* Delivery plans will be revised as time goes on and can be viewed

in the Evaluation Library on the Intranet Guidance Centre. The *project* evaluation delivery plan will be transferred and linked to a Research & Evaluation database currently being developed within the Strategy team, from summer 2007. Staff should consult the programme and project delivery plans in order to gain an overview of evaluations currently taking place that may be linked to their remit and to co-ordinate dissemination activities, where applicable.