



## ***Request for Proposal***

***Be the Business*** – Literature review into minority-owned businesses

12<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Be the Business  
26-28 Glasshouse Yard  
London  
EC1A 4JU

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**Confidentiality Statement**

The applicant will not disclose, divulge, or impart to any third party, other than those designated in writing by Be the Business, any information.

The applicant will not use any information, in whole or in part, for any purpose other than preparing and submitting the RFP unless agreed beforehand, in writing, by Be the Business.

The applicant will only disclose information to those of its employees and contractors as may be necessary to prepare and submit the RFP and will ensure that those employees and contractors comply with the terms of this confidentiality statement.

This duty of confidentiality will not extend to any information to the extent that such information at the time of receipt by the applicant was in the public domain; or:

- after receipt by the applicant was made public by a third party acting without impropriety in so doing; or
- was in its possession before receipt from Be the Business and was acquired directly or indirectly from a source wholly independent of Be the Business, and the applicant can establish this by competent proof; or
- is required by law to be disclosed, provided that the applicant notifies Be the Business of such requirement as soon as reasonably possible after becoming aware of the same.

The provisions of this section will survive the RFP expiration or earlier termination of this RFP and continue to apply for a period of ten (10) years from the date of such expiration or earlier termination.

## ***Terms and Conditions of this Proposal***

- In managing this procurement, the Buyer will endeavour to act fairly and reasonably in all its dealings with interested suppliers and Respondents, and to follow due process which is open and transparent.
- This RFP does not commit Be the Business to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred in the preparations or submission of proposals, or costs incurred in making necessary studies for the preparation thereof or to procure or contract for services or supplies.
- Be the Business reserve the right to cancel the RFP and any or all proposals may be rejected as a result.
- Following submission of the proposals and their final evaluation, Be the Business reserves the right to retain unsuccessful proposals. It is the responsibility of the Vendor to identify any information of a confidential or proprietary nature contained in its proposal so that it may be handled accordingly.
- Please make clear when giving any financial values whether it includes VAT or not. We would prefer that any monetary values are given free of VAT and VAT calculated separately.

If you have any questions or concerns about this proposal, please notify the Be the Business contacts outlined in Section 1 of this document. Successful suppliers will be subject to Be the Business standard Terms of Reference.

Where no notice is given, all information contained herein is Copyright 2020 Be the Business.

## Section 1: Submission & Selection

### Selection Timeline

<b>Event</b>	<b>Deadline date</b>
Published and released to market	Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
Deadline for Clarifying Questions	Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
Response to Clarifying Questions	Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
Response deadline	Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2020 @ 17.00 GMT
Decision	Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup> October
Project start date	Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2020

### Submission Delivery Details

- All submissions should be submitted by email to [Josh.Sheppard@bethebusiness.com](mailto:Josh.Sheppard@bethebusiness.com).
- Hard copies are not required.
- The electronic submissions must be in PDF format.
- The document must be no more than 10 pages long. Appendices of CV's can be in addition to this 10-page limit.

### Submission Questions and Clarifications

You may contact the following people if you have any questions or require clarification on any topics covered in this document.

#### **Joshua Sheppard**

Evaluation & Insights Manager

Email: [Josh.Sheppard@bethebusiness.com](mailto:Josh.Sheppard@bethebusiness.com)

### Selection Criteria

We are looking for a partner with a strong track record in evidence-based business planning. The partner will need to demonstrate:

- A clear understanding of the aims and objectives of Be the Business (BtB) and this RFP
- The ability to deliver a high-quality piece of work within a short time frame
- A clear understanding of the current business environment with a specific knowledge of small and medium sized businesses (SME's) and knowledge of evidence sources on diversity and inclusion.
- A clear outline of the input and resource required of Be the Business
- A clear outline of relevant experience of the project team or individuals.
- A clear project approach and alignment with the needs and requirements of this tender
- Please provide a full breakdown of the cost of your proposed approach.

## **Section 2 – Background About Be the Business**

### **Background to Be the Business**

Be the Business (BtB) was formed by Sir Charlie Mayfield (Chairman John Lewis Partnership) and a number of other well-known companies with a major UK presence who make up the Productivity Leadership Group (PLG). PLG members include firms such as GSK, Amazon, BAE Systems, McKinsey, Rolls Royce, KPMG, EY, Siemens UK, John Lewis Partnership.

Be the Business is a business-led movement that operates across the UK, whose purpose is to act as a catalyst for improving productivity and helping businesses to rebuild after the impact of Covid 19. The aim is to help thousands of small and medium sized businesses from all sectors to understand their current performance and actively seek out ways to improve. By making incremental improvements to all businesses this will improve the UK economy and the standard of living for the nation's population.

BtB has a two-pronged approach: 1) we directly support all SMEs who are underserved by both government and the private sector supporting them with mentoring, management and leadership training, engagement and learning from peers and more effective technology adoption. 2) we crowd in Britain's world-class companies to the movement to provide resources, distribution and mentorship to UK small businesses. In the past three months BtB has pivoted its offer to focus on specific recovery sectors and needs – but the core focus on management and technology as well as the dual model of serving SMEs but leveraging big corporate leaders continues.

### **Be the Business Interventions/Programmes**

Be the Business runs a wide range of interventions which are briefly described below for further information.

Mentoring for Growth (MfG) provides mentoring of senior business leaders in SMEs by senior business leaders who work for some of the UK's best large corporations. This enables the transfer of knowledge and skills which they wouldn't usually be able to access. A specific shorter mentoring programme to help SME leaders build their business plans has been developed and rolled out in response to Covid 19.

Productivity through People currently runs through four UK university business schools and a shorter version of the programme is run by a training provider in the North. The specific aim of the programme is to improve the management and leadership skills of senior SME leaders and to help them implement best practise in their firms. This is done through a mixture of classroom-based learning, business open days, peer group working and mentoring.

Collaborative networks programme currently operates in Cornwall and Buckinghamshire for Hospitality firms and the North West for all family businesses. This programme supports firms using a range of different interventions such as masterclasses, peer groups and advisory boards.

Our Benchmarking tool is a light touch intervention that enables businesses to understand more clearly how they perform against similar businesses in terms of productivity and provides recommendations on where they could implement best practise.

Our new Rebuild site has been specifically set up to support businesses recover from the effect of Covid. This outlines what support is available under the six broad themes of Business Model development, Employees, Finance, Leadership, Suppliers and Technology. The site is continuously being developed but includes links

to resources, case studies and access to BtB wider programmes alongside specific Covid interventions such as our Rapid Response Mentoring Cohort.

Be the Business Digital provides free business advice for business leaders looking to get the most out of technology. We are focused on improving SMEs access to information on technology adoption, reducing the information asymmetries that exist in this area and enabling them to adopt and implement technology which is most suited to their needs. We are aware that technology adoption can have a huge impact on the levels of firm productivity, but even for the more general business technologies such as the customer relationship management system, take up remains low. We think Covid 19 has presented a unique opportunity to drive mass adoption of technology in UK and will play a key role in helping firms recover.

## **Section 3 – Project Overview**

### Project Overview

Be the Business are seeking to secure the services of a partner who will provide a literature review of diversity and inclusion evidence of minority owned SME businesses in the UK. There are seven key research questions we would like this review to answer.

### Objectives

The core aim of the project is to collate and present a clear summary of the evidence base to support our future business planning in this area:

### Outputs

These should be in a format that can support development of (1) our own approaches to programmes and communications improvement and (2) business plans and policy development.

- Initial draft report or presentation to stimulate discussion and focusing or prioritisation of attention, three weeks after commencing
- Final report six weeks after commencing.

### Context and Background

To ensure the future is not only more productive, but that the social benefits are felt by everyone regardless of race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, age, or other marginalised characteristic or identity, we need to become more diverse and inclusive, and we need to promote this amongst the businesses and leaders we serve.

The UK has a long way to go to achieve gender and ethnic parity. Beyond bringing significant social impact dividends, it makes business sense to close these gaps. In 2019, 18% of UK executives were women (compared to 46% in the workforce); research by McKinsey Global Institute in 2016 calculates that closing the gender parity gap could result in £150 billion additional GDP (5-8% increase across regions) by 2025. Average ethnic minority representation in UK companies was 9%, versus 20% in the population; McKinsey's Diversity Wins research in 2019 found that moving from bottom to top quartile performance on ethnic representation results in a 36% increase in likelihood for financial outperformance.

Be the Business is uniquely positioned to drive large scale impact on this issue. We currently work with thousands of SMEs, and partner with over 40 large public companies who collectively serve millions of SMEs and employ hundreds of thousands of people – a large share of UK PLC.

As a result, we want to review the key literature in this area and build greater insight into the key issues at hand. Evidence on all marginalised groups should be included when providing evidence against the research questions below.

One area which would be interesting to discover more about during the literature review is Intersectionality. Intersectionality recognises that multiple aspects of a person's identity (eg. Race, gender, class, ability) may combine to create unique experiences and modes of discrimination and privilege.

Another key focus will be on BAME led businesses. This is one of the key areas where BtB may want to focus its initial work in this area, so clear evidence collected in this area against the key questions will be of important.

## Key questions to answer

The literature review should aim to provide evidence on diversity and inclusion with a focus of minority owned SME businesses in the UK. The evidence collated should cover the key questions outlined below.

1. **What are the characteristics of minority owned businesses in the UK?**
  - Includes proportion of the business population – Are minority owned businesses over/under-represented in specific regions / sectors / size (employees) / turnover / family owned.
2. **What are the existing barriers or challenges that all minority owned business leaders in the UK face?**
  - This includes access to finance and / or networks.
3. **Does engagement with business support in the UK vary for this group and what are the best ways for driving greater engagement?**
  - This should include private sector support as well as access to publicly funded support.
4. **What does the research tell us about the impact of becoming more diverse and inclusive for SMEs?**
5. **What are the major challenges businesses face in implementing change to become more diverse and inclusive and how have these been overcome?**
6. **What evidence exists around the relationship between D&I and productivity?**
7. **Highlight areas where there are gaps in the evidence base with regards to minority owned businesses and recommendations on how these will be filled?**

During the initial kick off and scoping phase for the work any additional questions which the bidder believes are key or relevant could be discussed and included. These should also be outlined in the bid.

## Project Approach

We would like to kick off the project as soon as possible, and we envisage the core outputs being delivered in **a short sharp piece of work over 6 weeks.**

## Section 4 – Proposal Content

The following outlines suggested areas where you may want to comment in your proposal. This is not a complete and final list and you may wish to comment in other areas.

## Approach and Timeline

- Please explain the approach you would use and what challenges you perceive that could affect the success.
- What information will you require from BtB to undertake this piece of work?

- Please provide a suggested timeline with key milestones for the project.
- What support channels are available to Be the Business following completion of the project? Can you provide details of typical SLAs you can offer?
- What outputs will be provided to Be the Business at the end of the project?

## Team, Administration & Resource

- What team would you propose to pull together this work?
- What team structure would you recommend?
- Please include personal biographies (bios) of the proposed team members including some background experience and key skills. (These can be included in an appendix)

## Project Experience

- Provide examples of previous similar projects? Please include references and/or testimonials from previous clients.
- Have you delivered previous projects:
  - o which required a strong focus on results-based management?
  - o with relatively new organisations?
  - o with public / private sector hybrid organisations?

## Other Experience & Credentials

- What other experience would you like to highlight
- The Vendor must be able to make available appropriate financial evidence in order to ascertain the financial stability and capability for taking on the scale and duration of this project. Be the Business may also ask for proof of cover of professional/company indemnity insurance
- We would also expect the organisation to have a clear data security policy and fully comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 which applies the General Data Protection Regulation.
- If successful, you may be asked to outline and agree your approach to the handling of data.

## Costs

Please include a full breakdown of the project costs including rates. We are looking for bidders to set out plans to deliver a project that meets our needs and represents value for money. As Be the Business is a charity, we expect a charitable discount to usual rates.

## General comments

If there are any general comments, questions or suggestions that you would like to make as part of this proposal then please include them.