

Business Link Outreach ERDF project core components

What will this project do

This application for ERDF funding will create a programme of enterprise support to be delivered within the 12 ERDF Priority Axis 2 districts as indicated above, and is designed to enhance the provision currently available via the core Business Link service; a service delivered by the project delivery partners on behalf of the East Midlands Development Agency (*emda*), the core activities delivered by Prince's Trust, and the activities delivered via the Enterprise Ecologies Programme in the cities of Leicester and Nottingham.

The Business Link Start-Up Service provides both individuals who are considering establishing their own business as well as businesses who are within their first 12 months of trading with a dedicated programme of support, including the provision of a business advisor and mentor and access to free workshops to equip them with the information and knowledge required to run a successful business.

The core Business Link service provides support to SMEs, including Social Enterprises, who have been trading for a minimum of 12 months with information, diagnostic and brokerage support. This is provided via an enquiry team supported by information officers, online support material via a comprehensive businesslink.gov website and a region wide events programme. Diagnostic, action planning and brokerage support is provided via a team of Business Support Advisors. They undertake an in-depth review of the business to identify any key areas of weakness which should be addressed in order to enable the business to maintain a competitive advantage within the marketplace, supporting sustainability and growth.

The Prince's Trust supports disadvantaged young people to get their life working by challenging them to take personal responsibility and providing them with practical personal support to help them to succeed, through increasing self-esteem, social skills, readiness for employment, fostering personal enterprise, and working in partnership with others. The Trust's involvement in this project specifically concerns the delivery of business start-up activity to such individuals.

Enterprise Ecologies is a pilot programme targeted to stimulate enterprise development and growth within key target wards in Leicester City and Nottingham City.

The 'Business Link Outreach Support' project will provide a targeted programme of support to those individuals and businesses who either live or trade within one of the 12 ERDF Priority Districts and who would not traditionally access the support which is available through the mainstream services as identified above. The project will employ a team of community based outreach workers and advisors who will each have a geographical focus for the promotion and delivery of business support services within each of the 12 ERDF priority districts. More specifically the 'Business Link Outreach Support' project will provide the following services:

- > **Community Based Outreach** – the project will employ a dedicated team of Community Outreach Advisors who will work within target communities from within each of the 12 districts in order to raise the awareness of enterprise and the associated start-up support to be made available through the project. Through such activities, the project will aim to identify those individuals who would not typically access support through the mainstream Business Link Start-Up Service but who, with additional information, encouragement and support may consider the benefits to be attained through self employment and the creation of their own enterprise.

The Community Outreach Advisors will work pro-actively in partnership with a number of key agencies including Job Centre Plus, Pathways to Work, Flexible New Deal, local networks, community based agencies e.g. social landlords, role models and neighbourhood groups in order to identify those individuals who are most in need of advice and support. Such support will be prioritised and targeted towards those individuals who are either unaware of the services available or reluctant to access support from the mainstream Business Link Start-Up Service.

Outputs

The 'Business Link Outreach Support' project will achieve the following impacts:

- > **Number of people assisted to start a business** – it is envisaged that a minimum of 1,541 individuals will access advice and support via the Community Outreach Advisors and the Start-Up Advisors.
- > **New business creation** – it is envisaged that a minimum of 726 new start businesses will be created and survive for a minimum of 12 months as a direct result of the activities to be delivered through the project.
- > **Jobs created** – it is envisaged that the project delivery will directly result in the creation of 827 new jobs within the 12 ERDF priority districts.
- > **Business assisted to improve their performance** – it is envisaged that a minimum of 2,113 businesses will be assisted throughout the lifetime of the project through the provision of advice, support, and grant funding and that this support will result in a measurable improvement in their performance.
- > **Number of businesses improving performance** – it is envisaged that of the 2,113 businesses assisted to improve their performance 807 will record such an improvement during the lifetime of the project. Such improvements will be recorded via an increase in their Gross Value Added (GVA) measured against the baseline ascertained prior to the project intervention and then compared against the same figure following such an intervention.