

Business Recovery and Growth Board

28 October 2021

Sheffield Innovation Programme (SIP) Continuation (28R18P02582) Extension

Is the paper exempt from the press and public?	No
Purpose of this report:	Funding Decision
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Has it been included on the Forward Plan?	No

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Executive Summary

This paper will discuss the need to extend the existing Sheffield Innovation Programme (SIP2). The project is formally known as 'SIP Continuance (28R18P02582). The project currently funds 2 Innovation Advisors in the region who are dedicated to the programme along with an admin support who is 20% funded

This project is a European Research Development Fund (ERDF) project that has been continued from the original SIP 1 project, delivered between 2016 and 2019. The current SIP2 project has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic and this paper will outline the impacts in section 1.

What does this mean for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire?

The continuance of the programme will deliver the intended benefits that have not been realised due to the impacts we will discuss in section 1. This will be done by extending the

availability of the programme. The extension will enable access to academic expertise and support from the Innovation Advisors to be maintained and delivered for a further 9 months within the existing cost/benefit parameters. This provision provides a key link between regional SMEs and Academia as many SMEs have no experience of how or where to obtain the support to enable them to grow, flourish, be sustainable and contribute to the growth of the South Yorkshire economy

Recommendations

The Programme team recommend that SIP 2 is extended

Consideration by any other Board, Committee, Assurance or Advisory Panel

None

1. Background

- 1.1 Businesses across all sectors of the economy in the South Yorkshire region have historically been innovative and invested in innovative activities. However, with the expansion of the SME business base, access to supporting expertise that is both available, practical and financially achievable has been a challenge. Having a route into supporting academia to achieve ambitious goals for growth through non blue-sky, practical research has been significantly eased by having the SIP as part of the regional offering.

As a result of the national lockdowns imposed by government, due to COVID-19, businesses were unable to access this programme as both University of Sheffield (TUoS) and Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) experienced closures of facilities and access to innovative departments that traditionally supported SIP. Some faculties that could work remotely have done so and a limited number of successful outputs have been achieved

- 1.2 The programme was due to run until September 2022, however the programme was significantly restricted for 18 months due to the lack of resource to support it.
- 1.3 The programme partners would like to extend the duration out until July 2023, a further 9 months from the original end date. This will enable it to achieve the originally intended outputs, within the agreed existing financial arrangements – no further budget will be requested as it will utilise the significant underspend by all parties to date. This extension plans to deliver the original outputs in the extended duration and will not look to deliver additional interventions above the ones in the existing schedule.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 TUoS and SHU have now fully reopened all areas of support opportunity and the access to the programme delivery partners is no longer at risk. Both institutions are gearing up to deliver the required outputs over the potential new programme duration. All parties agree that the outputs required under the programme will be achievable in the extended timescales.
- 2.2 Should there be another significant lockdown due to COVID the programme may have to revisit the achievability of the outputs.

2.3 An extension to the programme will additionally enable Regional SMEs to access expertise and support from the Innovation Advisors over an extended period.

3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal

3.1 Option 1

Extend the existing programme and agreement between the three parties to deliver the existing schedule of outputs in the new duration. This should deliver the desired outcomes whilst avoiding the programme significantly underspending. This is the preferred option.

3.2 Option 2

The only other option is to use the existing resource to deliver within the original timescales. It is unlikely that the programme will deliver the desired impact and outputs required in these timescales and will also be severely underspent.

3.4 Option 1 Risks and Mitigations

The issue to be mitigated is the project delivery time lost due to COVID severely restricting access to the programme delivery at both Universities. Extending the programme allows the programme to deliver the required outputs.

3.5 Option 2

The key risk is that 3.2 will under deliver and under spend, resulting in a lack of innovation with the SYMCA area, a clawback of funds from the ERDF and potentially reputational issues within the area of SME's.

3.13 Recommended Option

Option1

4. Consultation on Proposal

4.1 All other parties to the programme have been consulted through the Partnership Board Meetings and agree extending the duration is the only way to enable delivery of the outputs.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 Following approval from the board we will seek approval for an extension from ERDF to continue beyond September 2022.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice

6.1 This report contains a proposal to extend the SIP2 programme for a further 9 months utilising underspends from the SIP2 programme. There is therefore no additional ask/call for funding on top of the current arrangement.

7. Legal Implications and Advice

7.1 The options fall within the Authority's functions relating to Economic Development and Regeneration of the Combined Authority area.

8. Human Resources Implications and Advice

8.1 N/A

9. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

9.1 N/A

10. Climate Change Implications and Advice

10.1 N/A

11. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice

11.1 N/A

12. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice

12.1 N/A There is no budget/provision for marketing as part of this programme.

List of Appendices Included

None

Background Papers

None