

## Project Specification

### Tender details - the opportunity

Company name	Clarion Interpreting Ltd
Company address	The Old Dairy, Brook Rd, Herts, SG87RG.
Description of company activity/SIC code	We provide BSL Interpreters across the UK to the public, private and third sectors
Objective of the proposed innovation project- this MUST involve activity that results in the development of or introduction to the market of a new product or service (max 300 words)	<p>Traditionally, BSL interpreters have been giving profoundly deaf people access to information by being in the same room as them. In the last 5 years, this service has also been delivered remotely, using an interpreter in a room far away from the deaf person with visibility on a screen. Spoken language interpretation (French to English, for example) can be provided, with great accuracy, using machine learning without the interference of a person (for example Google lens)</p> <p>Many organisations are looking to deliver operational and customer focused services remotely and equality of access is going to be a prime consideration.</p>
Company's current situation - existing project team and innovation project development stage (max 400 words)	<p>A British Sign Language Interpreter provides communication support between a profoundly deaf person - who uses sign language and a hearing person who uses spoken or written English to communicate.</p> <p>Trading since 2001, Clarion Interpreting Limited are the largest, specialist British Sign Language (BSL) agency in the UK. We provide face to face and remote sign language interpreters across the whole of the UK and hold contracts with the Ministry of Justice, Police, Guys and St Thomas' Hospital, Kings College Hospital and National Rail. We work across the healthcare sector, local authorities, the justice sector and education as well as corporate clients. We reacted swiftly to COVID-19, pivoting 50% of our service to digital platforms with real people, ensuring financial stability and health for 2020. Carrying out an average of 180 assignments per day, we have 24 staff, 1017 freelance interpreters and are 100% female led and owned.</p>

	<p>The existing project team is three staff; the CEO, head of IT and systems and the Commercial Director.</p> <p>It is at the research stage with conversations being carried out at three levels:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Funding - conversations with Enterprise Europe Network, Local Enterprise Partnerships, EIRA, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and KEEP+.</li> <li>2. We have also had conversations with Google, Universities and current software developers.</li> </ol> <p>We have had conversations with our clients, Virtual Reality headset manufacturers, Automated chatbot developers and Virtual Reality Conference organisers about potential applications.</p>
<p>Business need - what expertise and support is required from a Knowledge Base to reach the objective(s) above? (max 400 words)</p>	<p>We need a partner who can:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Help us create Intelligent design.</b> This means a partner that can work with us to develop a software model that is: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) iterative i.e. it learns as it works and uses what it learns to improve. In this way we get scalability of the business opportunities;</li> <li>b) agile i.e. can be deployed in short sprints and we can work on the later developments whilst also improving the earlier ones;</li> <li>c) robust - that there is a back-up plan in terms of either an earlier version that can be rolled back to; and</li> <li>d) human intervention to check for quality.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. <b>Work with us to develop software.</b></li> <li>3. <b>Work with us across multiple stakeholders.</b> We may need to bring in other specialist organisations and partner that is willing to work with us alongside others to a shared vision will be essential.</li> <li>4. <b>Understand.</b> That British Sign Language is about body, hands, face and culture. That has high levels of knowledge in the following areas: deaf culture and community, technology and linguistic expertise.</li> </ol>
<p>Please list six key words that describe your potential project, i.e. ICT, engineering, biotech etc.</p>	<p>Disability. Artificial Intelligence, specifically visual and cognitive processing. British Sign Language.</p>
<p>Required timescales (if any) for Project Start and duration, and if</p>	<p>As soon as possible.</p>

applicable anticipated product launch date	
Optional - company budget available to match fund KEEP+ grant (if known) please see 'Further details' for maximum funding amounts	
Company Contact for further information	Sally Chalk Tel: 07976 939122 sally@clarion-uk.com
Required tender response date (min 20 working days from posting of advert)	16 March 2021
<p>Responses are sought from organisations classified as Knowledge Bases, defined under the ERDF Definition of the Knowledge Base: Higher Education, Further Education and Research Entities which are: UK Public Sector Research Establishments, Research and Development Organisations, Research and Technology Organisations.</p> <p>The Company is seeking a Knowledge Base partner to work with them to develop a project which, dependent on a successful Grant Application, will be supported by the KEEP+ ERDF project using one of the two types of intervention described below. Please also see KEEP+ website - <a href="http://www.keepplus.co.uk">www.keepplus.co.uk</a></p> <p>In Stage 2, if the grant application to KEEP+ is successful, the Company requires the expertise of the Knowledge Base partner, to work with them to deliver the solution i.e. the project intervention supported by the KEEP+ grant.</p>	
Criteria for Decision making	<p>Assessment criteria are as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expertise fit 50%</li> <li>• Timing fit 25%</li> <li>• Suitability of proposed methodology 25%</li> </ul>
Date for Contract Decision	Minimum of 20 working days from date of advertisement
Tender response templates	Please approach the company for the exact format of your response.

### Further details for potential respondents

You are responding to a tender for an activity which is eligible for part funding by the European Regional Development Fund, specifically under the KEEP+ Programme.

The KEEP+ Programme aims to support SMEs to develop new products and services by fostering long term collaborative relationships between Knowledge Bases - Universities and research institutions - and SMEs who need expertise and support for innovation.

Please see KEEP+ website for further information [www.keepplus.co.uk](http://www.keepplus.co.uk) or contact the KEEP+ project team 0845 196 4207 [julie.benabdeljelil@anglia.ac.uk](mailto:julie.benabdeljelil@anglia.ac.uk) or 0845 196 4985 [kayleigh.parkes@anglia.ac.uk](mailto:kayleigh.parkes@anglia.ac.uk)

KEEP+ provides maximum allowable grants for its specific types of intervention. Those intervention types and maximum grant levels are as follows;

- KEEP Knowledge Exchange Embed Partnership (typically 12 months' duration) - this intervention involves a graduate working on a mid- to long-term activity with the support of a specific academic staff member, the graduate is based within the beneficiary company - grant allowance 50% of eligible costs and £10,000 capital.
- KEEP Research and Innovation Collaboration (no fixed duration) this intervention involves an academic colleague working on a short- to long-term activity, they are based at the Knowledge Base but with regular face-to-face interaction with the beneficiary company - grant allowance 50% of eligible costs plus a strict maximum of £10,000 capital.

The following is a guide to the types of cost that you should expect to occur should your application be successful;

- KEEP Knowledge Exchange Embed Partnership (typically 12 months' duration) - project development, associate wage, academic wage, administrative support, training and travel (on the part of the knowledge base employees), minor equipment (please note there is a potential separate grant for major capital purchases), recruitment
- KEEP Research and Innovation Collaboration (no fixed duration) - project development, academic wage, administrative support, consumables (please note there is a potential separate grant for major capital purchases)