InfoLab21 Strategic Innovation Support Programme (ISIS)

Transformational ICT For Northwest SMEs

InfoLab21 has been successful in securing funds through the European Regional Development Fund to provide free “transformational ICT” support i.e. implementing Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to change business processes and operations to create improvements that could not happen without the use of ICT. E.g. maximising the benefits of ICT to increase productivity, create new business models, increase resource efficiency or support innovation and exploit new markets. ISIS aims to raise levels of ICT investment across the region, by working with businesses to break down barriers and promote ICT products and services.

What The Project Offers Your Business

The project provides free expertise for 270 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) which can identify a significant opportunity to develop and transform their businesses through ICT in the following areas: Prototype Development, Mobile & Wireless Technologies, Software Development, IT Strategies, Audits & Infrastructure Development, Research Into New Technologies, Ecommerce & Web Applications. We can also access extra resources and expertise from ICT based students and graduates via the InfoLab21 and Student Academies.

Eligibility

SME Size

Businesses with 5-250 employees.

SME Location

The project can assist SMEs based in the Northwest of England - ie anywhere within Cumbria, Lancashire, Cheshire & Warrington, Greater Manchester & Merseyside. Postcode restrictions no longer apply.

SME Sectors

Most sectors are eligible excluding the retail sector but the project has a specific focus on the High Growth sectors ie Biochemicals, Food and Drink, Energy & Environmental Technology, Advanced Engineering, Financial and Professional Services, Digital & Creative Industries. Each project must have a significant impact on your business- support can only be given to SMEs that can show a clear business advantage from implementing technology in their business through increased jobs and GVA. Basic ICT solutions such as CRMs and brochure websites will not be supported.

Client Needs

Places are limited, we are looking to work with 270 SMEs over 3 years across 5 sub-regions that fit the eligibility requirements overleaf and have one of the following business needs: (see overleaf)
Prototype Development
Has your business identified market opportunities through new product development but does not have the time or resources to invest in taking your ideas forward? Development of a prototype to secure future financing or take a product to pre-production stage before deciding to make a significant investment in your idea.

Mobile & Wireless Technologies
Do you want to find out how you can use mobile and wireless technologies (eg RFID, Bluetooth, 3G, WIFI, WIMAX and GPS) to introduce new client services or new ways of working? Bespoke solutions including data logging, data collection sensor networks, tracking & mapping systems, mobile phone applications.

IT Strategies, Audits & Infrastructure Development
Do you worry about loss of time & money that inappropriate ICT systems cause your business? Would you like a fresh view on the ICT capabilities of your business and advice on how to invest for the future? A detailed report which may include: hardware and software analysis, reviews of appropriate technologies, security issues, investment and cost implications.

Software Development
Are you unable to find the right software solution for your business? Is off-the-shelf software too generic to do exactly what you need but bespoke software beyond your resources? Bespoke software defined and developed to implement new ways of working, new business products or services.

Web Applications
Would you like something developing for the web that will help you create new services for your clients or improve access to information for your staff and/or clients? Bespoke web applications, eg intranets, extranets and web-based business systems to create business efficiencies, provide remote access and reduce paperwork.

Research Into New Technologies
Would you like impartial advice and guidance on how technology could be used within your business to help it grow? Specialist and bespoke research to help you decide whether a particular problem or business requirement can be solved through the implementation of new technology.

What To Do Next
For further details and an informal discussion on potential support contact David Oliver or Saesela Razvi in the Knowledge Business Centre:

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