



## **Request for a Research Proposal**

# **How lawtech can meet the legal needs of SMEs**

Tech Nation  
Legal Services Board

Issue Date: **12 October 2020**



## **Executive Summary**

LawtechUK and the Legal Services Board want to understand how small to medium sized organisations (**SMEs**) address their legal needs and access legal advice and support. The objective is to identify how lawtech can better support SMEs.

This research should address the following key questions (see section 2 for more detail):

- What is the current user journey for SMEs identifying and addressing their legal needs and accessing legal advice and support?
- How are SMEs using technology to help address their legal needs?
- What are the key pain points for SMEs when obtaining legal advice that lawtech could address?
- What are the key opportunities for lawtech within the SME sector?
- What can be done to overcome the barriers to adoption/usage of lawtech by the SME sector?

The findings of the research will also inform future LawtechUK and Legal Services Board work aimed at fostering the development of lawtech in the UK.

We are expecting the research to be qualitative, use case studies and result in a final written report, which LawtechUK and the Legal Services Board will be able to make publicly available. Please see section 2 for the exact scope of deliverables and output.

We are happy to respond to questions from tenderers who need further information before submitting their proposals.



## **Section 1: Background**

### **About LawtechUK**

LawtechUK is a government-backed initiative delivered by [Tech Nation](#)<sup>1</sup>, which provides leadership, tools and a targeted work programme to help transform the UK legal sector through technology. For more information, please see [www.technation.io/lawtechuk](http://www.technation.io/lawtechuk). LawtechUK's purpose is:

*To support the digital transformation of the UK legal services sector to deliver what society and the economy need from legal services, and to create a climate to support the development and use of lawtech, including through considering changes in the legislative and regulatory framework.*

Successful applicants would contract with Tech Nation. For more information, please see [www.technation.io/lawtechuk](http://www.technation.io/lawtechuk)

### **About Legal Services Board**

The Legal Services Board (**LSB**) is the oversight regulator of legal services in England and Wales. Its vision is legal services that everyone can access and trust. It seeks to achieve this through pursuing its statutory regulatory objectives and providing oversight for the regulatory bodies it oversees.

New technology has the potential to make legal services more accessible and cheaper. LSB has conducted research into the levels of innovation and use of technology by legal services providers (most recently in 2018<sup>2</sup>) and into the legal needs of small businesses (most recently in 2017<sup>3</sup>). This previous research shows that (at least prior to the lockdown) around a third of SMEs had a legal issue in a 12 month period. Of those a minority sought outside advice and were more likely to consult an accountant than a lawyer. Few have inhouse legal resource. Their legal advisors have traditionally been conservative in adopting lawtech or

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<sup>1</sup> Tech Nation is the growth platform for UK tech companies and leaders, also responsible for the Fintech Delivery Panel.

<sup>2</sup>

<https://www.legalservicesboard.org.uk/research/technology-and-innovation-in-legal-services-2018>

<sup>3</sup>

<https://www.legalservicesboard.org.uk/research/the-legal-needs-of-small-businesses-2013-2017>



new ways of working, the barriers are typically lack of technical expertise and capital investment.

## **Section 2: Requirements and scope**

### **Objective**

LawtechUK and the Legal Services Board want to understand how SMEs address their legal needs and access legal advice and support. The objective is to identify how lawtech<sup>4</sup> can better support SMEs and also help inform future LawtechUK and LSB's work, including fostering lawtech development and understanding appropriate levels of regulation.

### **Output**

This research project should deliver the following outputs:

- identify and map the user journey of how SMEs identify and address their legal needs;
- identify how and why SMEs seek (or do not seek) legal support, distinguishing use cases of lawtech vs traditional legal services and any hybrid options;
- collect retrospective feedback on what legal support SMEs wanted (including in what way they wanted it to be delivered) and compare this with the actual support and service delivered, identifying opportunities for improvement driven by lawtech;
- identify users who did not receive adequate legal support despite needing it and examine obstacles to obtaining such advice, particularly where lawtech was involved; and
- based on the above exercises of mapping the user journey, identify the strengths and weaknesses of how lawtech solutions assist SMEs in addressing their legal issues and outline key opportunities and threats to further adoption of lawtech by the SME sector.

The research should take into account but not replicate existing research and information available.

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<sup>4</sup> We think of lawtech as technology that supports or enables the provision of legal services or dispute resolution systems – the term is roughly synonymous with legaltech or legal technology. Lawtech includes technology used by legal service providers and the justice community to help them deliver legal services or resolve disputes. It also includes technology that allows businesses and individuals to take care of their own legal matters.



## Deliverables

We are open to discussing the exact format and scope of the deliverables, which will illustrate the research findings.

Minimum deliverables requirements:

- Final report addressing all output objectives above - research teams should allow for three drafting and review rounds, before the report is finalised.
- Infographic of the user journey of SMEs identifying opportunities for lawtech innovation, growth and optimisation<sup>5</sup>. the key is mapping those to the opportunities. Also noting they won't necessarily present as legal pain points - they may be business and process issues.
- Case studies<sup>6</sup> of the SME's experience of adopting lawtech solutions, showing how lawtech can be deployed to solve legal issues faced by the SMEs. Case studies should include good and bad experiences.
- Infographic showing strengths, weaknesses and external threats specific to the SME sector adopting or using lawtech.
- Presentation, webinar or a workshop based on the research findings, organised jointly with LawtechUK and the Legal Services Board<sup>7</sup>.

We encourage applicants to include further suggestions for scope of the research task and potential deliverables in light of the objectives, together with relevant cost estimates and making a clear case for their added benefits.

## Scope

- Jurisdiction: the United Kingdom. We would like the research to be as inclusive and encompassing as reasonably possible within the budget (taking into account any

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<sup>5</sup> Please note that there has already been a lot of data collected on the "legal pain points" and we would like you to make the most of the existing sources, if appropriate. Where we see an opportunity for a significant value add to the sector is mapping that data onto the user journey. We also ask that you include the challenges, which might have been omitted as not "obviously" legal in nature, but which are legal- or reg-related blockers for SME innovation, growth and optimisation. Examples of such pains points are...

<sup>6</sup> Please note we do not provide the number of case studies required and ask you to provide your suggestions on the recommended number of case studies and any cost impact.

<sup>7</sup> Please provide the proportion of any fee attributed to the workshop/ presentation.



impact this might have on data analysis), with a geographical mix of research and case studies.

- Small to medium enterprises from a mix of industry sectors. We are open to proposals regarding scope.
- Businesses that faced a legal issue in the last 3 years\*
- Qualitative research

\*Please exclude claims specific to covid-19 laws and regulations, which will not persist post-pandemic, such as furlough claims.

### **Approach**

We anticipate that this will be a qualitative research project. Your proposal should set out clearly your proposed approach to the research, including how you will identify and engage SMEs in a way that will ensure high quality responses and input.

You should plan for a project inception meeting to confirm the approach, roles, tasks, responsibilities etc.

### **Budget**

This is an important project for the legal sector and the UK more broadly, and draws on public funds. We are looking for competitive bids not exceeding the total available funding in the region of up to £35,000 (excl. VAT). In light of the potential cost variables, we ask that responses set out flexible cost packages, detailing an overall fee estimate and how this is achieved. Please include a clear estimate of the cost impact of organising a workshop/presentation, as detailed above.

Nothing in this RFP shall create any obligation on the part of Tech Nation to award an agreement to any company or to award any agreement at all. We reserve the right to reject any and all proposals and/or negotiate or decline to negotiate.



## **Section 3: Instructions for submitting a tender response**

### **Information required for the research proposal**

Any research proposal must include responses to the following. If the proposal is on behalf of a consortium, please provide the information for all consortium members, and advise which entity and person will be the Consortium leader and coordinator:

#### **1. Applicant's details**

- a) Name of organisation
- b) Registered address
- c) Website address
- d) Registered company number (if applicable)
- e) Registered VAT number (if applicable)
- f) Details of person handling this RfP for the resposdee
  - i. Name
  - ii. Job title
  - iii. Telephone number/ mobile number
  - iv. Email address

Please note: appropriate background checks may be undertaken on any potential research group.

#### **2. Applicant's background**

What are your core research competencies, capabilities and achievements? Please provide a brief statement of what differentiates your team.

#### **3. Applicant's experience and expertise**

- a) Please detail the relevant experience that relates to the research you would undertake, including familiarity with the proposed research methods and format of the output and give examples of relevant previous projects that your key people (see 5) have worked on
- b) Please detail any experience you have of working on government backed, driven or funded projects
- c) Please detail your experience and knowledge of research conducted on SMEs, research on innovation and/ or legal needs or any experience from other sectors you deem relevant (e.g., similar tasks in fintech, healthtech sectors)



#### 4. **Conflict clearance**

- a) Do you currently or have you ever provided any research or services to any potentially competing companies or initiatives? If so, please describe the research/products/services you promoted and if/when you ended your retainer with them.
- b) Please identify any potential conflict of interest between you or any members of the research group and LawtechUK or its collaborative parties, Tech Nation, the LawtechUK Panel and the Ministry of Justice.

#### 5. **Key people experience**

Please provide details and expertise of key people who would be involved in the research team and their backgrounds, taking into account diversity and inclusion.

#### 6. **Research proposal**

- a) Set out your research proposal, including clear schedule and timetable, including different work stages. Please describe the approach you would take to conducting data collection, presenting the findings, meeting key milestones on time and keeping in touch with the LawtechUK and LSB team throughout the research process.
- b) Provide example infographics and design you propose to use for the user journey mapping and strengths/ weaknesses/ threats assessment.
- c) Describe the approach you would take to ensuring that the research identifies pain points and opportunities in an SMEs journey to addressing a legal need that can be used by the lawtech community to deliver relevant services and products.
- d) Provide a list of sources you propose to use to start your research. Note that we welcome maximising the use of existing sources and we expect the top applicants to focus on generating new insights, which add tangible value to the sector.
- e) Please detail any assumptions or requirements (including any support you require from LawtechUK/LSB).





- f) Please identify any risks to the research project and your proposed risk reduction and mitigation actions.

**7. Fee quote**

Please provide a full fixed fee cost quote (excluding VAT). Within this please provide a per unit cost for case studies and cost of the final presentation/workshop deliverable. Where you suggest we expand the scope of the deliverables, please provide a separate fee for any additional output.

*Please remember that the project is being funded with public money.*

**8. References**

- a) Please provide up to a case study relevant to our research objectives
- b) Please provide two relevant publications you authored or co-authored

**10. Additional Information**

Please provide any additional information to support your submission.

**Timeline**

Please submit the research proposal to [lawtechuk@technation.io](mailto:lawtechuk@technation.io) by **26 October 2020, 5pm (UK time)**. Please see the table below for more details on the timetable.

If you have any questions about this tender or its process, please email them to [lawtechuk@technation.io](mailto:lawtechuk@technation.io)

Date	Stage
12 October 2020	Request for proposals launched
5pm G.M.T. 19 October 2020	Deadline for submitting RFP clarification questions
5pm G.M.T. 26 October 2020	Deadline for submitting research proposals
6 November 2020	Announcement of successful candidate



3.15 pm G.M.T. 12 November 2020	Inception meeting
November/December	Fieldwork
Mid-January 2021	Interim report
End-January 2021	Final deliverables
February 2021	Presentation/workshop on the deliverables

### Evaluation criteria and weighting

	Weighting	Title
Quality	60%	Research capability, excellence and confidence in delivery
		Experience and credibility in delivering and presenting research in areas relevant to this RFP
		Quality of your Research Proposal
		Experience and diversity of people proposed to be involved
Price	30%	Value for proposed fee
Ease	10%	Ease of working together e.g. processes, contracting

Tech Nation reserves the right to take into account any other relevant considerations that, in its absolute discretion, it may deem are appropriate.

### Further instructions and information for applicants

- *We will be provide a copy of our standard T&Cs / service agreement.*
- *Research proposal must be submitted in accordance with these instructions and any further instructions contained in other documentation issued by Tech Nation.*
- *The applicant may not alter this document. Any proposed alteration is to be given in a separate letter accompanying the RFP.*



- *Research proposals may be rejected if any of the requested information is not supplied with the research proposal or if the submission fails to comply with Tech Nation's request.*
- *The date and time for return of research proposals is shown in the instruction section. Research proposals will be received up to the time and date stated.*
- *It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that their research proposal is received on time. Tech Nation does not undertake to consider any research proposal received after that time.*
- *Tech Nation does not acknowledge receipt of research proposal documents and accepts no responsibility for loss or non-receipt of applications.*
- *Tech Nation expressly reserves the right not to award any contract as a result of this research procurement process and it shall not be liable for any costs incurred by the applicants. Tech Nation also reserves the right to accept all or any part of a research proposal.*
- *Any indication of costs (estimates at this stage) must be shown exclusive of VAT.*
- *The applicant must not try to obtain any information about any other party's research proposal before the contract is awarded.*
- *The applicant must not arrange with any other party the submission of a research proposal, except in the circumstances where consortia, sub-contracting and/or joint ventures are applicable.*
- *Tech Nation reserves the right, at its discretion, to request clarification in writing, or further relevant information, from any applicant post submission of the research proposal response by such applicant.*
- *The applicant must be strictly AML, ABC and GDPR compliant and will cooperate with all checks and requests for information relating to Tech Nation's due diligence processes and reporting.*



- *In submitting your proposal, you declare that to the best of your knowledge the answers submitted and information contained in this document are correct and accurate.*

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[2] *Originally established in 2018 by the Secretary of State for Justice, the Lawtech Delivery Panel brings together industry, government, academia, judiciary, regulators and technologists in a single forum, to promote, champion and shape the use of technology in the UK's legal sector and ensure the continuing strength of the UK jurisdiction.*