**Overview of the project**

The aim of this project is to develop a blueprint for a co-created, distributed, community-based manufacturing platform in the UK with a business model to support its financial viability and scalability.

We are a team of four experienced researchers from Loughborough University, Durham University, University of Derby and Teesside University and we are successful in securing funding from the InterAct Network to scope out what is the best way to develop access to digital technologies, skills, and small-scale manufacturing (for example, 3-D printing) within communities.

This research project aims to examine what communities would like access to, in terms of digital skills and manufacturing within their community. We wish to engage with a range of stakeholders and interested parties to understand the needs of communities, for example, councils, businesses, enterprise partnerships, educators, young people, disadvantaged groups, differently abled groups etc. The longer-term aim would be to create a network of digitally enabled community-based hubs, where community needs for products, training, skills, and job opportunities were met locally. This study is the scoping exercise for the initial phase of the project, which is to understand local needs first, which will then lead to the development of a digital platform linking local needs with local solutions. Our intent is that by better understanding what communities are looking for in terms of digital skills and manufacturing, we can facilitate the creation of hubs to support these needs. Thus, to summarise, the aim of this project is to develop a blueprint for a co-created, distributed, community-based manufacturing platform in the UK with a business model to support its financial viability and scalability.

**Consent form**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I confirm that I have read and understood the information related to the project | Yes |
| I have had sufficient time to consider the information and ask any questions I might have, and I am satisfied with the answers I have been given. | Yes |
| I understand who will have access to information about me and how the information will be used. | Yes |
| I agree to take part in the above project. | Yes |
| I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. | Yes |

**Questions for digital technology service providers**

1. What efforts have your company taken to support digital technology adoption across processes for manufacturing companies? Which specific performance objectives for manufacturing companies is your organisation trying to improve through digital technology adoption?
2. What challenges have you faced while supporting manufacturing companies in adopting digital technologies across processes?
3. What kind of digital skills does your organisation and manufacturing companies need?
4. Has your organisation taken efforts to upgrade digital skills of your existing employees? Did you face any challenges associated with that?
5. Has your organisation taken efforts to recruit personnel to drive digitalisation/ digital technology adoption efforts or to recruit personnel to drive future growth in your organisation?
6. Did you face challenges in recruiting people with desired skill sets to support digital technology adoption efforts or to drive future growth in your organisation? What kind of challenges did you face?
7. Will your organisation like to get involved in sharing the skills needed by your organisation with the broader community?
8. Will your organisation like to get involved in training people within the community for the skills, needed by your organisation?
9. Will you like to get connected with manufacturing companies, educational service providers, people within the community to support digital technology adoption in manufacturing companies?