



Signingbanks.uk

Signing Banks: Student Project Scope & Brief

DICE Consortium · Stupreneurs Live Client Brief

Your consultancy team will help Signing Banks make banking accessible to the d/Deaf community. The work covers five areas: building a partner network, removing communication barriers in banking, designing an AI tool that translates banking terms into sign language, training the financial sector, and strengthening ties between banks and d/Deaf organisations.

Project at a glance

Item	Detail
Client	Signing Banks, an initiative led by ESquared (E2 Enterprise and Employability), a social enterprise.
Client type	SME
Sector	Inclusivity & Digital Finance; Inclusive FinTech
Project type	Live client brief on the Stupreneurs model
Brief in one line	AI sign-language fintech integration for d/Deaf accessibility
UN SDG target	SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities
Duration	DICE's pilot roadmap describes live project delivery as 8 to 12 weeks
Workspace	A dedicated team Basecamp (DICE standard)
DICE contact	andrem@diceconsortium.com

About the client

Signing Banks provides digital financial services tailored to d/Deaf communities, to improve their access to banking and their economic independence. It combines human-centred design with technology. It is developing a real-time British Sign Language (BSL) translation system using AI and cloud technologies, with project partners such as Signly and Robotica.

Endorsements (as stated in June 2023). Lloyds, Halifax, MBNA and BoS (Bank of Scotland), and the UK Government's Disability & Access Ambassador, Kathryn Townsend.

What Signing Banks has already built (June 2023):

Type	Items
Research	Desktop analysis; interactions with the d/Deaf community and stakeholders; several case studies; best practice in financial services and supportive technologies; a view of the current environment
Resources	Guidelines for banks; sign language materials for the d/Deaf community; training resources on d/Deaf awareness; "Accessibility for Deaf Customers in the Banking and Credit"



A note on d/Deaf. People who identify as Deaf (capital D) do so as a cultural identity tied to the Deaf community, and do not see deafness as a disability. People who identify as deaf (small d) are typically hard of hearing and may use hearing aids or cochlear implants. Use d/Deaf to include both, as the client does.

The challenge

The financial services industry has digitised fast but has not fully served the d/Deaf community. The CIP brief says misunderstandings, miscommunication and a lack of tailored services leave d/Deaf customers feeling excluded and frustrated.

The 2023 analysis cites Hearing Link (2022): about 11 million people in the UK are deaf or hard of hearing, about 1 in 6 UK adults is affected by hearing loss, about 151,000 deaf people use BSL, and about 900,000 are severely or profoundly deaf.

BSL is complex and depends on context, which makes translation technology costly. Signing Banks combines AI and machine learning with professional d/Deaf translators. Both need significant investment, so funding applications are central to building an integrated solution.

Scope

Under each of the five workstreams below, suggested activities draw on the methods the 2023 team proposed (audit, literature review, website review, focus group, user journeys, consultation framework, funding research). Agree the final list with the client.

Workstream 1: Partnership formation

Forge a cohesive European network of organisations committed to the Signing Banks initiative.

- Map existing partners and endorsers, then identify banks, d/Deaf organisations, technology firms and funders that could join.
- For each candidate, give the fit, the contact route and a suggested approach.

Workstream 2: Inclusivity drive

Address the d/Deaf community's banking communication barriers.

- **Audit:** assess how UK financial services currently serve d/Deaf customers, and pinpoint gaps.
- **Literature review:** secondary research on d/Deaf users' experiences of financial services.
- **User research:** plan and run a focus group with d/Deaf people. The 2023 team proposed 10 to 20 participants, guided by a d/Deaf facilitator.
- **Ideal user journeys:** map optimal journeys for d/Deaf customers, based on the research.
- **Website review:** assess the Signing Banks website for user experience, accessibility, content and search engine optimisation (SEO), and recommend improvements.

Workstream 3: Digital solution

Design an AI tool translating banking terms into sign language.

- Set out user needs and requirements from Workstream 2.
- Propose a design concept: which banking terms and situations to cover first, how users would reach it, and how it would work alongside Signing Banks' real-time BSL translation system and its partners' technology.
- Note risks, such as translation accuracy for BSL's contextual grammar and the need for review by d/Deaf translators.

Workstream 4: Skill enhancement

Train financial sectors on d/Deaf community needs.

- Review Signing Banks' existing guidelines for banks and d/Deaf awareness training resources.
- Propose a training programme outline for bank staff: audience, learning outcomes, format and delivery partners.

Workstream 5: Collaboration

Strengthen ties between banks and d/Deaf entities for mutual growth.

- Design a consultation framework that lets banks and the d/Deaf community co-create services together.

Cross-cutting: Funding

Funding is central to the project (see The challenge). The 2023 team also worked on a UKRI submission and wider funding research (for example impact accelerators).

Out of scope (proposed)

Further project expansion for solution development:

- Building or coding the AI tool. The brief asks for a design.
- Delivering training to banks.
- Contacting banks, partners or funders in Signing Banks' name without written agreement.

Deliverables

The CIP brief names goals, not documents. The table turns them into outputs, following the 2023 team's plan where it fits. Agree the list with the client and module lead.

#	Deliverable	Workstream
D1	Partner network map and target list (banks, d/Deaf organisations, technology firms, funders), with fit and approach for each	1
D2	Audit of UK financial services for d/Deaf customers, with gaps and improvement areas	2
D3	Literature review on d/Deaf users' experiences of financial services	2
D4	Focus group plan, findings report, and ideal user journeys for d/Deaf banking customers	2
D5	Signing Banks website review with prioritised improvements (UX, accessibility, content, SEO)	2
D6	Design concept for the AI banking-terms-to-sign-language tool: requirements, scope, user flow, risks	3

#	Deliverable	Workstream
D7	Outline training programme for financial-sector staff on d/Deaf community needs	4
D8	Consultation framework for co-creation between banks and the d/Deaf community	5
D9	Funding research, and a draft funding application if confirmed	Cross-cutting
D10	Final client report and presentation	Proposed
D11	Basecamp project record	Proposed

Interim reports. The 2023 plan used a written pitch, two interim group reports and a final report, one at the end of each phase. Use the same rhythm if the module lead agrees.

Assessment

The work should also give each student portfolio evidence. DICE's framework calls this Portfolio Proof of Work and Client Portfolio Deliverables. Keep copies of your contributions (subject to any confidentiality Signing Banks requires).

Timeline and milestones

Phase	Activities	Ends with
Set-up and pitch	Skills audit and registration; team formation; team Basecamp; company and industry overview; objectives; methodology; timeline	Written pitch
Phase 1: Discover	Audit (D2); literature review (D3); focus group preparation; website review (D5); partner mapping starts (D1)	Interim Group Report 1
Phase 2: Define and design	Focus group, analysis and user journeys (D4); AI tool concept (D6); training outline (D7); consultation framework (D8)	Interim Group Report 2
Phase 3: Fund and finish	Funding research and draft application (D9); partner list finalised (D1); final report and presentation (D10)	Final Group Report

Enter the agreed dates as To-dos in Basecamp. Allow extra lead time for the focus group: booking BSL interpreters and recruiting d/Deaf participants can take weeks.

Ways of working

You are a professional consultancy working with a social enterprise and with d/Deaf people. Practise the inclusion you recommend.

- **Basecamp is the project's home.** Use the team messages for quick chat, To-dos for milestones and owners, for decisions and client updates. Keep all files there.
- **Client contact.** Agree one point of contact on each side. Send agendas before meetings and notes after.
- **Build on what exists.** Ask for Signing Banks' existing research, case studies, bank guidelines and training resources before starting new research, so you do not repeat work.
- **Lived experience.** The 2023 team had a d/Deaf team member, and its focus group was to be guided by a d/Deaf facilitator. Involve d/Deaf people in shaping the research and checking your recommendations, not only as participants.

Accessibility, ethics and data protection

- ☐ Check with the module lead whether university research ethics approval is needed for the focus group, and obtain it.
- ☐ Provide information sheets and consent forms in plain English and BSL (for example a BSL video), and book qualified BSL interpreters. Agree with the client who pays.
- ☐ Choose accessible venues and video platforms with captions, and send materials in advance.
- ☐ Collect only the personal data you need, anonymise findings, and store data securely in line with UK GDPR. Disability and health information is special category data and needs extra care.
- ☐ Make your own deliverables accessible: clear headings, alt text on images, captions on any video.

Resources

Need	Resource
Client background	SigningBanks_Signing_Banks_Analysis_June23 (the 2023 team's objectives, methodology, website review framework and timeline); the Signing Banks website
Funding bids	UKRI_SmartGrants_Template; UKRI Previous Submission Approach and Template; Dynamic_Company_Innovate_UK; 164 Small Grants Open to Individuals and Organisations; EUCAP Network Brochure: Funding Opportunities under Horizon Europe
Showing impact	Demonstrating Social Value in Tender Answers; Best Practice in Social Value
Consultancy basics	Introduction to Management Consulting; Consultancy Thoughts of the Day
Research and planning	Introduction to Research Methods and Tools in Business; Introduction to Project Management; GPT_GANTT_Example
Working with the client	Navigating Client Meetings; Effective Meetings; Professional Email Etiquette; Communicating on Basecamp; Effective Presentations

Open questions to confirm

Settle these before or at the client kick-off.

#	Question	Ask
1	Module title, assessment components, weightings and submission dates	Module lead
2	Start date, duration, and whether the pitch / two interim reports / final report rhythm applies	Module lead
3	Should the partner network be UK, European, or both?	Client
4	Which of the 2023 team's outputs were delivered (UKRI submission, website changes, focus group), so this cohort does not repeat them?	Client
5	Is a funding application in scope, and to which funder and deadline?	Client
6	Are the endorsements (Lloyds, Halifax, MBNA, BoS, Disability & Access Ambassador) still current?	Client
7	Who recruits focus group participants, and who pays for BSL interpreters?	Client
8	Is ethics approval needed for the focus group?	Module lead
9	Is an NDA required, and can students use the work in their portfolios?	Client