

INVITATION TO TENDER

GROWTH PLATFORM LIVERPOOL CITY REGION – MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS (INVESTMENT)

Date Issued – 26 July 2021

1. Introduction

In January 2021, the Liverpool City Region's Combined Authority (LCRCA) agreed a new Inward Investment Marketing strategy to support the Mayoral priority to establish a single front door for investment into the region backed by a high-quality account management service. Through a commissioning arrangement to March 2023, Growth Platform will co-ordinate this activity by working in collaboration with the region's local authority investment teams, DIT and commercial stakeholders to generate investment leads, manage the resulting enquiries and provide aftercare/key account management.

We are seeking a communications company to develop and deliver an innovative and integrated media communications programme, that enables the LCRCA and Growth Platform to showcase investment successes and opportunities.

The successful company will develop a communications framework, which will be targeted at key markets using an agreed brand narrative, to showcase investment successes, opportunities and secure national, international and sector specific lead generation.

The company must demonstrate how they would approach securing media coverage within national, international and sector specific media titles and digital properties. The communications programme will focus on LCR's strengths in advanced manufacturing; business and professional services; creative and digital industries; energy; health & life sciences; port and logistics.

2. Growth Platform

The inward investment service will be delivered through Growth Platform, the Liverpool City Region's Growth Company which has been established by the Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Combined Authority (CA) to deliver the City Region's business growth and investment priorities, working in partnership with business, the constituent Local Authorities, Universities, Colleges and third sector partners.

In July 2021 a new investment team was established within the Growth Platform with the purpose of positioning Liverpool City Region (LCR) for inward investment growth, as part of the emerging Place Making strategy. The team combines inward specialist marketing, account management and sector expertise to provide an integrated approach to proactive lead generation and enquiry handling. Working in conjunction with the regions Inward Investment Board, it is tasked with raising the City Region's share of FDI to 2% and generating 400 qualified marketing/sales leads per annum from domestic and FDI markets.

3. Current Position

The City Region has attracted c.£1.4bn inward investment over the last 5 years, the majority being across the key sectors of manufacturing, health & life sciences and digital. The City Region also has recognised strengths in logistics, maritime and port access, professional services and low carbon/renewable energy.

As identified by the City Region's Internationalisation Strategy, attracting inward investment has been due in no small part to the strength of the City Region's major prime industries in creating supply chain opportunities, as well as its proximity to customers and export markets through the Port of Liverpool.

The region's strong network of scientific research and the City Region's Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) also attracted businesses who see innovation and specialisation as key to driving their competitive advantage. The ongoing collaborations between these assets and industry are evidence of how such partnerships are creating commercial opportunities through knowledge transfer and the infrastructure to enable growth – Sci-Tech Daresbury and the Knowledge Quarter are cases in point.

The strength of Liverpool as an international city, as well as the diversity and affordability of the City Region as a place to live and spend leisure time, also makes a considerable contribution to the area's overall investment proposition and quality of life. This is further enhanced by the pull of the region's universities and access to graduates, its position within the Northern Powerhouse and connectivity to other national/international cities and regions. The skills base is highly specialised in areas such as health & life Sciences, digital innovation and advanced manufacturing where the combined value of foreign direct investment into the City Region over the last 5 years has exceeded £200m

Against this backdrop however, the City Region only secures 1.5% of all UK FDI projects equating to an average of almost 10 projects per annum. While the City Region's Internationalisation Strategy identifies that attracting this level of FDI projects is comparable with the UK's other core cities when assessed as a share of its GVA/economic output, it is significantly below that of Greater Manchester who are averaging circa 30% - 35% more FDI projects above the national trend.

4. Opportunities for Growth

The uncertainties resulting from the COVID-19 global pandemic and the UK new trading arrangements post Brexit will have significant impact on the global investment climate. This can however bring opportunity through greater emphasis being placed on trade, medical research, materials innovation and digitisation in decision making, the region can capitalise on its recognised sector strengths. Most notably around health & life sciences, advanced manufacturing, its digital and tech clusters, as well as the opportunities resulting from the region's designated FreePort locations.

Working on the premise that these areas are the most likely to drive overseas and domestic investment, the region's supporting sector ecosystem (finance/professional services, logistics/storage and energy etc) provides the critical mass of advantages and opportunity, which can capture the interest of influencers and multipliers. Similarly, many of the region's global primes operate within the identified growth sectors (Astra Zeneca, Unilever, NSG Group - Pilkington etc) and will continue to offer existing or new supply chain opportunities as they adapt to these new conditions.

The implications are that greater investment from smaller projects (linked to larger enterprise) and national/international SMEs may be the most realistic short to medium term target. They are likely to be seeking alignment with local primes as well as improved access to local markets/customers as the international trading environment becomes more complicated (and uncertain). They will also be influenced by the cost efficiencies of operating in the North over other parts of the UK, which, along with access to world leading R&D capability, capital investment within the region, skilled labour and premises create a compelling proposition.

5. LCR Inward investment Marketing Strategy

The City Region's Inward Investment Marketing Strategy is being delivered across 5 priority areas and combined market analysis, customer relationship processes and proposition development. The resulting outcomes will be

greater awareness of the City Region, and an extended pipeline of qualified opportunities for the investment services teams in the Growth Platform and Local Authorities to convert.

The 5 priority areas are as follows:

- Priority 1: Competitive Value Propositions** – Working with industry expertise to identify the core strengths of the region's business sectors aligned with the assets in each LA area to establish a clear, evidenced set of Competitive Value Propositions, with distinct competitive advantages and compelling business cases to attract investment. These will form the core of the investment approach supported by a powerful evidence base.
- Priority 2: Delivering Sector Specific Campaigns** – Capitalising on the City Region's sector strengths by delivering inbound and outbound marketing activity that are effective in building leads and nurturing investment enquiries through to conversion.
- Priority 3: Always On** – Maintaining 'year-round' visibility of the investment opportunities by developing content marketing, PR and the quality of sales materials to ensure the City Region is front of mind with its target markets.
- Priority 4: Being brand led** – Aligning investment marketing with the City Region's brand narrative and building the profile of Invest Liverpool with 'far' domestic and international markets.
- Priority 5: Developing Strategic Marketing Partnerships** – Building relationships with partners and intermediaries at local, regional and national level to amplify the City Region's investment proposition, extend the reach of investment marketing and increase content.

The strategy will be supplemented by a programme of research and intelligence designed to build insight into key investment markets, performance analytics and targeted lead generation. Importantly, the approach is intended to enhance the relationships with the Investment Services Teams (Growth Platform and Local Authority partners) to continue with a co-ordinated and centralised approach to account management and enquiry handling.

The marketing strategy is available upon request.

6. Liverpool City Region Internationalisation Strategy

Whilst chemicals and automotive investment generated the majority of FDI in recent years, it rarely exceeds more than 2% of the UK's total FDI projects, with the Pharma sector recorded in the top 5 sectors.

Key growth markets were identified as:

- Transatlantic: continues to generate the largest number of investment and research projects. The Port of Liverpool provides excellent connectivity for supply-chain solutions in light of Brexit and new trade deals and the Government's announcement of Freeports.
- Germany: Represents the 2nd strongest origin for investment and is the City Regions second largest trading partner.
- Ireland: Liverpool's proximity to Ireland, connectivity with the Port of Liverpool (containers and RoRo) alongside the community linkages provides strong market opportunities.

7. Liverpool City Region Covid 19 Recovery Plan – Build Back Better

The City Region has a £31.5bn GVA economy, with £1bn added to the economy in the last decade. However, growth has been slow since the recession and it has taken us longer to recover compared to other economies. There is a high propensity of people classed as 'inactive' and a relatively high number of poor education outcomes, which turned around could drive growth. Liverpool City Region also has some of the most deprived areas in the UK, including Wirral, Knowsley and Sefton.

Against this backdrop, the City Region's recovery plan aims to establish it as a globally competitive, environmentally responsible, socially inclusive economy. It is being delivered through six key principles that include using the regions strength of brand and ability to shape places to create a compelling narrative for investment - post COVID-19, post Brexit UK.

Of the 4 priority areas, the interventions for Business Eco System and Place have the most significance for the region's inwards investment proposition. Critically, this centres on the City Region's knowledge and research capabilities and assets to commercialise and drive innovation across health, digital, logistics and manufacturing sectors to build resilience and exploit emerging opportunities.

In terms of place, the diversity of the region's cultural and tourism offer is acknowledged as key strengths in differentiating the region from others. In combination with interventions for improving housing, local amenities, town centres and connectivity, the ambition is to further enhance the attractiveness of the City Region to those who live and aspire to live it.

8. LCR Brand Narrative

'[Here for Good](#)' has been accepted as the unifying idea for the Liverpool City Region's brand narrative and uses eight themes to reflect the region's individual strengths/characteristics. In support of this, a brand framework has been developed for business and investment which is aligned with the LCR Covid -19 Recovery Plan using 8 themes. The themes are based on the City Region's identified strengths (Globally Connected, Knowledge and Expertise, Green Powered, Talent etc) backed by individual proof points/case studies.

The outworking of the brand strategy is being delivered through an open access repository hosted on the Invest Liverpool allowing stakeholders to access and provide content for investment marketing. The strategy and framework have been delivered through a private sector led steering group. It is anticipated that the creative development of the brand and application will be progressed over the next 6 months.

The Brand narrative can be found on the Invest Liverpool website (see link above) and sets out a narrative framework, a set of values and key messages that define the narrative, a summary evidence base and stories to support the values and bring the narrative to life.

The ultimate audiences for the material and messages are multiple – they include investors, businesses, foreign owned companies, SMEs, the third sector, partners, influencers, students, academics, visitors and residents. The marketing and communications strategy for inward investment will be at the centre of brand activation such is the relationship between the perception of places and those businesses we are targeting to invest. This will involve four main areas of activity aimed at engaging stakeholders and building advocacy. They are:

- Brand building and application through adoption within planned inward investment marketing activity and Invest Liverpool channels.
- Generating brand led content.
- Increasing stakeholder access to brand messaging and content
- The creative development of the brand's visual identity.

Based on its global reach, Liverpool will be used as the main attract brand for the City Region when considering 'far' domestic and international investment markets. Major events like The Good Business Festival also offer the opportunity to present the Liverpool City Region brand to a global audience and play to the strengths, messages and themes that are aligned with the festival's ethos.

9. Your Brief

We are seeking a communications company to develop and deliver an innovative and integrated media communications programme that enables the LCRC and Growth Platform to showcase investment successes and opportunities.

The successful company will develop a communications framework, which will be targeted at key markets using the agreed brand narrative and specific messaging developed through the sector competitive value propositions. PR will form an activity within the region's marketing programme for inward investment in helping to secure national, international and sector specific lead generation and we anticipate the main areas of activity being as follows:

- Enhancing the general profile of the LCR investment proposition through reactive/pro-active comms support for emerging opportunities – new investment secured, major conferences secured (ACCL), infrastructure programmes, economic growth/performance.
- Engaging with external partners to maximise PR coverage for the LCR investment proposition – MIPIM, The Good Business Festival, The Knowledge Quarter, Sci-Tech Daresbury, DIT etc.
- In conjunction with the Investment Services team, devising PR strategy and integration with planned marketing programmes/campaign targeting key investment markets and intermediaries – including the generation of newsworthy stories, communication for attendance at events/conferences, identifying/securing speaking opportunities at key industry events etc.
- Co-ordinating thought leadership programmes for the LCR with key influencers and decision makers – to generate PR interest and support digital/social marketing programmes.
- Delivering a media monitoring service to help identified investment opportunities, trends and benchmark the LCR against comparator regions/destinations
- Regular reporting showing the value of PR generated across traditional & digital media
- Maintaining relations with key media titles and identify opportunities for the development of supplements/collateral that increase awareness of investment in the LCR – property, sector related, talent/skills, lifestyle etc.

10. Timeline & Milestones

Project procurement, award and initiation will need to be progressed within an acute timeframe. In order to provide bidders with key milestones, the timeline below indicates the response time and proposed timescales for the award, please note these dates are subject to change:

Project specification issued	26 th July 2021
Project Questions Deadline	2 nd August 2021
Project Responses	4 th August 2021
Submission Deadline	11 th August 2021
Clarification Interviews (if required)	13 th August 2021
Appointment Decision	25 th August 2021
Contract Commencement	26 th August 2021
Contract Completion	31 st March 2023

11. Supplier questions

Any questions should be directed to sylvia.pollock@growthplatform.org, on or before the 'Questions Deadline' date stated in the above timeline.

All questions and answers will be made anonymous and disseminated to all potential suppliers on Growth Platforms [tender page](#). It will be the responsibility of the potential supplier to monitor the site for latest activity.

12. Format & Content of Submission

The company must demonstrate the ability and capacity to deliver the brief. The communications programme will focus on LCR's sector strengths and opportunities. The contract will be reviewed on an annual basis with monthly performance/target reviews. The KPI's to be measured against are:

- Quality of coverage (was it top tier publications?)
- Potential reach
- Sentiment (positive or negative)
- Earned website traffic (has it increased website traffic?)
- Social media engagement (how has the coverage performed on social media?)

Companies/applicants expressing an interest in this opportunity should provide:

- A submissions in MS Word or PDF formats and not exceed 6 sides of A4.

Further details of evaluation criteria are found in section 13 which will be the framework of your submission.

COMPLETED TENDERS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED BY EMAIL TO sylvia.pollock@growthplatform.org BY 5pm on WEDNESDAY 11TH AUGUST 2021.

The deadline for any queries prior to submission is Monday 2nd August 2021 and these should also be sent by email to sylvia.pollock@growthplatform.org

13. Evaluation

When awarding this contract Growth Platform on behalf of the LCR LEP reserves the right not to accept the lowest price tender, but the most economically advantageous tender taking into consideration the award criteria below.

Submission will need to score at least 65 to be eligible. In the event that all submissions score under 65, Growth Platform reserves the right to re-advertise the opportunities.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals / Quotations will be assessed and scored on the following criteria:

Quality 65% made up of;		Weightings
1.	Please include an outline implementation plan that defines roles and responsibilities (with associated resource requirements), covering all aspects of the proposed outline of approach in response to this brief – It is expected that submissions will set out how the requirements will be met, in terms of providing the desired outputs on time and on budget and what methodology you will adopt to deliver the brief.	35%
2.	Provide information on monitoring of the contract and how you will ensure our required outcomes are met. How will you keep the Growth Platform team up to date with progress? How will you address any failure to generate results? How will you deliver final evaluation of the project to provide an overview of outputs achieved.	10%
3.	Detail the resources and your technical ability to carry out the service. Provide information on the workforce to be employed for performance of the service level of resources to be used. This should include providing any details of ability you will bring to the project in terms of developing PR strategy and maximising the impact of the LCR Inward Investment Marketing Strategy? This should include how you would	20%

	approach the delivery of this projects and how you would work across the various sub sectors of the Liverpool City Region's business economy.	
4.	Price Breakdown costs Other overheads	35%

The scoring mechanism for scored questions will be detailed as follows unless stated otherwise.

Score	Meaning
0	Unacceptable response. Requirement level is not met. Many important issues are completely un-addressed or response wholly inadequate or inappropriate. Concerns are serious and risk levels unacceptable for many areas.
2	Poor response. Requirement levels are adequate for only some important issues. Some important issues are largely incomplete. Concerns are serious and risk levels unacceptable for some areas.
4	Adequate response. Requirement level is partially met. Overall the proposals are satisfactory, but some issues are weak. Risk levels apply but Bidder has demonstrated understanding of how they will meet all minimum requirements.
6	Good response. Requirement level is partially met, competence is demonstrated in all areas but there is scope for more detail and more depth in some areas.
8	Very good response. Requirement level is met with only a few minor weaknesses or queries. Competent bid demonstrating overall understanding of requirements and experience in all areas.
10	Excellent response. Requirement level fully met. All key issues addressed. Range of examples of good practice, experience, understanding of requirements.

Price will be scored based on the following formula.

Lowest price submitted [divided by] your bid price [multiplied by] by 35%

13 Terms & Conditions

The Liverpool City Region Growth Platform standard legal terms and conditions will be used to govern procurement and contract management. These arrangements will be confirmed on completion of the tender process. Please note that Growth Platform does not negotiate these standard terms as they are considered to be fair and reasonable.

14 Conditions of Tender

- Please be aware that due to the relatively low indicative budget for this work (i.e. less than the current OJEU limits) there is no regulatory obligation for us to provide feedback if you are unsuccessful.
- We reserve the right to discontinue this tender process at any time and not award a contract.
- You will not be entitled to claim from us any costs or expenses which you may incur in preparing and/or submitting your Tender at any stage of this exercises. This applies whether or not your organisation is successful.

15 Budget

Based on external support for the delivery of PR services a maximum of £54,491 (inclusive of VAT) has been allocated for the period September 2021 to March 2023.

16 Clarification Interviews

If it is felt that submissions require clarification, tenderers will be invited to a clarification interview. The representatives who attend should be the people who will be working on this contract. Suppliers will be sent an invitation with an allocated slot before the interview date in the timetable above.