

Invitation to Tender New Markets 2 Delivery Support

Growth Platform

Growth Platform is Liverpool City Region's economic enabler, designed to support people and businesses to realise their potential and generate growth. Our role is to strengthen and simplify our regional ecosystem, creating a sustainable economy that reflects the needs of all our business community across Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral. We exist to enable change and growth that makes our economy work for everyone; to provide guidance, inspiration and support for businesses, create opportunities for growth and foster resilience.
www.growthplatform.org

New Markets 2 ERDF Programme

The New Markets 2 ERDF programme (NM2) offers a portfolio of business support services to Liverpool City Region SMEs, who have an ambition to grow their business. These support services are provided by the following delivery partners, Growth Platform, St Helens Chamber, Liverpool Chamber of Commerce and the University of Liverpool. Each delivery partner offers a bespoke support service to help with business growth needs. Services include commercial consultancy grants, export related grants and leadership development support. The NM2 Programme has been operating since January 2016 and previous partners in the programme were Agent Marketing, Blackburne House, Downtown in Business, High Performance Consultancy, Mersey Maritime, Sci Tech Daresbury and the Women's Organisation. To date the programme has supported in excess of 1,200 SMEs across the Liverpool City Region.

Growth Platform's element of the programme allows eligible SMEs in Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral to access a grant towards project costs of consultancy or agency fees, to help achieve their growth ambitions. Projects can be between £3,000 and £35,000* in value and need to be fully completed and suppliers paid by 31st May 2023. (*Upper limit may change dependent upon remaining funding available.)

Grants are awarded to eligible SMEs that have completed the application and procurement process to choose their preferred supplier. Once the work is completed and the SME can evidence defrayal of the payment to the supplier, they can claim 35% of their eligible costs from Growth Platform.

Due to the nature of the funding SMEs are only permitted to access support from the New Markets 2 programme once. Therefore, your networks will be essential to reaching businesses who haven't previously engaged in the support. To be eligible for support SMEs must not have been supported by any partner in the NM2 programme previously and be an SME based in the LCR. St Helens Chamber run their own grants programme, so Growth Platform do not run this programme in St Helens.

We would welcome submission from suppliers with a diverse range of networks to allow Growth Platform to extend our reach into the wider business community.

Requirement

Growth Platform are looking for an individual/company to deliver a Commercial Broker function, create a pipeline and deliver up to 25 grants to eligible businesses. So far Growth Platform have engaged with 812 business with 304 of those going on to receive a grant.

Growth Platform reserves the right to split the contract between a maximum of two suppliers' dependant on the responses received. If this is the case, we will engage with the preferred supplier to agree delivery targets.

Eligible SMEs are supported from application, through procurement to claim stage by a Growth Platform Commercial Broker, please see Annex 1 for the workflow. It is the Commercial Brokers role to;

- Develop a pipeline and support eligible high growth/high growth potential SMEs through the New Markets 2 programme.
- Work with eligible businesses to establish the commercial support needed to most effectively enable their business growth.
- Support business to complete the application process and evidence eligibility
- Assist businesses to accurately scope out the support they require to take their business forward. Agree overall and individual project objectives, timescales and resource requirements.
- Work with the business to undertake a competitive procurement exercise for commercial support required utilising the agreed scope of works, ensuring that they select the most appropriate provider for the support required based on agreed criteria.
- Procurement must be compliant with the ERDF programme and it will be the Commercial Broker's role to ensure that this is the case for all SMEs supported.
- Once procured, keep a watching brief on the project to ensure that delivery of the project is as agreed and in the case of variance determine appropriate intervention with input from Programmes and Compliance Manager.
- Once the project is completed ensure that all paperwork relating to the project is collected and retained in line with ERDF requirements. This will include agreed business eligibility, scope of work, competitive procurement process, completion of project, invoicing, payment, defrayal, and claims.
- Ensure all claims for ERDF contribution to the business for the service procured are complete, eligible and timely, so that the SME is reimbursed for this contribution as quickly as possible after completion – subject to the claims process.
- Use a web based CRM system to ensure no duplication, support delivery and record all SME interventions.

Timescales

This work begins on 5th September 2022 and runs through to 30th June 2023. Contracts will be reviewed on a monthly basis for performance and may be terminated if targets are not being met.

Should there be a situation where the programmes can increase delivery targets or timescales, Growth Platform reserves the right to extend this contract to meet any additional programme deliverables and/or timescales. This will be at Growth Platform's absolute discretion, subject to funding, performance and strategic alignment.

Published	8 th August 2022
Deadline for supplier questions	11 th August 2022
Deadline for Growth Platform response to supplier questions	12 th August 2022
Deadline for tenders to lisa.duddridge@growthplatform.org	21 st August 2022
Interviews	25 th & 26 th August 2022
Supplier notified of award of contract	31 st August 2022
Contracts issued	1 st September 2022
Contract Start date	5 th September 2022
Contract end date	30 th June 2023

We aim to work to the dates above but these may be subject to change. However, the deadline date for submissions will remain static.

Indicative Budget

The total budget for this work is up to £1,000+ VAT per eligible business supported through to successful SME grant payment.

The intention is to pay the successful supplier(s) in stages at the end of each quarter (March, June, September & December). Stages are as follows –

- 50% Payment upon issue of Grant Funding Agreement to SME
- 50% Payment upon SME grant payment

This will be monitored via the CRM system and amount to be invoiced agreed each quarter.

Supplier Questions

Any questions should be directed to Growth Platform's point of contact Lisa Duddridge, Programmes & Compliance Manager via email. lisa.duddridge@growthplatform.org before the deadline for supplier questions (stated in the above timeline).

All questions and answers will be made anonymous and disseminated to all potential suppliers on Growth Platform's tender page <https://growthplatform.org/tenders/>. It is the responsibility of supplier to monitor the site for latest activity.

Proposal Format

The successful individual/ company should demonstrate they have the capabilities and resources to deliver the above brief taking into consideration the evaluation criteria below.

Submissions should be in MS Word or PDF formats and not exceed 4 sides of A4.

Please indicate in your submission if you are VAT registered.

Evaluation Criteria

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

Quotes will be scored by the Head of Business Growth and a NM2 Commercial Broker.

In the event that all tenderers score under 65, Growth Platform reserves the right to re-advertise the opportunity.

Quotations will be evaluated and scored on the following criteria:

Quality	Weighting
Methodology how you would develop a pipeline and ensure you deliver the targets required. What mitigating actions will you introduce if the targets are not being met?	40%
Business advisory skills	15%
Evidence of strong links and understanding of the business support networks across the Liverpool City Region	15%
Demonstrable knowledge of the business support environment in the Liverpool City Region	15%
How will you ensure integration with the Business Growth Team in Growth Platform?	10%
Understanding and knowledge of working with ERDF funding	5%

Scoring Methodology

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 and understanding of requirements.

Interviews

Once all submissions have been scored Growth Platform will invite the individual/suppliers with the 3 top scores over 65 to present their product to a panel made up of the Head of Business Growth and a NM2 Commercial Broker.

Growth Platform reserves the right to split the contract between a maximum of two suppliers' dependant on the responses received. If this is the case, we will engage with the preferred supplier to agree delivery targets.

These interviews will offer suppliers the opportunity to elaborate and present further detail on the content of their tender submission. Therefore, interviews will be evaluated as below –

Quality	Weighting
Methodology how you would develop a pipeline and ensure you deliver the targets required. What mitigating actions will you introduce if the targets are not being met?	40%
Business advisory skills	15%
Strong links and understanding of the business support networks across the Liverpool City Region	15%
Demonstrable knowledge of the business support environment in the Liverpool City Region	15%
How will you ensure integration with the Business Growth Team in Growth Platform?	10%
Understanding and knowledge of working with ERDF funding	5%

Deadline and Submission

Proposals are required by **21st August 2022** electronically to lisa.duddridge@growthplatform.org

Date Published:

8th August 2022

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 exercise. This applies whether or not your organisations is successful.

This work is part funded through the European Regional Development Fund.

The Liverpool City Region New Markets 2 Programme is receiving up to £14,618,107 of funding from the England European Regional Development Fund as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020. The Department of Levelling up Housing and Communities (and in London the intermediate body Greater London Authority) is the Managing Authority for European Regional Development Fund. Established by the European Union, the European Regional Development Fund helps local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support innovation, businesses, create jobs and local community regenerations. For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/european-growth-funding>.

The Northern Powerhouse is a key aspect of this Government's approach to addressing the productivity gap in the North and ensuring a stronger, more sustainable economy for all parts of the UK. Alongside over €1.5 billion of European Regional Development Fund support for businesses and communities across the North, the government has awarded £3.4 billion in three rounds of Growth Deals across the Northern Powerhouse.

Annex 1 New Markets 2 Workflow

