

Lincolnshire Science and Innovation Park (LSIP)

Provision of Business Support Services ITT

Issued: 16/08/2021

Introduction

Workspace developments in Lincoln have been successful and enjoy very high levels of occupancy, however, graduations from these facilities tend to be sluggish due to the dearth of sufficient, well-specified space into which firms can expand. This prevents early exit from incubators and means precious incubator space remains in short supply. Tenants tend to stay in incubation space for far longer than would be ideal for them. There is a waiting list of applications for start-up space and growth of expanding firms is being restricted. This issue is particularly pronounced for innovation led businesses in key sectors, whose property requirements are more demanding and more complex than traditional businesses.

Lincolnshire Science and Innovation Park (LSIP) is undertaking a major project to create physical grow-on-space to house SMEs who are looking to graduate from incubation space into larger and more suitable premises. Alongside the development of the space, there is a need to help high growth potential small firms that cannot be immediately accommodated with a programme of assistance to help them better manage their growth. The LSIP team recognise there are a number of factors influencing this, including the growth aspirations of SMEs, difficulties in the identification of suitable space, SME managers capability and capacity to manage the process and the challenges of raising finance to modify unsuitable spaces to meet the needs of the technology businesses.

Requirements

LSIP is therefore seeking a contractor to deliver two distinct requirements:

Element 1: Delivery of Direct Support to SMEs

LSIP are seeking to appoint a contractor to provide a minimum of 87 local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with support to assist their expansion. These will include tenants of the grow on space along with companies with similar profiles who are located elsewhere – for example in other incubators and managed workspaces.

The support will be at no cost to the beneficiary SMEs, simply implying a commitment of their time. The contractor must supply a minimum of 12 hours of support to project participants. There is no time requirement imposed on the participating company. Support can be of any relevant kind. It may include a combination of one-2-one support, research, active signposting or even peer to peer networking. The LSIP team are open to considering any kind of model which will deliver added value to local firms

Element 2: Barriers to Growth Report

In addition to the direct support delivered to companies, LSIP are keen to understand much more about the barriers of exiting incubation space, the problems associated with taking up suitable grow on space and how these can be overcome. The scope of the report will be more clearly defined during the inception process and co-designed with the team, however, it should include an analysis of the common barriers, and recommendations for how local agencies can better help businesses overcome these material barriers.

The project is aiming to dovetail with help available from the Lincolnshire Growth Hub and demonstrate alignment to the Local Enterprise Partnership's priority sector strategy.

The LSIP team is seeking a reliable contractor with whom it can build a long-term relationship. The project is expected to operate until the end of June 2023. All deliverables associated with this contract must be completed by February 2023 and payment made by March 2023.

The chosen contractor's performance will be subject to an ongoing (3 monthly) evaluation with break clauses. In the medium-term the contractor's success will be evaluated on the basis of the impacts it has achieved for the assisted businesses.

Finance from ERDF carries a significant number of technical requirements and if contractors have no prior experience, they will need to demonstrate a commitment to carrying out the related CPD, dedicating time and effort to understanding the requirements in relation to documenting ERDF compliance and evidencing the support provided. This process will require rich narrative reporting on the nature and scale of the barriers faced, the support provided, and the resulting impact on the business, including evidencing any employment impacts.

LSIP have retained the service of specialist ERDF consultants for the duration of the project. The consultants will be available to work collaboratively with the successful contractor, providing technical support where required and helping to create "minimum burden" compliant documentation and processes.

Payments will be on a mutually agreed basis on provision of ERDF audit quality output evidence of each business assisted.

The grow on space is currently in the construction phase, with work to be completed by September 2021. The first occupancy is expected to be in November 2021. This contract is not materially affected by these timescales.

Project Background

More information regarding the project can be found at: lincolnsceiencepark.co.uk.

1. Tender Specification

Potential contractors are invited to provide:

- Evidence of how they intend to target and acquire a suitable volume of companies to ensure a minimum of 87 innovative or technology-based growth potential SMEs receive 12 hours of support over a period of up to one year
- Confirm a willingness to create an ERDF compliant application process which diagnoses business need and captures the nature and scale of the barriers to growth
- A robust delivery method which aligns with the project's drive to assist local SMEs in graduating from incubation to grow on space
- A solution that encompasses the medium and long-term growth and strategic needs of the assisted businesses. This might include management development programmes, workshops and events, peer to peer initiatives, the preparation of business plans or specific commercial services which support future growth.
- Plans for designing an ERDF compliant process which evidences the nature and scale of support provided and a suitable output/impact evidencing approach
- Any proposed innovative and novel approaches for the delivery of relevant support to the target cohort
- Initial thoughts on the development of the Barriers Report

Within the proposal, potential contractors will need to demonstrate they have taken the following into account:

- Collaboration with the LSIP team and local business support structures such as Lincolnshire Growth Hub, to ensure any proposed service does not duplicate support offered elsewhere
- The wider business support available to SMEs both locally, regionally and nationally and how they will connect beneficiaries to appropriate providers to deliver 'wrap-around' support, i.e. Access to Finance to modify potential new premises
- How they will work with the LSIP team to achieve ongoing success
- The contractor will be required to build cross cutting themes from the project into the delivery including Sustainable Development and Equality and Diversity. These will be captured in the sub-contractual agreement
- The sub-contractual agreement will require the contractor to abide by the England 2014 to 2020 European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme Publicity Regulations. The contractor should consider how these will be implemented and how they will be communicated to beneficiaries
- Thinking in terms of how the support will align with Greater Lincolnshire LEPs priority sectors; Agri-food, Manufacturing, Health & Care, Low Carbon, Ports & Logistics and Visitor Economy

2. Role Definitions

The contractor will:

- Deliver and evidence a minimum of 12 hours support to each SME beneficiary and;
- Implement the necessary ERDF administration disciplines: confirmation of SME and State Aid eligibility status, provision of records detailing how clients were assisted, confirming hours expended and the nature of support
- Participate in video conference reporting sessions with the LSIP Team
- Attend a small number of one-to-one meetings (frequency to be agreed and in accordance with any prevalent Covid-19 restrictions)
- Share data on all involved clients with the LSIP Team on a Commercial in Confidence basis and meet all GDPR requirements
- Gather evidence of the impact achieved its individual SME “projects” / support provided
- Produce a Report exploring the barriers to taking up suitable grow on space and making recommendations to the supply side to develop suitable, perhaps innovative support

3. Value for Money

This is a fixed price contract. Therefore, value for money will be assessed by considering the quality of the approach, the level of innovation, understanding of the target sectors, ability to assist the ERDF Operational Programme objectives in terms of equal opportunities and sustainability or the potential to deliver more than 87 12 x hour outputs for the project.

4. Providing Information

Tenderers should respond to all elements the above tender scope and specification to include the following:

- An understanding of the brief
- The proposed approach for delivering the requirements
- An outline work plan, including a timetable with key milestones and expected results
- Details of all personnel involved in delivery, including biographies or CVs, relevant experience and a clear description of each individual's role
- Details of relevant skills and experience including experience of providing business support to SMEs
- A description of any added value the contractor will provide as part of their delivery
- A declaration of any pro-bono support that could be provided in parallel with the contract

In addition, proposals should include, as annexes:

- A short history of the organisation, structure and services, evidence of any quality marks, certifications such as Investors in People or other relevant standards
- A copy of the latest annual accounts
- Copies of Quality, Environmental, Equality, Health and Safety and any other relevant policies
- Evidence of appropriate professional indemnity and public liability insurance
- Confirmation that there are no existing or potential conflicts of interest

LSIP does not wish to receive any sales collateral in response to this ITT. If supplied, it will be disregarded in the evaluation of proposals.

5. Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated against the following scoring matrix:

Criteria	Maximum Possible Score
Relevant Experience	40
Methodology	40
Project Plan – including capacity and delivery within timescales	10
Value for Money	10

The contractor will need to adequately demonstrate they can meet all the requirements and specifications outlined in this ITT.

6. Budget

This is a fixed price contract. Element 1 – Direct Support is fixed at £85,000 (exc. VAT), with Element 2 – Consultancy Report fixed at £5,000 (exc. VAT). Prices must include all travel and subsistence costs. All prices must be fixed, not indexed and not subject to change for the duration of the whole contract.

7. Clarifications and Further Information

Potential contractors can obtain further information via email. All clarification questions should be sent to andypowell@theinsightworks.co.uk no later than 17:00 on 03/09/2020. In the interest of openness and transparency, all clarification responses will be published on the LSIP website.

8. Submission of the Tender

The Insight Works Limited are managing this procurement on behalf of LSIP.

Proposals should be submitted to Andy Powell via email andypowell@theinsightworks.co.uk by 17:00 on 10/09/2021

The LSIP team would appreciate knowing whether a potential contractor intends to submit a proposal. Please email andypowell@theinsightworks.co.uk.

Tenders received after the deadline will not be opened or considered. All responses will be acknowledged on receipt.

9. Tender Evaluation Timetable

Event	Date
Issue of ITT	16/08/2021
Deadline for Clarifications	17:00 03/09/2021
Deadline for Tenders	17:00 10/09/2021
Evaluation of Tenders	w/c 13/09/2021
Contract Award	17/09/2021
Inception Meeting	w/c 20/09/2021
Completion of Element 1 – Direct Support	28/02/2023
Completion of Element 2 – Consultancy Report	28/02/2023

LSIP reserves the right to make amends to any of the above dates. Any changes will be published as soon as is practicable with any interested parties being notified via email.

10. Further Information

After evaluation the contract will be awarded, and all bidders will be notified of the decision via a Tender Award Notification. Once the contract has been awarded, feedback can be made available to unsuccessful tenderers on request.

11. Disclaimers

While the information contained in this ITT is believed to be correct at the time of publication, LSIP will not accept any liability for its accuracy, adequacy or completeness. Neither the issue of this ITT nor any of the information presented should be regarded as a commitment on the part of the LSIP to enter into a contractual arrangement.

LSIP is not liable for any costs incurred in tendering.

LSIP reserves the right to amend this ITT at any time. Any amendments made will be dated and issued to all interested parties within a reasonable timeframe.

Should LSIP deem it necessary, a selection of shortlisted applicants may be invited to present their proposal to a panel prior to the award decision.