

**Invitation to Tender**

**‘Procurement Portal’**

**A new feature for the Digital Growth Hub offering**

GFL/17/103/GH

**TENDERS MUST BE SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS. TENDERS NOT COMPLYING WITH THESE INSTRUCTIONS MAY BE REJECTED BY GFIRST LEP WHOSE DECISION IN THIS MATTER SHALL BE FINAL. THIS INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS ARE PROVIDED FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF TENDERERS BUT DO NOT FORM PART OF THE TENDER DOCUMENT.**

**SECTION A – BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**1.0 Background**

1.1 The Growth Hub opened in October 2014, as a very unique partnership between GFirst LEP and the University of Gloucestershire. We set out to help all growing Gloucestershire businesses accelerate their growth, boosting the economy and prosperity of the county. Further information can be found on our web site:

[www.thegrowthhub.biz](http://www.thegrowthhub.biz)

**2.0 The Requirement**

Summary

2.1 The Growth Hub have identified three new features to be added to enhance their Digital Growth Hub offering – one of these being the ‘Procurement Portal’.

2.2 These features will be integrated into the existing Digital Growth Hub experience so as to provide a seamless customer journey through use of the features and maintain an auditable record of the clients’ interactions with the Growth Hub and use of these features.

2.3 It is required that all new features will be launched by 31 August 2018 and that the accompanying commercial arrangements ensure that there is adequate support and maintenance arrangements in place for the period to March 31st 2022.

Objective – Procurement Portal

2.4 One of the key assets of the Growth Hub service is the Business Directory, which contains listings for recognised Support Providers, as well as businesses in general. This is a key tool in ensuring that clients of the Growth Hub can be signposted to an independent and impartial collection of solution providers that might be able to help them, from which they can make their own decisions on how to proceed. However, the potential of having this database of businesses and engaged users goes beyond just search and consideration, which is why we are looking to turn the business directory into a transactional community in which Gloucestershire businesses, whether clients of the Growth Hub or not, can advertise or respond to requests for help or specific contracts, so as to provide an active platform upon which businesses can grow.

Utilisation

2.5 The target audience for this solution will be members of the Growth Hub business community. This will be primarily made up on Growth Hub business support clients, but the Growth Hub website is available and accessible to any Gloucestershire business that wishes to explore it. We will be actively promoting the business directory and hope to have over 10,000 businesses listed on it and interacting with it by the end of March 2022. The procurement portal will be a key feature in enabling this to happen.

2.6 Whilst the procurement platform will not be part of a business’ initial interaction with the Growth Hub, we do see it as playing a key role in the later stages of their business support service as well as being the primary reason for a businesses to want to engage with the Growth Hub website once they have received all of the fully funded support available to them. We envisage users will come to recognise that the Growth Hub website as a single portal whose sole purpose is to offer a platform for growth, whether it be through support and guidance, or a forum within which business can be sought and won, whether locally or further afield.

2.7 Finally, we are keen to explore ways in which procurement can be made simpler, increasing the chances for micro and SME businesses to competitively participate in procurement activity, including removing the need to duplicate information. At the very least however, the platform must be optimised for mobile use and ideally offer real-time communication and notifications, so that users are empowered to engage with the service as when then both want and need to do.

Specification

2.8 There are a number of organisations that offer procurement platforms already so we are inviting these providers to submit submissions that will allow for the seamless integration of their platform into a Growth Hub branded experience, that integrates with the existing Business Directory and supporting infrastructure. The key capabilities we are looking for from this solution are:

(a) The ability for businesses to search for tendering opportunities locally, regionally, nationally and UK-wide.

(b) The ability for businesses to advertise contract opportunities locally, regionally, nationally, and UK-wide.

(c) Whilst we specify the need for UK based opportunities above as a key requirement, we welcome and submissions from suppliers that can offer an international opportunity for our users, so as to support Gloucestershire businesses to broaden their search for the highest levels in skills or to find opportunities to increase their export activities.

(d) The ability for businesses to manage the end to end procurement experience within the platform, including document upload, question submissions and responses and award notifications.

(e) The ability to businesses to access tendering opportunities from the private sector, the public sector and supply chain activities.

(f) The platform must be able to integrate with the Growth Hub CRM so that there is no duplication of data entry from business owners.

(g) Ideally it would be possible for the service to be built from an API to optimise the customer experience, however if this is not viable, then the minimum requirement is that the experience is built to be responsive and can therefore be utilised effectively across desktop, tablet and smartphone devices.

(h) Supporting the experience must be a structured database which allows for sensible and searchable classification of contract opportunities, incorporating such things as contract value, contract duration, sector, skills required and location.

2.9 In addition to the above, we see this platform as being a feature from which we can build a sustainable future for the Growth Hub service and therefore would welcome ideas on commercialisation of this feature along with any payment processing platforms.

**3.0 Procurement Timetable**

3.1 The anticipated procurement timetable for this opportunity is set out below; however no guarantee is implied by these dates.

| **Date** | **Activity** |
| --- | --- |
| 20 October 2017 | Publish ITT document pack. |
| 10 November 2017 | Deadline for clarification queries. |
| 20 November 2017 | Deadline for submission of tenders. |
| 21 November 2017 | Evaluation of tenders complete – supplier shortlist selected – maximum of 3 suppliers. |
| w/c 20 November 2017 | Option for GFirst LEP to invite suppliers to interview by the evaluation panel. The interview will start with suppliers giving an overview of their proposals. The purpose of any interviews will be for GFirst LEP to clarify that they have understood the suppliers proposals and for the suppliers to clarify that they have understood GFirst LEP’s requirements. This is not an opportunity for suppliers to score more marks by introducing new elements to their proposals. GFirst LEP reserves the right to adjust evaluation scores accordingly. |
| 24 November 2017 | Issue contract award notices. |
| 05 December 2017 | Start of contract. |

**4.0 Linkage and Support**

4.1 The selected supplier will need to liaise and work closely with:

- Growth Hub Manager

- Growth Hub Data Controller

- Growth Hub Digital Marketing Manager

- Growth Hub Business Navigators and Guides

- GFirst LEP Project Management

**5.0 Form of Contract**

5.1 The contract will be based on an agreed version of the Supplier’s own contract for services.

**SECTION B – TENDER INFORMATION and INSTRUCTIONS**

**1.00 Tender Evaluation**

1.01 Upon receipt of the tender submissions GFirst LEP will carry out a detailed evaluation process to shortlist a maximum of three suppliers for interview if required.

1.02 If interviews are conducted then they will start with the invited supplier(s) giving an overview of their proposals. The purpose of the interviews is for GFirst LEP to clarify that they have understood the suppliers proposals and for the suppliers to clarify that they have understood GFirst LEP’s requirements. This is not an opportunity for suppliers to score more marks by introducing new elements to their proposals. GFirst LEP reserves the right to adjust evaluation scores accordingly.

Interview schedule

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Introductions** | **5 minutes** |
| **Presentation of outline proposal** | **30 minutes** |
| **Communication plan** | **15 minutes** |
| **Q&A/Discussion** | **40 minutes** |

1.03 The contract will be awarded to the partner submitting the most economically advantageous tender – 40% price and 60% quality.

**2.00 Completion of Pricing**

2.01 Potential suppliers are required to complete a method statement as requested below. Pricing should include VAT.

**3.00 Submission**

3.01 The tender should be submitted strictly in accordance with the tender documents and without qualifications. Failure to comply with this requirement may at the discretion of GFirst LEP, invalidate the tender.

3.02 To enable GFirst LEP to assess the supplier capability, please provide the following method statements using your own style.

3.03 Quality & Pricing Evaluation Method Statements

Suppliers are required to provide method statements in their own style that respond to the following criteria:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Criteria – Quality** | **Marks** |
| 1 | **Experience**   1. Describe your experience of providing this type of service and of similar contracts. 2. Provide contact details of two references which GFirst LEP may check before awarding the contract. 3. Please provide CVs for the key members of your team that will be used to deliver the requirements. | 10  Pass/Fail  10 |
| 2 | **Skills and expertise**  Please outline the range of skills and expertise that you possess that will enable you to successfully deliver the Requirement.  Please include your service delivery management policies and processes. | 10 |
| 3 | **Service delivery proposal**  Please describe your service delivery proposal to show exactly what will be delivered and how it will meet all of the requirements contained in the Section A – paragraph 2.1 onwards.  Please include a product development road map. | 25 |
| 4 | **Sustainability**  GFirst LEP takes responsibility for sustainability and ethical sourcing seriously. Suppliers are therefore requested to comment on the sustainability credentials of the services and approach that they propose to provide. For example: Fair Trade, ethical sourcing, supply chain management, sustainably efficient means of communication, initiatives in the supply chain to reduce the use of energy, chemicals, water, packaging, initiatives to ensure employee rights, health and safety and welfare etc. | 5 |
|  | **Criteria – Pricing** | **Marks** |
| 6 | Please provide a schedule of pricing, including VAT, that includes:   1. Initial implementation costs, broken down by roles involved 2. Support and maintenance costs covering the period until March 31st 2022 | 40 |

**4.00 Tender Evaluation Criteria**

**Quality (60%)**

4.01 The evaluation of method statements will be made using the criteria listed above (3.03) and the marking scheme listed below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Marking Range** | **Evaluation Criteria** |
| **Inadequate** | **0 to 1** | **Significant indications** that **supplier** lacks certain requirements in this area to achieve the required standard of service delivery / information totally inadequate. |
| **Concerns** | **2 to 4** | **Some concerns** that **supplier** may lack certain requirements in this area to achieve the required standard of service delivery. |
| **Potential** | **5 to 7** | Information, rather than examples, indicating **potential** to deliver outcomes. |
| **Capable** | **8 to 10** | Comprehensive and strong information and examples indicating **supplier** capable of delivering outcomes to required standard. |

The marks within each range will be awarded depending on the degree which the description of the evaluation criteria applies.

If a score of **0 to 1** is applied to the evaluation of any question, the tender will be **eliminated.**

If a score of **1** is applied, 10% ofavailable marks for that question will be awarded.

If a score of **2** is applied, 20% ofavailable marks for that question will be awarded.

If a score of **3** is applied, 30% ofavailable marks for that question will be awarded.

If a score of **4** is applied, 40% ofavailable marks for that question will be awarded.

If a score of **5** is applied, 50% ofavailable marks for that question will be awarded.

If a score of **6** is applied, 60% ofavailable marks for that question will be awarded.

If a score of **7** is applied, 70% ofavailable marks for that question will be awarded.

If a score of **8** is applied, 80% ofavailable marks for that question will be awarded.

If a score of **9** is applied, 90% ofavailable marks for that question will be awarded.

If a score of **10** is applied, 100% ofavailable marks for that question will be awarded.

***Example:***

There are **10** marks available for 3.03 (2) in the table above. If a score of **6** is applied to a supplier’s response, the supplier will be awarded **6 marks** for that response. (i.e. 60% of the 10 marks available).

**Important Note:** Suppliers should not assume members of the evaluation panel have any prior knowledge of their organisation. The assessment will be made on the written response provided.

**Pricing (40%)**

4.02 Pricing models will be reviewed and evaluated using the below methodology.

4.03 Following any required clarification with potential partners to ensure as far as possible that the pricing elements of the offers are being evaluated on a ‘like for like’ basis, marks will be awarded based on the lowest overall tender price for the preferred delivery model receiving 100% of the marks available. The other prices submitted for the similar delivery models from the other Potential suppliers will be compared to the lowest price and the difference between those prices will be expressed as a percentage of the lowest price.

For every one percent the price is above the lowest price the supplier will lose 1% of the marks available.

For example:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Tender Offer** | **Difference from lowest** | **% difference from lowest** | **Marks awarded out of 40** |
| £10,000 | £0 | 0% | 40 |
| £11,000 | £1,000 | 10% | 36 |
| £12,000 | £2,000 | 20% | 32 |
| £15,000 | £5,000 | 50% | 20 |
| £20,000 | £10,000 | 100% | 0 |

**5.00 Queries**

5.01 Any queries regarding the tender process should be raised as correspondence through the e-tendering portal

5.02 Any queries that may have a material effect on the costing of the tender will be circulated to all Suppliers along with GFirst LEP’s response. Queries received less than seven days before the closing date may not be answered. If a query gives rise to the need for an amendment to the original tender documents an extension to the closing date may be made, in which case all parties will be notified simultaneously. Please note the latest time for receiving queries relating to this tender is 1**2.30pm on Friday 10 November 2017**.

**6.00 Submission of Tender**

6.01 Tender submissions must be made via e-mail, with submissions e-mailed to [gfirstadminteam@gfirstlep.com](mailto:gfirstadminteam@gfirstlep.com) by **12.30pm on Monday 20 November 2017**

6.02 No other method of tender submission will be accepted. GFirst LEP may, after the opening of the tenders, enter discussions or post-tender negotiations with any potential partner.

**7.00 Contract Award**

7.01 The contract will be awarded to the potential partner submitting the most economically advantageous tender in terms of quality and price. (Quality Marks + Price Marks).

7.02 GFirst LEP reserves the right to cancel the process at any stage. However, assuming that a tender is successful, GFirst LEP will notify all Suppliers simultaneously about the intended award.