**Invitation to Tender**

**European Social Fund – Employer Led Skills Project**

**Specification Reference: Manufacturing Sector - Employer Led Skills Support**

ESF Priority Axis: Priority Axis 2: Skills for Growth

ESF Investment Priority 2.1: Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning

Area: Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (C&IoS)

Opens: 1st August 2020

Closes: 14th August 2020

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10. **About Cornwall Marine Network**:

Cornwall Marine Network (CMN) has secured project funding through the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), known locally as the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Growth Programme, from the European Union’s European Social Fund for a project named Employer Led Skills (ELS) Cornwall and is seeking to procure a new sub-contractor to deliver some aspects of the project in the Manufacturing sector.

CMN is a not for profit company, limited by guarantee, set up in 2002 to help marine businesses improve their prosperity and sustainability. In the last 15 years it has worked to secure project funding to deliver a range of services to its now more than 300 member businesses and has successfully delivered more than 100 business support projects to its marine member businesses since 2005, creating more than 3,000 new jobs and seeing the key to the current and future success as continuing to support members through innovative training, marketing initiatives and business support including productivity and innovation improvements. CMN has extended this effective role to include services to other sectors through a network of Delivery Partners.

1. **Background and Context:**

	1. **Background**:
	One of the dominant contributory factors to the region’s productivity and economic growth is the level of education, training and skills within the working age population. This specification seeks to address a range of issues concerning the development and upskilling of the manufacturing workforce. It aims to help businesses to develop and grow, become more resilient and more productive.

	There are approximately 1,300 manufacturing units in C&IoS who employed around 21,500 (2012 figures for 2011), of which 5,200 were self employed, on a workplace basis – i.e. 16,300 in employment. This dropped to 15,500 by 2017. Overall, manufacturing accounts for almost 10% of the total workforce which is consistent with the GVA figures below.

	The Manufacturing sector delivers almost £800m to the economy but by addressing low productivity this contribution will increase rapidly.

	Manufacturing in C&IoS has experienced the highest sectoral growth in terms of GVA per job from 2012 to 2017 at 24% considerably above the local average. In addition, the cross cutting nature of the sector can help spread innovation and productivity. These aspects are strengths within the local manufacturing sector and can help improve productivity across the wider economy.

	The Employer Led Skills (ELS) project will address the following strategic objectives:
		* To address the basic skills needs of employed people, particularly in SMEs and micro businesses.
			+ The ELS project will engage 1,303 participants without basic skills and support 353 participants to gain a basic skill.
		* To increase the skills levels of employed people from the existing level to the next level up, to encourage progression in employment.
			+ The ELS project will support 833 participants to gain a Level 2 or below unit / qualification.
		* To increase the number of people with technical and job specific skills, particularly at L3 and above and into higher and advanced level apprenticeships.
			+ The ELS project will support 269 participants to gain a Level 3 and above unit / qualification.
		* To increase the skills levels of employed women to encourage progression in employment and help address the gender employment and wage gap.
			+ The ELS project will support and encourage 594 employed women to progress within their employment and career pathway. In addition, women will be upskilled with transferrable skills to enable them to move into and within sectors where they are traditionally under-represented.
	2. **Context**:

In C&IoS the percentage of people with no qualifications remains relatively static, in terms of the percentages of those in employment. In addition, there are substantial numbers of employees without level 2 qualifications underpinning the arguments for creating the Employer Led Skills project. Furthermore, productivity across the sector lags behind that of England and the EU so if we are to address these deficits, we need a focused programme of support in the manufacturing sector to drive up growth in knowledge and skills. As a result of this focused investment through ELS in new and/or different approaches to engagement and delivery we will see stronger economic performance from the sector.

* 1. **Additionality** – It is important for applicants to ensure that proposals do not duplicate existing activities or activities that do not address market failure. ESF can only be used to achieve additional activity or bring forward activity more quickly. Applicants must be able to demonstrate that proposals are additional to activity that would have occurred anyway and/or enables activity to be brought forward and delivered more quickly than otherwise would be the case in response to the demand established by sectoral development work and needs analysis.
	2. **Eligible participants** - Employees – full time or part time, including furloughed staff (further guidance available re those with zero-hour contracts) and the Self Employed. All manufacturing sector businesses in C&IoS.

1. **Specification Requirements:**
	1. **Budget** – CMN expects to allocate up to **£85,000 of ESF** inclusive of VAT**.** CMN reserves the right to increase this allocation by up to 15% subject to the quality of the proposals received.
	2. **Location**: Learning delivery should be based in C&IoS.
	3. **Duration** – Projects will be completed by 31st March 2023. The end date may be extended by 6 months to 30th September 2023 subject to further dialogue with DWP.
	4. **Objectives** -
		1. Applicants will be required to establish a sector led skills development programme which will address the four key themes identified through the ESF Developing Skills for Business project as critical to the sector’s sustainability and growth. The four themes are:
			* Continuous Improvement
			* Leadership/Management
			* Train the Trainer
			* Supply Chain & Procurement
		2. Applicants will be responsible for delivering the outputs and results identified in section 4 below.
		3. Applicants will set out how they will achieve the deliverables set out within their proposal. Given the nature of the four key themes it is recognised that bespoke programmes are likely, but it should be possible to reflect skills outcomes at levels 1, 2 or 3 either in the form of accredited or non-accredited provision.
		4. Applicants will have the capacity to deliver online, as well as face to face delivery in C&IoS over the term of this tender.
		5. Applicants will describe how they will capture and record the targets.
		6. Applicants will report quantitative and qualitative performance information to CMN on a quarterly basis using the ELS Progress Report Template.
		7. Applicants should provide a response outlining how they intend to engage businesses and potential participants.
		8. Applicants will outline their track record in the delivery of provision against the four themes identified above.
		9. Applicants should consider in their response:
			* How many courses could be delivered and at what level.
			* How many participants would be targeted for each course.
			* Which businesses would be targeted and how you will engage businesses.
			* How you will target individuals within sector businesses to help progress their careers and in turn, support business and sectoral growth.
			* How much the programme will cost to deliver.
			* What each course will consist of.
	5. **Match Funding** – Applicants will be responsible for securing eligible match funding for the balance of costs. This match funding must not be from another EU source. The match funding required is 50% of total delivery costs; i.e ESF plus match. This directly supports one of the Employment & Skills Strategy objectives to secure increased contributions from employers as we progress towards the end of the current ESIF programme.
	6. **Audit** – All claims will be subject to audit by CMN and other bodies such as DWP, which is the Managing Authority for ESF funds in England. Non-compliance with the terms and conditions set out in the SLA may lead to financial penalties.
	7. **Selection** – All proposals will be scored in line with the criteria specified in Annex 1
	8. **Cornwall Marine Network** - CMN will provide the formal paperwork sign-up process, including eligibility checks, once participants have been identified to confirm eligibility. This is to ensure consistency in the recording and handling of data.
	9. **State Aid** – Funding offered through the ELS is defined under the Commission Regulation (European Union) No 1407/2013, OJ L352/1 using the De Minimis exemption. This allows any one organisation to receive up to €200,000 of De Minimis aid (cash grant equivalent) over a rolling three-year period. The European Commission considers that public funding which complies with the De Minimis regulation has a negligible impact on trade and competition and does not require notification and approval of the Commission.
		1. Applicants will be expected to advise potential participants and beneficiary businesses as such.
		2. Applicants will also need to consider their own position in respect of the receipt of State Aid. Guidance for applicants explaining more about the State Aid requirements will be available on request but we recommend that applicants seek independent legal advice to avoid any uncertainty.
	10. **Publicity** - In order to comply with the necessary publicity regulations that accompany ESIF funds, all promotional material, meeting invites, questionnaires and reports must at all times comply with the latest guidelines.

	The Secretary of State has published the National European Guidance to assist grant recipients to comply with the Regulations referred to in the paragraph above. The chosen provider will be required to agree all project paperwork design with the project manager at the start of the contract to ensure that the necessary conditions have been met.

	The appointed provider must comply with the publicity requirements in all activities, events, and literature developed as part of this contract. The link to the ESF publicity requirements is <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/634288/ESIF_Branding_and_Publicity_Requirements.pdf>
2. **Required Deliverables:**
	1. **Outputs** - Proposals will set out how they will contribute to the overall ELS output target of 3,090 plus participants. Applicants will aim to deliver the following outputs.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ID | Output indicator | Target |
| O1 | Participants (total)\* | 300 |
| O4 | Participants over 50 years of age  | 21 |
| O5 | Participants from ethnic minorities | 6 |
| CO16 | Participants with disabilities | 33 |
| CO14 | Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children | 15 |
| O6 | Participants without basic skills | 123 |

 *Note: \* The participant output target is based on 300 separate individuals. If a single participant is supported more than once it will be counted as added value and not against this output target.*

* 1. **Results -**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ID | Result indicator | Target |
| R3 | Participants gaining basic skills | 11% |
| R6 | Participants gaining level 2 or below or a unit of a level 2 or below qualification (excluding basic skills) | 25% |
| R7 | Participants gaining level 3 or above or a unit of a level 3 or above qualification | 8% |
| R8 | Employed females gaining improved labour market status | 35% |

1. **Cross Cutting Themes** - All applications received under this specification should demonstrate how the cross-cutting themes will be addressed in their project design and development. The cross-cutting themes for ESF are ‘gender equality and equal opportunities’ and ‘sustainable development’. All proposals must include a gender and equal opportunities policy and implementation plan that should fit strategically at local and programme level whilst also adding value. This may include control of waste in manufacturing, use of renewables, a focus on those over 50 to enable sustainable inclusion and improved productivity, or women within the workforce where the project would see improved equality and progression for example.
2. **Application Process & Prioritisation Methodology:**
	1. All applications will need to be eligible under the European Social Fund Operational Programme for England 2014 to 2020. The ESF Operational Programme is available for applicants to read at - <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/750497/ESF__operational_programme_2014_2020.pdf> .
	2. This specification sets out the requirements for applicants to consider before applying. Applications against this specification will be assessed as part of a one stage appraisal process and successful applicants must be legally constituted to enter into a Service Level Agreement with CMN.
	3. Procurement - Robust and transparent procurement is required to ensure that CMN considers:
		1. value for money;
		2. maximises the efficient use of public money; and
		3. maintains competitiveness and fairness across the European Union.
	4. This specification identifies specific requirements for all applicants to consider in respect of their proposals. CMN will appraise proposals against these requirements.
	5. This specification is being assessed in a ‘single stage’ process.
	6. CMN will check applicant eligibility; activity and expenditure eligibility; and the fit with the specification as initial gateway criteria. Proposals that pass this stage will then be considered against the following points: Strategic fit; Value for money; Management & control; Deliverability and State Aid compliance. The assessment and any prioritisation will be undertaken using only the information supplied as part of the application process.
	7. Questions can be addressed to CMN by email to mark.williams@cornwallmarine.net. All questions and answers will be published for the benefit of all potential applicants on the CMN website.
	8. CMN will also complete a Financial Due Diligence exercise and ask applicants to provide:
		1. Proof of trading – financial accounts/statements
		2. Proof of Existence – Certificate of Incorporation, VAT Registration Certificate, etc.
	9. Evaluation Methodology:
		1. As a deliverer of public funds, CMN will advertise this tender in accordance with public contracting regulations.
		2. The decision to award the contract will be based on a number of criteria:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Score (0=not addressed, 5=Fully addressed) | Weighting (%) |
| Best value for money | 0-5 | 20 |
| Understanding of the brief, including clarity and credibility of the proposal. | 0-5 | 15 |
| Proposed delivery model addresses the objectives outlined above. | 0-5 | 15 |
| Quality of the approach to the work. | 0-5 | 15 |
| Capabilities and experience of delivering similar programmes | 0-5 | 15 |
| Equality & Diversity policy in place | 0-5 | 10 |
| Environmental policy in place | 0-5 | 10 |
|  | Max. 35 points | 100 |

* + 1. Each proposal will be checked for completeness and compliance with all requirements.
		2. During the evaluation of proposals, CMN reserves the right to seek clarification in writing from applicants to assist it in its consideration of the service procurement.
		3. CMN is not bound to accept the lowest price or any proposal. CMN will not reimburse any expense incurred in preparing proposals. Any contract award will be conditional on the contract being approved
1. **Timetable**: The anticipated timetable for submission of the tender is set out below.

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| Milestone | Date |
| Issue Invitation to Tender | Day 0 (31st July 2020) |
| Final date for receipt of clarifications  | Friday 7th August, 2020 |
| Final date for response to clarifications  | Tuesday 11th August, 2020 |
| **Deadline to return the proposal to CMN** | **5pm Friday 14th August, 2020** |
| Evaluation of proposal by CMN - commencement | Monday 17th August, 2020 |
| Successful and unsuccessful quoting organisation informed  | Friday 21st August, 2020 |
| SLA sent  | Tuesday 25th August, 2020 |
| Signed SLA returned | Friday 28th August, 2020 |
| Project Inception meeting and start date | To be mutually agreed. |

1. **Submission Requirements:**
2. Please submit the proposal document/s by email or post or in person by 5pm on Friday 14th August, 2020
3. If submitting electronically, please send by email to mark.williams@cornwallmarine.net with the following wording in the subject box: “ELS Manufacturing Proposal - Strictly Confidential.”
4. Applicants are advised to request an acknowledgement of receipt when submitting by email.
5. If submitting by post or in person, the quotation document must be enclosed in a sealed envelope, marked as follows:
“ELS Manufacturing Proposal - Strictly Confidential.” Mark Williams, Senior Project Officer, Cornwall Marine Network, Maritime Business Centre, Units 7a & 7b Falmouth Business Park, Bickland Water Road, Falmouth, TR11 4SZ
	1. The proposal should be clearly marked for Cornwall Marine Network, issued on a letterhead that includes your company name, company number and VAT number.
	2. In you are delivering the proposal by hand or courier it should be delivered to Reception at Cornwall Marine Network during normal working hours (9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday and an official receipt obtained.
	3. Please ensure you cover all the elements of the specification objectives and your costings should be inclusive of VAT (where this element applies)
6. **General Information**: All proposals **must** consider **all** of the following points as pre-requisite if the proposal is to be considered;
	1. **Equality and Diversity** - CMN is committed to providing services in a way that promotes equality of opportunity. It is expected that the successful applicant will be equally committed to equality and diversity in its provision and will ensure compliance with all anti-discrimination legislation. You will be required to provide a copy of your signed Equality and Diversity Policies/Practices if successful in securing this contract.
	2. **Environmental Policy** - CMN is committed to sustainable development and the promotion of good environmental management. The successful applicant will be committed to a process of improvement with regard to environmental issues. You will be required to provide a copy of your signed Environmental Policies/Practices if successful in securing this contract.
	3. **Indemnity and Insurance** - The successful applicant must effect and maintain with reputable insurers such policy or policies of insurance as may be necessary to cover the provider’s obligations and liabilities under this contract, including but not limited to:
		1. Professional indemnity insurance with a limit of liability of not less than £1 million.
		2. Public liability insurance with a limit of liability of not less than £5 million.
		3. Employers liability insurance with a limit of liability of not less than £5 million.
		4. All insurances shall cover for any one occurrence or series of occurrences arising out of any one event during the performance of this contract.
	4. **Exclusions** - CMN shall exclude the applicant from participation in this procurement procedure where they have established or are otherwise aware that the organisation, to include administrative, management or supervisory staff that have powers of representation, decision or control of the applicant’s company, has been the subject of a conviction by final judgment of one of the following reasons:
		1. Participation in a criminal organisation
		2. Corruption
		3. Fraud
		4. Terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities
		5. Money laundering or terrorist financing
		6. Child labour and other forms of trafficking in human beings
	5. **Sub-contracting** - Applicants should note that a consortia can submit a quote but the sub-contracting of aspects of this commission after appointment will not be allowed.
	6. **Content ownership** - By submitting a proposal, the provider acknowledges that the copyright to all material produced during the project will be the property of CMN.
	7. **Document Retention** - All documentation (electronic and hard copy) produced as part of this contract will need to be returned to CMN at the end of the contract so that we can retain them for future reference/audit. The provider will not be expected to store these documents for future reference.
	8. **Disclaimer**
		1. The issue of this documentation does not commit CMN to award any contract pursuant to the quoting process or enter into a contractual relationship with any provider of the service. Nothing in the documentation or in any other communications made between CMN or its agents and any other party, or any part thereof, shall be taken as constituting a contract, agreement or representation between CMN and any other party (save for a formal award of contract made in writing by or on behalf of CMN).
		2. Providers must obtain for themselves, at their own responsibility and expense, all information necessary for the preparation of their quote responses. Information supplied to the providers by CMN or any information contained in CMN’s publications is supplied only for general guidance in the preparation of the quote response. Providers must satisfy themselves by their own investigations as to the accuracy of any such information and no responsibility is accepted by CMN for any loss or damage of whatever kind and howsoever caused arising from the use by providers of such information.
		3. No representation by way of explanation or otherwise to persons or corporations quoting or desirous of quoting as to the meaning of the Invitation to Quote, contract or other quote documents or as to any other matter or thing to be done under the proposed contract shall bind CMN unless such representation is in writing and duly signed by the CEO of CMN. All such correspondence shall be returned with the quotation documents and shall form part of the contract.
		4. **Payment terms** - Based on quarterly invoices, paid in arrears, with supporting claim evidence subject to approval prior to payment.
		5. CMN reserves the right to vary or change all or any part of the basis of the procedures for the procurement process at any time or not to proceed with the proposed procurement at all.