

**Invitation to Tender**

**‘SME Business Evolution Index’**

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

GFL/17/102/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 ‘SME Business Evolution Index’. This feature will aid business owners in better understanding how optimised their company processes, policies and practices are for the Digital Age and anonymously rank them against their peers in the same sector locally, regionally and nationally, guide them to identify the areas which could benefit from independent and impartial support and to assist them in finding business development opportunities.

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 – SME Business Evolution Index

2.4 It is widely recognised that we are in a period of time termed the ‘Digital Revolution’, which has seen the rapid emergence of increased connectivity, disruptive business models and increased consumer power. Consequently the scope of threats and opportunities to businesses is a great deal broader, more complex and daunting to business owners from micro business to international conglomerates. We believe that as part of the business support offering to Gloucestershire SMEs, we should provide a free-to-use tool that allows business owners to understand the options available to them for advancing their operational maturity in the digital age and helps them to plot a course of action to reach a level of maturity that will support and empower them to meet their strategic growth objectives.

2.5 We would like to provide the capability to Growth Hub users to help them gain a better understanding of their organisational maturity in relation to the digital age and provide them with a comparison against which they can plan their investments and improve their competitiveness. Via a series of interventions such as training courses, workshops and online learning modules this tool will help the Growth Hub to raise the competitiveness and capability of our business community.

Utilisation

2.6 We have undertaken some market research and have been unable to find any existing solution that allows an organisation to assess all components of their business for their level of maturity. Therefore, whilst we are open to receiving submissions from providers with existing tools in place, we envisage that this will be a bespoke build of a new tool, for which the IP will be retained by GFirst LEP, although flexibility on this could be discussed depending on the proposals received.

2.7 The intended use of this tool is primarily on the Growth Hub website (www.thegrowthhub.biz) and as such it should be possible to be integrated seamlessly with the existing customer experience of the Growth Hub website. However, as we expect such a tool to have wider appeal than just within Gloucestershire, we require the flexibility to customise the solution for use on other services, although the users of the tool will be business owners or support providers assisting business owners to grow their business.

2.8 Underlying this front-end experience will be a database of anonymised submissions that will enable another set of users interested in the economic context of the data, which can be accessed via a separate dashboard that displays the various levels of current and targeted maturity levels for all organisations by sector, size and region.

Specification

2.9 Our ambition is to create a Beta capability delivered no later than the end of March 2018 that can be tested in market with live data ready for a broader launch later on in 2018. We expect the delivery of the project to follow an Agile and iterative process of continuous feedback and testing so that the Beta build meets the needs of the local business community.

(a) Technical

The initial MVP phase of the project will be to deliver the white label website branded for use on the Growth Hub website (www.thegrowthhub.biz), Web API and database, as well as a cursory admin website. An element of design for the site as well as domain and brand name for wider use will also be essential.

The build should consider the following software elements:

**White Label Website** – This will be a consumer facing, responsive website, displaying the on-boarding form, matrix, registration and 3rd party resources.

**Mobile Application** –This will be built using a cross-platform, allowing the code to be written once and reused across iOS, Android and Windows Phone, and provides the same functionality as the white-label website.

**Admin Website** – The admin website provides global administrative capabilities across the white label and mobile applications, such as brand customisation, data viewing, resource provisioning and logging.

**Web API** – The purpose of the web API is to provide a single point of entry for creating, reading and maintaining the data. This allows functionality to be shared across multiple applications and platforms

**Database** – This is where we’ll store the results for all clients.

**3rd Party Integrations** – This represents both inbound and outbound integrations with 3rd party services. Outbound services should include integration with the Growth Hub CRM (Salpo CRM) and a Data Analysis service. Inbound services should include content feeds that will act as informative content to assist users of the tool in taking the next steps in their maturity journey.

(b) Eco-system building

There is a need to get a critical mass of users in place in order to create a credible benchmarking for each business. The provider will be expected to have a credible plan for adoption and relationships with organisations both commercial and non-commercial that can build a broad user base.

(c) Adoption of the service

Marketing, social media and other promotional activities will be needed to ensure full engagement and of the service, there will need to be consideration given to the messaging and positioning of the service to end users and intermediaries.

(d) Providing insight reports

The presentation of the data sets into easy to understand and compelling insight reports providing customizable and bespoke criteria for users.

(e) User testing

There should be reasonable user testing with feedback informing the service design and customer journey.

(f) Ongoing development

The expectation is that this service will continue to develop based on customer engagement and interaction with users. The selected provider will be expected to meet regularly with GFirst LEP representatives to share usage data and feedback and be prepared to develop the service in response to customer feedback.

**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.