

North East Fund

Supported by the European Regional Development Fund

Invitation to Tender and Tender Specification For Marketing, Digital Media & PR Services for The North East Fund

Tender Reference: TNEFL/2021/02

20th December 2021

**Suite D
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Forth Banks
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 3PA**



1. INTRODUCTION

The Contracting Authority for this Tender is **The North East Fund Limited (TNEFL)**, a company limited by guarantee with its registered office at Suite D, Fifth Floor, West One, Forth Banks, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4PA: <https://www.northeastfund.org/>.

TNEFL provides commercial finance and business support services to companies based in the North East of England – with a view to helping businesses to grow and to create new jobs. It wants to engage a media agency to provide digital media, marketing and PR services – to help promote its services to companies, and also to raise awareness of TNEFL’s activities among other key stakeholder groups.

The North East Fund has been established with funding from: the England European Regional Development Fund (**ERDF**) as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020 (for which the UK Government Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities is the Managing Authority); the European Investment Bank and from returns on previous North East based, publicly-supported investment funds.

TNEFL is owned by the seven North East Local Authorities: Durham County Council; Gateshead Council; Newcastle City Council; The Council of the Borough of North Tyneside; Northumberland County Council; South Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council. (These are also the Local Authority members of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership, which supported the establishment of TNEFL.) TNEFL can only invest in companies which are based in (or relocating to) these geographic areas – and so promotional activity is accordingly targeted at these areas.

TNEFL’s specific role is as the “holding fund manager” for a venture capital and loan programme which invests in Small and Medium sized Enterprises (**SMEs**) based in the North East. It is the principal investor and a limited partner in five funds which are set up as limited partnerships and which are managed by four independent, FCA authorised fund management companies: Maven Capital Partners; Mercia Asset Management; NEL Fund Managers and Northstar Ventures.

These fund managers have the primary responsibility for promoting and marketing the funds for which they are responsible (detailed in the following section). TNEFL helps to promote awareness of the overall suite of funds and directs companies to the fund(s) which are most appropriate for their requirements. TNEFL also works with each of the Local Authorities to promote awareness of the funds in each LA area, to maximise the number of applications for investment, or for business support services, from each area.

The North East Fund began operating in March 2018 and to date its funds have invested c.£70m in c.330 companies and are expected to invest a further £50m in c.270 more companies in the period



to December 2023 – with the potential to continue investing until 2025. Further information regarding the background and objectives of TNEFL is set out in section 2, below.

TNEFL is seeking to engage an agency for a period of two years (extendable by mutual agreement for up to a further two years) to provide digital media, marketing and PR services, which will include:

- Refreshing the North East Fund's WordPress based [website](#) and providing assistance to TNEFL's team to enable it to be updated regularly with new content.
- Reviewing and potentially refreshing the appearance of TNEFL's social media accounts, and – in conjunction with TNEFL's team – managing the accounts.
- Production of short video content for use on TNEFL's website and social media accounts.
- Production of newsletters and assistance with email marketing.
- Writing copy for newsletters and press releases, and managing media relations – including liaison with the fund managers' PR representatives.
- Identifying PR opportunities and helping TNEFL to frame its communication strategy and key messages.

Details are set out below of what to include in your tender and how to ask any questions you may have regarding the process. **The closing date for tender submissions is 12 noon on Monday 24th January 2022.**

The contents of this Invitation to Tender are as follows:

Page	Section	Content
2	1	Introduction
4	2	Background and Objectives of the North East Fund
7	3	Specification of Services Required
16	4	Tender Response [<i>this specifies the information to be submitted by bidders</i>]
17	5	Basis of Tender Evaluation and Contract Award Criteria [<i>this specifies how tenders will be scored</i>]
19	6	Contractual Arrangements
20	7	Submission of Questions, Expressions of Interest & Tenders
20	8	Confidentiality and Transparency
21	9	Further Conditions Applicable to Tender Process
22	Appendix 1	Selection Pre-Conditions
23	Appendix 2	TNEFL, Sub-Fund and Funder Logos

2. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE NORTH EAST FUND

The North East Fund Limited (**TNEFL**) is an independent, publicly-funded organisation which was established in March 2018 to act as the holding fund manager of a £120m venture capital and loan fund programme designed to improve the supply of finance to SMEs based in the North East of England.

TNEFL has overall responsibility for the delivery of the programme and for ensuring that it meets its objectives. TNEFL was responsible for appointing the managers of the five funds and oversees their delivery, monitoring the fund managers' performance against their targets and their compliance with the contractual and regulatory framework. TNEFL secured commitments to provide £120m of investment capital from the programme's funders, which is channelled via the five investment funds (to which the fund managers also contribute some of their own capital) to SMEs – as loans, equity or quasi-equity investments on commercial terms, often alongside private investors who typically invest on the same terms as TNEFL's funds.

TNEFL therefore does not have a direct role in making investments in SMEs, which is done by the fund managers detailed below. TNEFL provides the investment capital to the funds; the fund managers are responsible for sourcing, negotiating and completing the investments and for monitoring them and assisting their investee companies to grow and to return the capital.

TNEFL promotes the programme as a whole, to help maximise awareness across the seven Local Authority areas of the availability of this source of funding to the region's SMEs. It does so in various ways, including via social media and press releases and by staff participation in forums and events convened by stakeholders such as the Local Enterprise Partnership and Chamber of Commerce. TNEFL employs two External Engagement Officers who play a key role in promoting the company's offering direct to SMEs – via advertised 'drop-in' sessions and through participation in SME networking events. The External Engagement Officers also liaise closely with representatives of the Local Authorities, fund managers and other business support organisations and organise events in conjunction with them – with a view to stimulating applications from companies from specific geographic areas or business sectors.

It is important to note that the North East Fund and its fund managers do not offer any grants to businesses. All finance provided by the funds is "repayable" – either as a normal commercial loan (e.g. at 10% APR typically over 3 to 5 year terms) or by the purchase of shares in the company as an equity investment, which the fund managers will seek to sell, typically within 3 to 7 years after making the investment. That can be by the entire company being sold to a purchaser or by the company or its owners buying-back the shares from the fund. Funding is provided on "repayable" terms so that it generates a return on the public investment, which will be re-used for further SME finance initiatives in the North East.



TNEFL was established, and the funding it makes available was put in place, because many SMEs cannot source sufficient funding from mainstream lenders or investors to finance their growth plans. TNEFL therefore addresses this funding gap, helping companies to fund their growth plans. In addition to the finance provided, TNEFL's staff (in particular, our External Engagement Officers) give guidance to SMEs on what funding is available and is likely to be most appropriate for their needs. The fund managers also offer, free of charge, advice to SMEs on various aspects of business – in particular regarding “investment readiness” related matters such as preparation of business plans; cash-flow management and good accounting practices etc.

The overall “offering” from TNEFL and its fund managers therefore includes: guidance on funding and support that is available from TNEFL and elsewhere (including Local Authority grants); advice on how to access it and more general business-growth related advice; and the provision of loans or equity investment from £10,000 to £1m+. At a time when the process of applying for finance from many sources is increasingly automated and remote, TNEFL and its fund managers offer a personalised approach – with individuals being contactable throughout all stages of the process, and with the fund managers maintaining direct contact with SMEs following investment. The fund managers seek to work with the SMEs to provide introductions, guidance and support which help to grow their business with new industry contacts, potential new customers or additional investors.

The five funds and the fund managers are:

Fund Name	Fund Manager	Principal Type of Investment
Innovation Fund	Northstar Ventures	Equity and convertible loan notes.
Venture Fund	Mercia Asset Management	Equity.
Growth Capital Fund	NEL Fund Managers	Unsecured loans / quasi-equity.
Development Capital Fund	Maven Capital Partners	Mezzanine debt / quasi-equity and equity.
Small Loan Fund	NEL Fund Managers	Unsecured loans.

In brief, the principal characteristics of the five funds are as follows:

Innovation Fund: provides proof-of-concept, seed and venture capital funding, targeting early-stage businesses with high growth potential, including start-ups and university spin-outs. Maximum investment per funding round typically £500k. Links to: [fund site](#) and [portfolio](#).

Venture Fund: provides venture capital funding, targeting early-stage and more established businesses with high growth potential and investing principally in equity. Maximum investment per funding round is £1m. Links to: [fund site](#) and [portfolio](#).

Growth Capital Fund: provides unsecured loans / mezzanine finance typically between £100k and £500k to established, trading businesses. Link to: [fund site](#).



Development Capital Fund: provides equity finance and secured and unsecured quasi-equity/mezzanine finance, typically between £400k-£1m. Seeks companies with high growth potential; mainly established, mature businesses and some earlier-stage propositions. Links to: [fund site](#) and [portfolio](#).

Small Loan Fund: provides unsecured loans on standardised terms from £10k to £100k to trading businesses of all stages and sectors. Link to: [fund site](#).

As illustrated in the following table, TNEFL's funds can invest in businesses in most sectors and also cover businesses at all stages of maturity, from start-ups to long-established firms.

Type	Typical Size	Typical companies
Small Loans	£10k - £100k	All eligible, including gyms, hospitality, services and manufacturing
Debt / Mezzanine Finance	£100k - £750k	All eligible, typically manufacturing and engineering
Equity	£100k - £2m	All eligible, typically high tech, digital and IT, medical

The individuals involved in these companies obviously encompass a wide range of ages, interests and backgrounds – and TNEFL's promotional activity seeks to maximise awareness of its offering across all of them.

As noted above, it is principally the responsibility for the fund managers to source investees for their funds – and each of Northstar, Mercia, Maven and NEL pursue the marketing strategies which they believe are most appropriate to elicit applications for investment from suitable companies. The fund managers are accountable for the financial performance of the investments that they make, so it is appropriate that they are able to pursue independent marketing strategies which they consider will best serve their purposes. TNEFL's activity is additional and complementary to this and also specifically aims to ensure that companies from all seven Local Authority areas served by the funds are aware of what TNEFL offers. The region's corporate finance community is centred around Newcastle and because of this, and the size of its business base, it tends to receive a significant proportion of investment. TNEFL's promotional activities therefore has a specific role in raising and maintaining awareness of the funds in the other Local Authority areas.

TNEFL is a successor to the JEREMIE fund which was delivered by North East Finance and invested £160m in 950 companies in the North East and Teesside between 2010 and 2016,



creating or safeguarding over 7,000 jobs and leveraging £300m of additional private investment alongside its funding. Financial returns from that fund, and previous publicly-backed venture capital and loan programmes, form part of TNEFL's funding. Generating self-sustaining, 'evergreen' SME finance programmes for the region was and remains a key objective of TNEFL and its predecessor programmes. Using case studies of investees from the current and previous programmes will be part of the remit for the appointed agency, as TNEFL believes that this will help to demonstrate the benefit of regionally-focused programmes to key stakeholders.

The appointed agency will also be required to help TNEFL to maximise awareness and understanding of the potential benefits of the finance and business support it offers among owners and managers of North East SMEs, to help facilitate the successful deployment of a further £50m of investment in over 200 more companies by the end of 2023.

3. SPECIFICATION OF SERVICES REQUIRED

TNEFL wants to engage a media agency to provide marketing, digital media and PR services for an initial period of two years, extendable by mutual agreement by up to a further two years.

As there will be a requirement for regular input to social media management, copywriting and PR services, TNEFL intends to engage the agency on a fixed monthly-fee basis for a specified level of services. This will ensure that the appointed agency can liaise regularly with our fund managers' PR representatives and allow it to maintain awareness of TNEFL's activities and to proactively help shape its communications strategy.

Any additional services requested by TNEFL which are not within the scope of the services covered by the monthly fee will be priced in accordance with the agency's proposals in its tender, and the cost agreed with TNEFL prior to the work being undertaken. The monthly fee to be paid to the agency will represent the majority of TNEFL's marketing spend and bidders should assume that additional payments by TNEFL, for services from the agency and/or outlays for paid advertising, social media promotion etc. will be in the region of £1-3k per year, or less. This does not include the one-off cost of updating/refreshing TNEFL's website, an initial piece of work for which bidders are required to quote separately as part of their tender proposal.

The Recurring Services which TNEFL will require and for which it will pay the monthly fee are:

1. Helping to manage TNEFL's social media accounts – including posting engaging content (either agreed in advance with TNEFL or within parameters – regarding the type / tone of content – agreed by TNEFL) and producing graphics to accompany posts / frame account sites;
2. Drafting press releases for TNEFL to publicise its offering and/or specific events or milestones; placing these with appropriate publications/websites and promoting them via TNEFL's social media and website;



3. Producing newsletters – designing and producing copy for them, and providing advice and assistance to TNEFL regarding how best to circulate / publicise the newsletters;
4. Liaising with and reviewing press releases provided by the PR representatives of TNEFL's fund managers, to: (1) monitor compliance with TNEFL's publicity requirements; (2) where requested, suggest additional copy / quotes; (3) help TNEFL monitor overall publicity of the programme's activities and (4) inform the appointed agency's knowledge of investment activity, to take into account for potential inclusion in TNEFL's promotional activity;
5. Regular liaison with TNEFL to help identify suitable PR opportunities and to frame its communications strategy and key messages – and to undertake initial scoping, planning and scripting work required prior to any short video content production (see below);
6. Assisting TNEFL's team to update its website with new content, derived from the outputs generated from the above activities;
7. Providing regular reports on coverage received by press releases issued on behalf of TNEFL (including details of publications/websites which cover them and their readership / circulation) and on levels of online engagement with social media accounts / impressions / website visitors etc.
8. Photography – taking photographs to accompany press releases or for use in newsletters / social media posts / updates to the TNEFL website.

Please note: assumptions regarding the quantity / frequency / size of the above services (as applicable) which are to be included within the monthly fee are set out below – together with additional information on TNEFL's requirements for them, and what you should address in your tender proposal document regarding each of the required service areas.

The additional services which TNEFL requires, and for which it is not anticipated that payment will be included within the monthly fee, are:

1. Refreshing the North East Fund's WordPress based [website](#);
2. Producing short-form video or animated content, to promote TNEFL's offering and/or specific events or milestones on its website and/or social media accounts.

The scope and assumptions for these services, and the Recurring Services listed above, are summarised below. Please outline how you will deliver each of the following service requirements within Section 3 of your tender response document. Comments are included in the below boxes on some specific aspects relating to the service, which your tender response must also address. Please note that your tender response should not be limited to addressing these; please include in your response an overview of how you will approach delivery of each of the service requirements to best suit TNEFL's requirements – and also include comments on the specific points mentioned within the below boxes in the "To Address in Your Tender Proposal Document" section.

Activity	Website Refresh
Timescale / Frequency	<p>Please quote for a one-off piece of work, to refresh and update the appearance and content of TNEFL's website – with the work to be undertaken as soon as possible, during February / March 2022.</p> <p>TNEFL would like member(s) of its team to continue to be able to update areas of content independently post-refresh and so a training session on that, and potentially some limited website assistance going forward, will also be required – but these ongoing elements are to be covered by the monthly fee.</p>
Scope / Assumptions	<p>TNEFL's website has, and will continue to require, very limited functionality. Its principal purpose is to provide information on what TNEFL and its sub-funds offer and to help the owners/managers of SMEs to decide whether and what type of finance their company would benefit from – and to direct them to the most appropriate of TNEFL's fund manager to assist them.</p> <p>This will continue to be the website's principal function. TNEFL intends to refresh the written content and to add short-form video content to give visitors to the website visitors an additional, and potentially better, format to convey information which will help them to decide whether to pursue an enquiry/application for investment. Investment case studies, which detail why previous investees raised finance and what it helped their companies to achieve, will continue to be an important feature and TNEFL intends the refresh exercise to help give these additional prominence and to enable them to be updated more frequently, by TNEFL staff in conjunction with fund managers' PR and some assistance from the TNEFL's appointed media agency.</p> <p>TNEFL also wants to add some content which helps promote the overall benefit of its programme, and its predecessors, to the SME finance, start-up and investment ecosystem in the North East. This involves publicising statistics including jobs created by investee companies, new enterprises founded and products developed and additional finance leveraged – and is also expected to be a focus of one of the short-form videos which TNEFL wants the appointed agency to produce.</p> <p>TNEFL is not requesting – for the website refresh or other services under this tender – any redesign of logos, as it will continue to utilise the logos which are set out in Appendix 2 of this Invitation to Tender. It is also not looking to increase the functionality of the website – other than by the addition of some video content. It is seeking a refresh of the overall look and feel of the website and to update the written content and case studies. TNEFL will provide the updated written content (for review and revision by the appointed agency) and</p>

	case study material will be provided largely by our fund managers. TNEFL therefore hopes that the refresh will be a relatively straight-forward and quick exercise and will discuss and agree the more detailed remit with the appointed agency.
To Address in Your Tender Proposal Document	<p>Your cost for undertaking the website refresh is to be quoted as your response to section 4.2 (Pricing Proposals) of your Tender Proposal Document (see below).</p> <p>Please also: confirm that you have capacity to undertake the website refresh during February/March 2022 – and provide an indication of how quickly the work can be done (subject to timely input from TNEFL). Your response can refer back to examples of past website work (which are to be set out in Section 1 of your proposal) and give an overview of how the work will be done / suggested aspects or adjustments for inclusion within the refresh.</p>

Activity	Production of Short-Form Video / Animated Content
Timescale / Frequency	<p>TNEFL would like to include at least one piece of video content within its updated website, either on its launch or shortly after: by March/April at latest. This is likely to be an introductory summary / overview of TNEFL and what it has done and its offering going forward. A separate short video outlining key characteristics of different types of finance is also expected to be sought on a similar timescale. Subsequent video content is likely to centre around case studies and to feature entrepreneurs/SME owner/managers whose companies have received investment talking about their motivation for seeking it and the impacts it has had.</p> <p>TNEFL expects to commission two c.2 minute videos to be produced by March / April 2022 and estimates that a further four to six short videos – to feature on social media and TNEFL's website – will be required over the remainder of the initial two-year contract.</p>
Scope / Assumptions	<p>TNEFL's requirements are not for very high production value or complex video content, but for relatively straight forward pieces which convey information in an engaging and sufficiently professional style. Filming required will be limited in each video to a small number of people (expected typically to be 1 or 2), with the anticipated content/loose script planned in advance and the individuals who are to feature prepared and scheduled in advance. It is therefore assumed that the direct video content production work will require c. 2 days. Prices quoted in response to section 4.3 will therefore be assumed to be your video production "day rate" x2 and, should actual work on any individual video content take a longer or shorter time, that it will be billed to TNEFL accordingly.</p>

To Address in Your Tender Proposal Document	<p>Please provide your cost for production of c.2 minute video content (in line with the assumptions given above) in your response at section 4.3 of your tender proposal document.</p> <p>As social media posts can achieve better engagement if they are not “static”, TNEFL expects that some content which is not filmed but is animated will be produced by the appointed agency. Please indicate in your tender if you will produce such content within the cost of the monthly fee – which may include a limit / budget for the number of animated content included. If you propose charging for all such animated content or for animated content requested by TNEFL over and above the monthly/annual limit or budget, please indicate what that cost will be, as a fraction of the 2 minute video content cost quoted in response to section 4.3.</p>
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Activity	Recurring Service 1 – Management of Social Media Accounts
Timescale / Frequency	Ongoing, throughout period of the contract.
Scope / Assumptions	<p>At present, TNEFL operates only two social media accounts: Twitter and LinkedIn.</p> <p>Subject to adjustments in light of the proposals in the tender of the successful bidder and subsequent discussion, TNEFL envisages continuing to operate only a limited number of social media accounts and that they will be not be operated exclusively by the appointed agency but with posts/re-posts also being done by one or two members of TNEFL staff. The appointed agency will be responsible primarily for putting out planned content, which will include: (1) publicising the availability for virtual or in-person meetings with TNEFL’s External Engagement Officers, who provide guidance on available funding and support options to SME representatives; (2) publicising press releases / newsletters produced by the agency for TNEFL; (3) posting short video content produced by the agency for TNEFL; and (4) such other content proposed by the agency with a view to engaging TNEFL’s target audiences. Frequency of social media activity for which the agency will be responsible will therefore be driven by these events/initiatives. More ad hoc posts / re-posts of TNEFL’s fund managers’ social media output is likely (subject to agreement with the agency) to be undertaken by TNEFL staff.</p>
To Address in Your Tender Proposal	TNEFL’s LinkedIn account was established as a personal account. This has some benefits but also limits some of the activity/engagement statistics which the platform provides. TNEFL requests comments on this from bidders,

Document	<p>including whether it considers it feasible to transfer the account to a business one without material loss of Connections, and any experience of assisting such transition.</p> <p>TNEFL would like to consider refreshing the appearance of the profile backdrops and avatars of its social media accounts, consistent with the refresh of the appearance of its website. Please confirm that the cost for that work will be included within the monthly fee. If you propose an additional cost for the work, please add it to the cost for the website refresh proposed at section 4.3.</p> <p>Please also comment on whether you would recommend that TNEFL set up and operate any further social media accounts, to increase / diversify the reach of its communications.</p>
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Activity	Recurring Service 2 – Press Releases
Timescale / Frequency	We anticipate requiring c.4 TNEFL “milestone / commentary” press releases each year, roughly one each quarter for general release. In addition, it may be appropriate / necessary for a number of shorter form and more factual press releases be drafted to promote events held by TNEFL / its External Engagement Officer (sometimes in conjunction with Local Authority or other partners) – to target specific geographies or sectors.
Scope / Assumptions	As indicated above. Press releases to be drafted as appropriate by the agency, with topics / subject areas being proposed / discussed at regular catch-up calls / meetings with TNEFL.
To Address in Your Tender Proposal Document	Your response can refer back to examples of past work (which are to be set out in Section 1 of your proposal) and give an overview of the approach / angles you would expect to take when promoting TNEFL via press releases.

Activity	Recurring Service 3 – Newsletters
Timescale / Frequency	<p>TNEFL believes that newsletters which provide an overview of its offering, including case studies, are useful tools to help promote the company both to SMEs and to key stakeholders including Local Authorities. We anticipate requiring one or two 6 to 8 page “general release” newsletters to be prepared each year. The first of these is unlikely to be required until mid-2022.</p> <p>In addition, we may require newsletters targeted at the 7 different North East Local Authorities to be drafted during the first three months of the contract, potentially including input / content from the Local Authorities.</p>
Scope /	Please include within your monthly fee, a budget for the production of 6

Assumptions	newsletters during the first two years of the contract. Please assume that these will be between 6 to 8 pages long, with a majority of the content being derived from existing press releases/photographs (from fund managers' case studies) and potentially by partners including Local Authorities – with the layout / graphic design and some copywriting required of the agency, with input from TNEFL.
To Address in Your Tender Proposal Document	<p>Based on the assumptions above, please provide a quote in response to section 4.4 for production of each additional newsletter requested, over and above the 6 included in the monthly fee.</p> <p>TNEFL has a relatively limited contacts database. A significant proportion of our target audience are entrepreneurs and SME owner/managers who have previously not contacted or been aware of TNEFL, and so our assumption is that PDF format newsletters will continue to be appropriate as they can be circulated easily by partners to their client/contact databases – which, due to data protection regulations, partners do not afford TNEFL direct access to. That means that integrated email format newsletters are unlikely to be useful for TNEFL. TNEFL nonetheless welcomes suggestions in tender proposals regarding such newsletters and also regarding agency's ability to assist with mailshots using MailChimp, Revue or other recommended platforms.</p>

Activity	Recurring Services 4 & 5 – General PR Support / Liaison Services
Timescale / Frequency	<p>Ongoing throughout term of contract.</p> <p>The volume of draft press releases received from TNEFL's fund managers' PR fluctuates but is typically in the region of 10 per quarter.</p>
Scope / Assumptions	The requirements as outlined at numbers 4 and 5 on pages 7/8, above, are self-explanatory.
To Address in Your Tender Proposal Document	<p>Please include a summary of how you would envisage managing the relationship with TNEFL, to ensure an appropriate level of communication to keep you informed of TNEFL's activities, to help identify PR opportunities. Please include identification of: the individual(s) from your firm who will have lead/overall responsibility for managing the relationship with TNEFL; who will lead on day-to-day liaison and the individuals who will generally undertake the work required to provide the services sought by this invitation to tender.</p> <p>TNEFL has a small and approachable executive team. Its Operations Director will manage the relationship with the appointed agency and be first / regular day-to-day point of contact. TNEFL's Chief Executive will provide input and liaise with the agency as appropriate/required. TNEFL's two External Engagement Officers perform a key role in liaising on a day-to-day basis with SME owner/representatives to ascertain their requirements and in doing so pick up a lot of relevant market information. Publicising their outreach activities /</p>

	<p>'drop-in' sessions forms a material part of the communications requirements and so the appointed agency will be expected to liaise effectively with them to ascertain events for which promotion via social media etc. is required.</p> <p>TNEFL is obliged to ensure that press releases which it and its fund managers issue comply with ERDF publicity guidelines. These, and additional standard requirements/boilerplate, will be shared with the successful agency. Please comment on previous experience of ensuring publicity materials comply with such requirements.</p> <p>Regarding the service requirement detailed at point 4(3) on page 7, above ("help TNEFL monitor overall publicity of the programme's activities"), please advise whether you will include within the monthly fee a 'news-cuttings' service, collating press coverage of TNEFL and its sub-funds' activities. It is not a requirement of the contract, as it is relatively easy now to generate from online alerts / searches, but could potentially add value if included within the agency's reports (see below).</p>
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Activity	Recurring Service 6 – Ongoing Assistance with TNEFL Website
Timescale / Frequency	Ongoing throughout the term of the contract.
Scope / Assumptions	As outlined in the section above regarding the website refresh exercise, TNEFL would like to have available a point of contact within the agency who will be able to provide guidance/assistance to update the website on an ad hoc basis. It would also be useful if the appointed agency can liaise with fund managers' PR to help ensure regular new case study content is uploaded to TNEFL's website, e.g. at least two or three new case studies per quarter.
To Address in Your Tender Proposal Document	Please confirm that you will (directly or via a delivery partner) provide the services summarised above. You may also want to provide examples where you have provided a similar service to clients.

Activity	Recurring Service 7 – Reporting on Activity / Impacts to TNEFL
Timescale / Frequency	To be agreed with the appointed agency – but expected to be at least a quarterly summary report, potentially supplemented by bespoke reports on levels of coverage achieved by specific press releases drafted by the agency for TNEFL.
Scope / Assumptions	As TNEFL's on and offline activity is principally intended to sign-post potential 'clients' to the most appropriate of our fund managers to provide finance or business support, it does not directly make or monitor 'sales' or 'conversions'.

	Our promotional activity seeks to raise and maintain awareness of the programme and to maximise awareness and engagement from across all Local Authority areas and the diverse communities which TNEFL's funds serve. It therefore requires relatively high level reports on the levels on e.g.: coverage received by press releases issued on behalf of TNEFL (including details of publications/websites which cover them and their readership / circulation) and on levels of online engagement with social media accounts / impressions / website visitors.
To Address in Your Tender Proposal Document	Please include an outline of the impact/activity/coverage data you would propose providing to TNEFL, including the format this will take and the frequency with which you will provide it.

Activity	Recurring Service 8 – Photography
Timescale / Frequency	TNEFL would like to include some new photographs on its refreshed website, which is likely to include at least the executive team and potentially also non-executive directors and advisory panel members. It would also like the appointed agency to include within the monthly fee a budget to enable new photographs to be taken, as appropriate, to accompany some press releases and/or social media posts – to help drive engagement / encourage coverage by media outlets. As such, there may be an initial requirement for one or two photography sessions in February / March and then an infrequent, ad hoc requirement for some further sessions.
Scope / Assumptions	As above. Please include within your monthly fee budget an allowance for up to 10 hours of photography time per year, i.e. c. 5 photography sessions of 2 hours each.
To Address in Your Tender Proposal Document	<p>In case photography sessions take longer or additional sessions above 10 hours per year are required, please include a quote in your response at section 4.5 for a 2 hour photography session.</p> <p>Please provide examples of your firms use of photography to accompany press releases and / or for promotional purposes on social media, websites etc.</p>

4. TENDER RESPONSE

If your firm is interested in providing the services required by TNEFL, please submit a **tender proposal document** which provides your firm's proposals in relation to and in accordance with the following requirements. Your **tender proposal document** must be **a maximum of 30 pages long** and must set out how your firm will deliver the requirements specified at Section 3, above, and must detail the capabilities, qualifications and prior experience which makes it able to do so. **Your tender proposal document must be structured as follows:**

TENDER RESPONSE REQUIREMENTS	
Tender Response Section	Max score
1) Summary of Your Firm's Abilities and Experience , which must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- An explanation of your firm's capabilities relevant to delivering the services specified in Section 3, above;- Examples of work your firm has undertaken delivering the types of services specified in Section 3, above.	15
2) Demonstration of Your Understanding of TNEFL's Business and High Level Summary of Your Approach to Promoting It Taking into account the background and objectives of TNEFL set out in Section 2 and the requirements set out in Section 3, please: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Summarise your understanding of the nature of TNEFL's business and of who are the key audiences for TNEFL, and how you would approach promoting TNEFL to them.	20
3) Delivery and Project Team Please summarise how your firm will deliver the services required as specified at Section 3, above.	20
4) Price for Services With reference to the requirements / descriptions / scope of work set out at section 3, above, please specify the following (all exclusive of VAT): <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 4.1 The monthly fee you will charge for the Recurring Services.- 4.2 The price you will charge to update TNEFL's website.- 4.3 The price you will charge to produce each c.2 minute video (i.e. cost per 2 minute video).	25 7 5

- 4.4 The price you will charge to produce each 6 page newsletter (i.e. cost per 6 page newsletter).	5
- 4.5 The price you will charge for each photography “job”, assumed to take 2 hours.	3
Total	100

5. BASIS OF TENDER EVALUATION AND CONTRACT AWARD CRITERIA

5.1 Selection pre-conditions

Appendix 1 sets out 10 statements that all parties which submit a tender proposal are deemed to confirm are accurate as regards their company/firm/consortium and the basis on which it has tendered. If any of the statements set out at Appendix 1 are not accurate as regards your organisation or tender, your company/firm/consortium will be excluded from the process. Failure to disclose any fact which contradicts the statements in Appendix 1 (e.g. your company is the subject of material litigation or one of its directors has an unspent conviction for fraud) will, if discovered following the award of the contract, entitle TNEFL to terminate the contract with immediate effect.

5.2 Award Criteria

Bids which satisfy the selection pre-conditions will be assessed against the award criteria below.

The contract will be awarded to the bidder who submits the most economically advantageous tender, as determined by the application of the award criteria set out below.

Award Criteria	Max score
1. Summary of Your Firm's Abilities and Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstration of experience and capabilities relevant to the Specification of Requirements at Section 3 of this ITT; - Demonstration of compelling examples of effectively communicating your client's key messages to customers / stakeholders. 	15

2. Demonstration of Your Understanding of TNEFL's Business and High Level Summary of Your Approach to Promoting It <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstration of a good understanding of who are TNEFL's key audiences and of the nature of TNEFL's business; - Demonstration of compelling approach(es) to promoting TNEFL to its key audiences. 	20
3. Delivery and Project Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comprehensive, credible and compelling summary of how your firm will deliver each of the services required as specified at Section 3. 	20
4. Price for Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4.1 The monthly fee you will charge for the Recurring Services. 25 - 4.2 The price you will charge to update TNEFL's website. 7 - 4.3 The price you will charge to produce each c.2 minute video (i.e. cost per 2 minute video). 5 - 4.4 The price you will charge to produce each "additional" 6-8 page newsletter (i.e. cost per 6-8 page newsletter). 5 - 4.5 The price you will charge for each photography "job", assumed to take 2 hours. 3 	
Total	100
Scoring Principles in relation to criteria 1, 2 and 3: <i>In relation to Criteria 1, 2 and 3, above, tender proposals will be scored as follows:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding: meets <u>all</u> of the requirements to / provides proposals which are of... <u>a very high standard</u>: 100% of Max Score; • Very Strong: meets <u>all</u> of the requirements to / provides proposals which are of... <u>a high standard</u>: 80% of Max Score; • Good: meets <u>all</u> of the requirements to / provides proposals which are of... <u>a good standard</u>: 60% of Max Score; • Acceptable: meets <u>all or most</u> of the requirements to / provides proposals which are of... <u>an acceptable standard</u>: 50% of Max Score; • Weak: meets <u>some</u> of the requirements to / makes some proposals which are of... <u>an acceptable standard</u> but <u>most are at an unacceptable standard or are not met at all</u>: 25% of Max Score; • Unacceptable: fails to meet any of the requirements to an acceptable standard: nil. 	

The section 4 responses regarding price will be scored as follows.

For criteria 4.1, the fixed monthly fee for recurring services, the lowest priced proposal (or proposals, if two or more are identical prices) will receive the maximum score of 25 points. The other proposals will receive a score which is proportionately less, based on the lowest pricing proposal and the weighting shown in the above table – so these will be calculated as follows:

Amount of Lowest Bid ÷ Amount of Higher Bid x 25

The scores for criterion 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 will be calculated on the same arithmetical basis, i.e. with the lowest price proposal(s) receiving the full mark and higher priced proposals each receiving a proportionately lower mark, with the maximum score weighting then applied. Please include a price for each criterion even if you envisage including the cost for a certain amount of these services within the monthly fee – credit for which will be given in the scoring of the ‘delivery’ proposals, under award criteria 3.

6 CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS

6.1 Contract Price

The contract price will be the **fixed monthly fee** payable for providing the services specified at section 3, above, and in accordance with the proposals in the successful bidder’s tender. If additional services are required, TNEFL will request the appointed agency to provide a quotes for providing the additional services – to be based on the applicable rate(s) quoted in its tender proposal document.

6.2 Contract Terms

For simplicity, TNEFL will enter into a contract based on the successful bidders’ standard terms and conditions – but adjusted as necessary to reflect any reasonable requirements of TNEFL which are not covered in it or which are not acceptable to TNEFL. This Invitation to Tender and the successful bidder’s Tender Proposal Document shall form part of the contract, with the following precedence being applicable to the contract terms: (1) terms set out in this Invitation to Tender; (2) the proposals set out by the successful bidder in its tender proposal document (as further elaborate in any subsequent service level agreements); and (3) the agency’s standard terms and conditions adjusted as required by TNEFL and which will reflect the following contract requirements of TNEFL:

- 6.2.1 the term of the contract will be two years (expected to be from February 2022 to February 2024), extendable by mutual agreement by up to a further two years;



- 6.2.2 the appointed agency shall be entitled to terminate the contract on one months' notice; TNEFL shall be entitled to terminate the contract on two months' notice or with immediate effect in the event that the agency: has not fulfilled its commitments to deliver the contract in accordance with its proposals; has experienced an event of insolvency or entered administration or ceased to trade; has by its acts or omissions been in material breach of applicable law which would render it inappropriate to continue providing a service to TNEFL due to potential consequential breach by TNEFL or to damage to its reputation;
- 6.2.3 all intellectual property in the output created by the agency for TNEFL (to the extent that it was not third party intellectual property) shall be assigned to and become the property of TNEFL.

7. SUBMISSION OF QUESTIONS, EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST & TENDERS

If you intend to bid, **please register an expression of interest** by emailing alastair.smith@northeastfund.org. Responses to any questions received and/or any supplementary information issued will be emailed to all parties which register an interest. They will also be posted on the news section of TNEFL's website: <https://www.northeastfund.org/category/news/>

The closing date for tenders to be received is **12.00 noon on Monday 24th January 2022**. Your tender must be limited to a maximum of 30 pages of A4.

Please email your tender document, with the subject '**Confidential - Tender ref TNEFL/2021/2**' to alastair.smith@northeastfund.org. Any questions about this tender should also be emailed to Alastair Smith at this address and must be received no later than Monday 17th January 2022.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY AND TRANSPARENCY

To ensure a fair and transparent process, no approach of any kind should be made to anyone associated with TNEFL in connection with this tender other than your formal tender documentation and any clarification requests submitted to Alastair Smith as detailed above. Failure to comply with this may result in disqualification.

You must not disclose to anyone else any prices or other information contained in your submission before the decision on award of the contract is notified to you, and you must not make any arrangement with another party about whether or not they should bid. You must not try to obtain information about anyone else's tender before the decision on award of the contract is notified to you.



TNEFL will keep confidential and not disclose to any third party the tender proposal documents submitted by bidders, except as may be required in conjunction with audits undertaken by or on behalf of its funders and/or as may be required by any lawful authority.

9. FURTHER CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO TENDER PROCESS

Tender submissions should remain open for acceptance for 30 days from the tender submission deadline.

TNEFL reserves the right to cancel the tender process and reject all tenders at any time prior to the award of the contract. The issue of this invitation to tender in no way commits TNEFL to enter into any contract pursuant to this tender process.

TNEFL shall not accept any liability for any costs resulting from the cancellation of this tender process nor for any other costs incurred by those tendering, who do so entirely at their own expense.

Any contract awarded as a result of this process will be awarded by the application of the evaluation criteria set out in Section 4 of this Invitation to Tender. Accordingly, TNEFL will not be bound to accept the lowest-price, or any, tender.

20th December 2021



Appendix 1 – Selection Pre-Conditions

All parties which submit a tender proposal document (Prospective Supplier) are deemed to agree that each of the following statements are accurate in respect of that party, unless it indicates otherwise within its tender proposal document or any accompanying covering letter:

1. The Prospective Supplier has prepared and submitted its tender in good faith, and has not fixed or adjusted the pricing or other proposals of the tender in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other person or party;
2. The Prospective Supplier has not communicated to any person other than TNEFL the amount or approximate amount of the pricing proposed in the tender, except where the disclosure, in confidence, of the approximate amount of the pricing was necessary to obtain insurance premium quotations;
3. The Prospective Supplier has not entered into any agreement or arrangement with any person or party that they shall refrain from tendering, that they shall withdraw any tender once offered or vary the amount of any tender to be submitted;
4. The Prospective Supplier has not and shall not make any offer to pay or give any sum of money or other valuable consideration directly or indirectly to any person or party outwith its own organisation (or, if applicable, its subcontractors/joint venture or consortia partners named in the tender proposal document) for the purposes of securing any of the actions referred to in paragraphs 1 to 3, above, or to seek to influence in any way the outcome of this tender process;
5. The Prospective Supplier is not subject to any insolvency proceedings (including petitions for winding up; winding up orders from the Court; appointment of receivers or administrators);
6. The Prospective Supplier is not subject to any material litigation which could affect its ability to deliver the services sought by this Invitation to Tender or which might reasonably be expected to undermine perceptions of its integrity or appropriateness to provide the services to TNEFL;
7. Neither the Prospective Supplier nor any of its directors or senior managers has any convictions, nor been subject to sanction by any regulatory body for, any offences relating to: business and professional activities; professional misconduct; fraud; social security or taxation laws or obligations;
8. The Prospective Supplier operates its business in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the principles of anti-discrimination and equality of opportunity;
9. The Prospective Supplier has in place the human and technical resources to perform the contract to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and to ensure the protection of the rights of data subjects;
10. If, and to the extent, applicable to it, the Prospective Supplier satisfies all requirements under the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

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