

## **Growth Platform Invitation to Tender LCR High Growth Diagnostic Facility**

### **Background**

Growth Platform is Liverpool City Region's growth company, designed to support people and businesses to realise their potential and generate growth. Our role is to strengthen and simplify our regional landscape, creating a sustainable economy that reflects the needs of all our business community across Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral.

We exist to enable change and growth that makes our economy work for everyone; to provide guidance, inspiration and support for businesses, create opportunities for growth and foster resilience. [www.growthplatform.org](http://www.growthplatform.org)

The Liverpool City Region (LCR) ERDF High Growth Programme will provide a range of business support mechanisms for high growth SME businesses or SME businesses estimated to have high growth potential (potential to grow turnover or headcount >20% per year for 3 years) across the Liverpool City Region\*.

The programme will offer complementary business support mechanisms in LCR\* coordinated by Growth Platform. As a result, all the businesses supported as part of this Programme will also be introduced to the wider business support opportunities available. This will include, but is not limited to;

1. A business engagement, diagnostic and account management service
2. A programme to help businesses to critically evaluate their performance and achieve productivity improvements ([Productivity and Innovation Centre](#))
3. A small grant scheme to provide finance to support capital investment that might be holding back SME growth ([Liverpool City Region Capital Grant Fund](#))
4. An innovation fund that allows businesses to rethink their products / processes which is seen as especially important as businesses pivot as a result of Covid-19 (the High Growth Innovation Fund).

Central activity will be delivered by Growth Platform (as the delivery company of the Combined Authority) alongside partners – Edge Hill University and St. Helens Chamber.

The project will focus on SME businesses within the relevant LCR areas, who have demonstrated growth of 20% year-on-year for 3 years (employment or turnover); or businesses that a diagnostic process estimates will have the potential to achieve these rates of growth.

Through its Business Intelligence Team, Growth Platform has developed a high growth identification service to identify those high growth/high growth potential companies the programme will aim to target. Growth Platform will provide an account management service to support these businesses introducing them into different support services within the programme and across the wider LCR business support ecosystem.

*\*We currently only have funding to run the programme in Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton and Wirral. This may change in the future if more funding becomes available to allow us to deliver in Halton.*

## **Requirement**

### **Diagnostic Tool**

The core activity of the diagnostic will be to understand all elements of business activity and their high growth potential. This will identify not only the current growth reported but also business weaknesses & opportunities, their drive and ambition and highlight the preparedness of the business for dynamic growth. Work is likely to involve the following:

- **Client self-assessment**

Using an online diagnostic which looks across the core areas of the business and assesses how decisions are made. All businesses will complete this and it should identify board alignment around key issues, strengths, and weaknesses, highlight areas requiring improvement which are critical for change. The core areas of the business are likely to include:

- Strategy
- Financial performance and strength
- Cash
- Access to Finance
- Marketing & Customer and sales
- People & Skills - resources
- Leadership and management team to include decision making - ambition
- Operational activity of the business including risk and governance
- Sustainability & Innovation & Change

- **Reporting Capability**

The result of the self-assessment is an automated report of the outputs, providing a visual representation of the alignment of the management teams perspective on the strengths and weaknesses of the business, where improvement is required to enable growth.

These reports are to enable a facilitated discussion between the High Growth business and their Growth Platform High Growth Account Manager to discuss and identify key challenges within the business and agree a strategic action plan of clear objectives, utilising the support available within the High Growth programme and the wider LCR business support ecosystem.

As part of a response to this tender the actual metrics that would be examined should be set out.

- **Benchmarking**

For those businesses that have provided full information on the core areas of the business their results should be compared to a wider set of metrics and benchmarks against other businesses in their sector to show how the SME compares to different quartiles of performance and companies compared to their own self-assessment. This will include as a minimum the benchmarks provided by the ONS: How productivity is your business and the [Be the Business Productivity Review](#). These elements will be used to identify key issues ahead of a discussion with the business so that time is focused.

It is expected that the work will involve:

- The upfront creation of the diagnostic
- The ability for firms to engage with the diagnostic electronically
- Visual representation of results in report format
- Benchmarking capability

The service will need to operate for 15 months (with a possible extension if funding approved) and it is anticipated that c.200 businesses will pass through the system (although several more may not be judged to be high growth and will be filtered out at an earlier stage).

We are open to tenders from subscription-based tools. However, for those suppliers offering bespoke solutions, this must include ownership of IP.

We currently use the Evolutive CRM system and would like to look at linking the diagnostic tool to this to ensure we have all business data in one place.

### **Timescales**

This project will run from April 2022 until June 2023.

Should there be a situation where this programme is extended beyond June 2023, Growth Platform reserves the right to extend this contract to meet the programme timescales. This will be at Growth Platform's absolute discretion, subject to funding, performance and strategic alignment.

Published	23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2022
Deadline for supplier questions	28 <sup>th</sup> March 2022
Deadline for Growth Platform response to supplier questions	29 <sup>th</sup> March 2022
<b>Deadline for tenders to <a href="mailto:lisa.duddridge@growthplatform.org">lisa.duddridge@growthplatform.org</a></b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> April 2022</b>
Demonstration Meetings	w/c 4 <sup>th</sup> April 2022
Supplier notified of award of contract	w/c 4 <sup>th</sup> April 2022
Contracts issued	w/c 4 <sup>th</sup> April 2022
Contract Start date	11 <sup>th</sup> April 2022

We aim to work to the dates above but these may be subject to change. However, the deadline date for submissions will remain static.

### **Indicative Budget**

Up to £40,000 plus VAT

### **Supplier Questions**

Any questions should be directed to Growth Platform's point of contact Lisa Duddridge, Programmes & Compliance Manager via email. [lisa.duddridge@growthplatform.org](mailto:lisa.duddridge@growthplatform.org) before the deadline for supplier questions (stated in the above timeline).

All questions and answers will be made anonymous and disseminated to all potential suppliers on Growth Platform's tender page <https://growthplatform.org/tenders/> . It is the responsibility of supplier to monitor the site for latest activity.

### **Proposal Format**

The successful company should demonstrate they have the capabilities and resources to deliver the above brief taking into consideration the evaluation criteria below.

The response should include the actual metrics that would be examined as part of the diagnostic.

Please ensure you provide a full breakdown of costings including any future ongoing costs or subscription fees.

Please indicate in your bid if you are VAT registered.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

When awarding this contract Growth Platform reserves the right not to accept the lowest price tender, but the most economically advantageous tender taking into consideration the award criteria below.

Quotes will be scored by the Head of Business Growth, High Growth Business Development Manager and a representative from the LCR Combined Authority.

In the event that all tenderers score under 65, Growth Platform reserves the right to re-advertise the opportunity.

Quotations will be accessed and scored on the following criteria:

- **Quality/Technical Merit (50%)**  
Supplier must demonstrate they have the technical and professional capability to deliver the requirements detailed above.
  - Capability of the system
  - Help desk functions
  - Data Protection considerations
  - Training
- **Cost/Value for money (30%)**
  - the lifetime cost of the service
  - fees per licence or unlimited users
  - additional costs such as maintenance, help desk and modification fees
- **Delivery Timescale (20%)**  
Supplier must demonstrate they can deliver the requirement to timescales above.
  - Implementation timeline and plan

## **Scoring Methodology**

Score	Meaning
0	Unacceptable response. Requirement level is not met. Many important issues are completely un-addressed or response wholly inadequate or inappropriate. Concerns are serious and risk levels unacceptable for many areas.
2	Poor response. Requirement levels are adequate for only some important issues. Some important issues are largely incomplete. Concerns are serious and risk levels unacceptable for some areas.
4	Adequate response. Requirement level is partially met. Overall the proposals are satisfactory, but some issues are weak. Risk levels apply but Bidder has demonstrated understanding of how they will meet all minimum requirements.
6	Good response. Requirement level is partially met, competence is demonstrated in all areas but there is scope for more detail and more depth in some areas.
8	Very good response. Requirement level is met with only a few minor weaknesses or queries. Competent bid demonstrating overall understanding of requirements and experience in all areas.
10	Excellent response. Requirement level fully met. All key issues addressed. Range of examples of good practice and understanding of requirements.

## **Demonstration Meetings**

Once all submissions have been scored Growth Platform will invite the suppliers with the 3 top scores over 65 to present their product to a panel made up of the Head of Business Growth, High Growth Business Development Manager and a representative from the LCR Combined Authority.

At these meetings presentations will be evaluated as below –

- Ease of use – is the product easy and intuitive to use
- Production of diagnostic results – format and quality
- Flexibility – can the tool be adapted to suit Growth Platform needs

## **Deadline and Submission:**

Proposals are required by **3<sup>rd</sup> April 2022** electronically to [lisa.duddridge@growthplatform.org](mailto:lisa.duddridge@growthplatform.org)

## **Date Published:**

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022

## **Conditions of Tender:**

- Please be aware that due to the relatively low indicative budget for this work (i.e. less than the current OJEU limits) there is no regulatory obligation for us to provide feedback if you are unsuccessful.
- We reserve the right to discontinue this tender process at any time and not award a contract.
- You will not be entitled to claim from us any costs or expenses which you may incur in preparing and/or submitting your Tender at any stage of this exercise. This applies whether or not your organisations is successful.

**This work is part funded through the European Regional Development Fund.**

The Liverpool City Region High Growth Programme is receiving up to £5,504,829 of funding from the England European Regional Development Fund as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020. The Department of Leveling up Housing and Communities (and in London the intermediate body Greater London Authority) is the Managing Authority for European Regional Development Fund. Established by the European Union, the European Regional Development Fund helps local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support innovation, businesses, create jobs and local community regenerations. For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/european-growth-funding>.