

This is a published notice on the Find a Tender service: <https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk/Notice/014139-2024>

Tender

## **Stage 2 Appointment of an Operator for the i4C Innovation and Cleantech Centre, Ballymena, Northern Ireland**

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

F02: Contract notice

Notice identifier: 2024/S 000-014139

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocids-h6vhtk-0435e2

Published 1 May 2024, 6:17pm

### **Section I: Contracting authority**

#### **I.1) Name and addresses**

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

Ardeevin, 80 Galmorgan Road

Ballymena

BT42 1AB

#### **Contact**

Procurement Team MEA

#### **Email**

[procurement@midandeantrim.gov.uk](mailto:procurement@midandeantrim.gov.uk)

#### **Telephone**

+44 2825660393

#### **Country**

United Kingdom

**Region code**

UKN0F - Mid and East Antrim

**Internet address(es)**

Main address

<https://www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk>

**I.3) Communication**

The procurement documents are available for unrestricted and full direct access, free of charge, at

<https://e-sourcingni.bravosolution.co.uk>

Additional information can be obtained from the above-mentioned address

Tenders or requests to participate must be submitted electronically via

<https://e-sourcingni.bravosolution.co.uk>

Tenders or requests to participate must be submitted to the above-mentioned address

Electronic communication requires the use of tools and devices that are not generally available. Unrestricted and full direct access to these tools and devices is possible, free of charge, at

<https://e-sourcingni.bravosolution.co.uk>

**I.4) Type of the contracting authority**

Regional or local authority

**I.5) Main activity**

General public services

---

## **Section II: Object**

### **II.1) Scope of the procurement**

#### **II.1.1) Title**

Stage 2 Appointment of an Operator for the i4C Innovation and Cleantech Centre, Ballymena, Northern Ireland

Reference number

T553

#### **II.1.2) Main CPV code**

- 79000000 - Business services: law, marketing, consulting, recruitment, printing and security

#### **II.1.3) Type of contract**

Services

#### **II.1.4) Short description**

Mid & East Antrim Borough Council has secured funding approval for the business case for the development of a new i4C Innovation and Cleantech Centre (herein referred to as "i4C") located on the St Patrick's Regeneration Site in Ballymena, Northern Ireland.

It is anticipated that the i4C will have a gross internal floor area of circa 7,000 sq. metres, with current concept proposals interpreting this to be a four-storey building comprising laboratories, workshops, Grade A office space for rent by corporate tenants and co-working office space for entrepreneurs/SMEs. It will also contain an iLAB (innovation laboratory), a staffed 'makerspace' workshop. The i4C will be sited adjacent to the new Northern Region College (NRC) education campus and in close proximity to the ECOS Business and Conferencing Hub, a Council owned and managed facility.

Construction of the i4C is planned to commence in February 2026, with the Centre opening in August 2027.

The Council is seeking to appoint a suitably experienced Operator to manage and operate the i4C in the medium to long term (from its planned opening in August 2027) and, in the short term, to inform the design and advise on the branding, marketing and fit-out of the i4C prior to its opening.

Pre-operations phase (from late 2024 to August 2027)

During the pre-operations phase (from late 2024 to August 2027), the Council requires the Operator to provide early operator involvement in the final design of the i4C (collaborating with the Council's appointed design team), build relationships with the ECOS Business and Conferencing Hub, develop an understanding of related Cleantech initiatives in Ballymena and Northern Ireland, develop the brand of the i4C, market the i4C in advance of its opening, develop an initial programme of specialist Cleantech and SME supports in advance of opening, advise on the i4C fit-out, and secure funding bids to support the i4C's activities, such as, for example, Innovate UK funding. As part of the pre-operations phase, the Operator will also develop the operational business plan for the i4C.

#### Operating phase (from August 2027)

During the operating phase (from August 2027), the Operator will be responsible for the management of the i4C and its operations, including but not limited to i4C marketing, sales, management of tenancies and workspace rentals, provision of enterprise, innovation and specialist Cleantech supports for tenants of the i4C and for SMEs across the Borough (including wider community outreach around enterprise and innovation), identifying and securing funding for activities and the provision of front office and facilities management services.

#### Additional Optional Service - iLAB

The Council intends to include the specialist iLAB operations in the i4C and the provision of an initial phase of the iLAB (prior to the opening of the i4C) in the i4C operator contract as optional additional services. The i4C operator would not be obligated to provide the specialist iLAB services, rather the inclusion of these services as additional optional services would provide the Council the ability to add the provision of the iLAB services to the i4C operator contract during the term of the i4C operator contract.

#### Additional Optional Service - ECOS Business and Conferencing Hub

The Council also intends to include services relating to the operation of the ECOS Business and Conferencing Hub as optional additional services within the i4C operator contract, to provide the Council with the flexibility to avail of any strategic efficiencies and/or economies of scale in future through closer alignment of the operations of the i4C and ECOS.

The i4C Centre is a focus for social regeneration. The Economic Operator appointed will be required to address Social Value during the operation of the i4C Centre.

For a complete description of this procurement please refer to the Pre-Qualification Documents.

#### **II.1.5) Estimated total value**

Value excluding VAT: £14,000,000

### **II.1.6) Information about lots**

This contract is divided into lots: No

## **II.2) Description**

### **II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)**

- 55250000 - Letting services of short-stay furnished accommodation
- 73000000 - Research and development services and related consultancy services
- 79340000 - Advertising and marketing services
- 79342000 - Marketing services
- 79342200 - Promotional services
- 79400000 - Business and management consultancy and related services
- 79410000 - Business and management consultancy services
- 79411100 - Business development consultancy services
- 79420000 - Management-related services
- 79990000 - Miscellaneous business-related services
- 79993000 - Building and facilities management services
- 79993100 - Facilities management services
- 79996000 - Business organisation services
- 79998000 - Coaching services
- 98340000 - Accommodation and office services
- 98341000 - Accommodation services
- 98341100 - Accommodation management services
- 98342000 - Work environment services

### **II.2.3) Place of performance**

NUTS codes

- UKN0F - Mid and East Antrim

#### **II.2.4) Description of the procurement**

The Council is using the competitive dialogue process pursuant to Regulation 30 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) (PCR) which will involve the following core stages:

Stage 1 – Selection Stage: a Selection Questionnaire (SQ) stage to shortlist Tenderers based on their capacity, capability, and financial standing;

Stage 2 – Dialogue Stage: issue of the Invitation to Participate in Dialogue (ITPD) stage comprised of detailed dialogue for the development of solutions;

Stage 3 - Final Tender Stage: Close of Dialogue and the submission and evaluation of Final Tenders, following which the winning Tenderer will be selected;

Stage 4 – Contract Award Stage: Finalisation with Preferred Bidder and Award.

Those Tenderers shortlisted at Stage 1 will be invited to participate in the Dialogue Stage of the process. The Council intend to invite three (3) Tenderers to participate in Stage 2 and such Tenderers will be selected on the basis of them being the three highest scoring at the SQ stage, provided they all meet all minimum standards of qualification set out in the Selection Questionnaire. The three Tenderers will, following the close of dialogue, be invited to submit final tenders.

#### **II.2.5) Award criteria**

Price is not the only award criterion and all criteria are stated only in the procurement documents

#### **II.2.6) Estimated value**

Value excluding VAT: £14,000,000

#### **II.2.7) Duration of the contract, framework agreement or dynamic purchasing system**

Duration in months

204

This contract is subject to renewal

No

**II.2.9) Information about the limits on the number of candidates to be invited**

Envisaged minimum number: 3

**II.2.10) Information about variants**

Variants will be accepted: No

**II.2.11) Information about options**

Options: No

**II.2.13) Information about European Union Funds**

The procurement is related to a project and/or programme financed by European Union funds: No

**II.2.14) Additional information**

The estimated contract value is the estimated maximum total spend by MEABC for the contract duration of 204 months (17 years) which includes the option, at the sole discretion of the Council, to extend the operating phase for a further 3 periods of 3 years

---

## **Section III. Legal, economic, financial and technical information**

### **III.1) Conditions for participation**

#### **III.1.1) Suitability to pursue the professional activity, including requirements relating to enrolment on professional or trade registers**

List and brief description of conditions

In accordance with Regulations 57, 58 and 60 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, suppliers will be assessed in accordance with the Public Regulations 2015, on the basis of the information provided in response to the Pre-qualification Documents (which sets out the conditions for participation)

#### **III.1.2) Economic and financial standing**

Selection criteria as stated in the procurement documents

#### **III.1.3) Technical and professional ability**

Selection criteria as stated in the procurement documents

### **III.2) Conditions related to the contract**

#### **III.2.2) Contract performance conditions**

Contract performance conditions are set out in the Pre-Qualification Documents. Additional contract performance conditions will be set out in the procurement documents published by MEABC at later stages of the procurement. The appointment to the contract will be subject to the preferred tenderer demonstrating that the minimum requirements specified in the SQ continue to be met and there being no material adverse change to the standing of the preferred tenderer. The appointment will also be subject to all other necessary due diligence being carried out by MEABC. No formal contract shall be binding until it has been formally executed by the duly authorised representatives of the parties.

The Economic Operator's performance of this contract will be regularly monitored.

## **Section IV. Procedure**

### **IV.1) Description**

#### **IV.1.1) Type of procedure**

Competitive dialogue

#### **IV.1.8) Information about the Government Procurement Agreement (GPA)**

The procurement is covered by the Government Procurement Agreement: Yes

### **IV.2) Administrative information**

#### **IV.2.1) Previous publication concerning this procedure**

Notice number: [2024/S 000-003138](#)

#### **IV.2.2) Time limit for receipt of tenders or requests to participate**

Date

31 May 2024

Local time

12:00pm

#### **IV.2.3) Estimated date of dispatch of invitations to tender or to participate to selected candidates**

24 June 2024

#### **IV.2.4) Languages in which tenders or requests to participate may be submitted**

English

---

## Section VI. Complementary information

### VI.1) Information about recurrence

This is a recurrent procurement: No

### VI.3) Additional information

Tenderers must be registered on MEABC's e-procurement system <https://e-sourcingni.bravosolution.co.uk> to participate in this procurement and respond to the Pre-Qualification Documents.

Submissions are to be submitted online via the secure portal for e-Sourcing NI and if you have any technical questions relating to the portal, please contact the Bravo Solution Supplier Helpdesk on 0800 069 8630 (Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm). Or e-mail [help@bravosolution.co.uk](mailto:help@bravosolution.co.uk).

Tenderers are required to read all documentation available throughout all parts of the procurement. Within this Contract Notice MEABC has made available an Information Memorandum document (which contains key information referred to in sections II.1.4 and II.2.4 of this Notice and further information regarding the service requirements of MEABC and the Competitive Dialogue procedure to be undertaken). MEABC has also published a Selection Questionnaire – Guidance and Evaluation Methodology document, a Selection Questionnaire (in the form of the SQ Response Documents) and Pre-Market Engagement Documents.

This competition is being conducted in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”) and MEABC will seek to use the competitive dialogue procedure which is governed by Regulation 30 of the Regulations. Further Information on the competition and how the dialogue phase will be structured is set out in the Information Memorandum Document. This information will be added to in the Invitation to Participate in Dialogue (“ITPD”) which will be issued to those economic operators who advance in the procurement following the evaluation of the respFull details of the scope and requirements for the opportunity are set out in the procurement documentation to be issued by MEABC, which will be available via the portal referred to in section VI.3 above.

Please note that any date given in Section IV above is a best estimate at the time of dispatch of this notice. MEABC reserves the right to extend any such date.

The cost of responding to the Pre-Qualification Documents and any subsequent participation in the procurement will be borne solely by the participating economic operator. Economic operators should note that MEABC reserves the right to cancel this procurement process at any stage.

Social value will be included as an award criterion for this contract, requiring the successful tenderer to deliver measurable social value outcomes. Further details will be provided in the ITPD.

For a complete description of this procurement please refer to the Pre-Qualification Documents.

MEABC expressly reserves the right:

i. not to award any contract as a result of the procurement process commenced by publication of this notice or to cancel the procurement at any stage for any reason at its absolute discretion; and

ii. to make whatever changes it may see fit to the content and structure of the tendering competition in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015

and in no circumstances will MEABC be liable for any costs incurred by Economic Operators or Candidates in relation to the procurement. Any expenditure, work or effort undertaken prior to contract award is accordingly at the sole risk of the Economic Operator or Candidate participating in this procurement process.

No business whatsoever is guaranteed under any resulting contract indeed there is no guarantee that any contract will be put in place in relation to this notice. Economic Operators should take part in this process only on the basis that they fully understand and accept this position.

#### **VI.4) Procedures for review**

##### **VI.4.1) Review body**

High Court of Northern Ireland

Royal Courts of Justice, Chichester Street, Town: Belfast Postal code: BT1 3JF Country: United Kingdom

Belfast

Country

United Kingdom

##### **VI.4.3) Review procedure**

Precise information on deadline(s) for review procedures

Precise information on deadline(s) for review procedures:

Review procedures are as set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Proceedings under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 are time limited, and any such proceedings must be brought in the High Court of Northern Ireland.

Precise information on deadline(s) for lodging appeals:

MEABC will incorporate a standstill period at the point information on the award of the contract is notified to tenderers. That notification will provide full information on the award decision. The standstill period, which will be for a minimum of 10 calendar days, provides time for unsuccessful tenderers to challenge the award decision before the contract is entered into. The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 provide for aggrieved parties who have been harmed or are at risk of harm by a breach of the rules to take action in the High Court of Northern Ireland.