

This is a published notice on the Find a Tender service: <https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk/Notice/018171-2023>

Tender

T2407a - Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service ‘NIESS’ Framework A (preferred Contractors) Growth and Scaling

Belfast City Council

F02: Contract notice

Notice identifier: 2023/S 000-018171

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-03923a

Published 26 June 2023, 5:11pm

Section I: Contracting authority

I.1) Name and addresses

Belfast City Council

9 Adelaide Street

Belfast

BT2 8DJ

Contact

Lewis Murray

Email

cps@belfastcity.gov.uk

Country

United Kingdom

Region code

UKN06 - Belfast

Internet address(es)

Main address

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

Buyer's address

<https://www.belfastcity.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/web/login.shtml>

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/web/login.shtml>

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/web/login.shtml>

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

T2407a - Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service 'NIESS' Framework A (preferred Contractors) Growth and Scaling

Reference number

T2407a

II.1.2) Main CPV code

- 79400000 - Business and management consultancy and related services

II.1.3) Type of contract

Services

II.1.4) Short description

The Local Authorities in Northern Ireland have developed a new enterprise support service 'ESS' which aims to put in place a more ambitious approach to the delivery of start-up and growth support which seeks to revamp the current offer and increase the number, survival and growth rates of new businesses across the region. The service aims to provide a set of connected ESS where individuals, entrepreneurs or businesses can access a continuum of support to meet their needs, aligned with the relevant stage of their business.

Given the varying needs of the individuals, entrepreneurs and businesses that will likely engage with this service across the business lifecycle, the Local Authorities have identified a need to put in place a framework of ESS, this NIESS Framework A, which will:

- a) Be proactive and flexible to address market needs.
- b) Incentivise market development activity.
- c) Provide a core programme of service delivery across the region.

- d) Provide access to specialists in certain sectors / target groups.
- e) Be flexible in responding to future variability in demand and funding.
- f) Provide quality services that meet user needs; and
- g) Support the Local Authorities strategic ambitions aligned with The Northern Ireland Draft Programme for Government, 10x Economy – Northern Ireland’s Decade of Innovation, Economy 2030, draft Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland, Invest NI’s forward business plans, the City/Growth deals, and inclusive growth focus of the individual Council community plans.

The NIESS, which is described in greater detail in the Specification, will comprise the following three frameworks/ contracts which are being procured separately:

- a) NIESS Framework A (preferred Contractors) - Growth and Scaling;
- b) NIESS Framework A (preferred Contractors) - Engage and Foundation; and
- b) NIESS Framework B (Subject Matter Experts and Sector Experts).

This procurement relates to the award of a contract to the Contractor for each of five (5) geographic Lots for NIESS Framework A (preferred Contractors) covering the Growth and Scaling requirement. The geographic Lots are based on groupings of the 11 Local Authorities and are for the provision of ‘growth and scaling’ level supports as further described in the Specifications and in section 1.4 of the ITT.

Please note – this T2407a ITT is a re-tender of T2407- NIESS Framework A (preferred Contractors) which included ten (10) geographic Lots and the provision of both ‘engage and foundation’ and ‘growth and scaling’ level supports. The T2407 tender competition (Notice reference: 2023/S 000-009378) has been discontinued and following further engagement with the market has been split into 2 separate requirements:

- T2407a - NIESS Framework A (preferred Contractors) Growth and Scaling i.e. this ITT
- T2407b - NIESS Framework A (preferred Contractors) Engage and Foundation

The re-design of the procurement strategy for T2407b is ongoing with separate tender to be issued, if deemed appropriate.

The other 10 Local Authorities (Contract Users) included are:

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Derry City and Strabane District Council

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council - Enniskillen Office

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

Mid Ulster District Council - Dungannon

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

II.1.5) Estimated total value

Value excluding VAT: £14,000,000

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: Yes

Tenders may be submitted for all lots

Maximum number of lots that may be awarded to one tenderer: 5

The contracting authority reserves the right to award contracts combining the following lots or groups of lots:

As explained in the ITT documents

II.2) Description

II.2.1) Title

Lots 1 – Enabling Growth and Scaling Derry City & Strabane District Council and Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Lot No

1

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 79400000 - Business and management consultancy and related services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKN - Northern Ireland

Main site or place of performance

Derry City & Strabane District Council and Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

Enabling Growth is aimed at stimulating growth within existing businesses across the area. All businesses receiving support through this element have potential to be 'employer enterprises'. They will receive differentiated and tailored support focused on cohorts such as SME start-up enterprise founders, who can be the life blood of high streets and local economies; and innovation-driven enterprises with a strong aspiration to grow, with a focus on regional/ export markets. Support would include; access to 'live' masterclasses, post-start mentoring, connections to sources of finance and 'grow-on' accommodation; and peer support/ networks.

The scaling element entails a hand-holding support for scaling companies in the early phases of their transition to other provision.

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: £2,100,000

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

Duration in months

48

This contract is subject to renewal

No

II.2.10) Information about variants

Variants will be accepted: No

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: Yes

Description of options

The Contract for each Lot shall be effective from the date of award for an initial period up to 31st March 2025 (approx. 18 months based on contract start date of 1st October 2023). Any extension may be subject to further approval by the Council (including other Local Authorities) and funders for the relevant Lot, availability of funding and satisfactory performance of the Contractor.

Funding has been secured for service activity up to 31 March 2025 initially. Any activity following this date will be subject to securing additional funding.

The appointed Bidder for each Lot must have the potential to scale up or down to meet demand and availability of future funding.

As such there is no guarantee of any delivery post the 31st March 2025 until funding has been secured.

In addition to delivering Components 1 and 2 of the core service requirements as described in the Specification, throughout the Contract Period the Contractor may also be required to deliver one or more optional services which are additional to the core services described above. These optional services will be in areas related to the core services described above and may for example include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Intelligence gathering.
- Business plan assessments and challenge.
- Management of financial incentives and administering grant funding to businesses in the Growth Element with Lot Councils' target markets (where relevant). Indicative number of

grants per Council, for this have been included in Appendix 1 of the Specification. The average grant offer per business is £3,500.

- Managing and monitoring access to finance for participants on behalf of the Lot Councils.
- Collaborative space development and delivery; and
- Managing access to test trading space.

If required, these services will be agreed with the Contractor in advance and the costs for the delivery of the services will be agreed by reference to the daily rates contained within the Contract.

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) Description

II.2.1) Title

Lot 2 - Enabling Growth and Scaling Mid & East Antrim Borough Council and Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council

Lot No

2

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 79400000 - Business and management consultancy and related services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKN - Northern Ireland

Main site or place of performance

Mid & East Antrim Borough Council and Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

Enabling Growth is aimed at stimulating growth within existing businesses across the area. All businesses receiving support through this element have potential to be 'employer enterprises'. They will receive differentiated and tailored support focused on cohorts such as SME start-up enterprise founders, who can be the life blood of high streets and local economies; and innovation-driven enterprises with a strong aspiration to grow, with a focus on regional/ export markets. Support would include; access to 'live' masterclasses, post-start mentoring, connections to sources of finance and 'grow-on' accommodation; and peer support/ networks.

The scaling element entails a hand-holding support for scaling companies in the early phases of their transition to other provision.

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: £1,100,000

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

Duration in months

48

This contract is subject to renewal

No

II.2.10) Information about variants

Variants will be accepted: No

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: Yes

Description of options

The Contract for each Lot shall be effective from the date of award for an initial period up to 31st March 2025 (approx. 18 months based on contract start date of 1st October 2023). Any extension may be subject to further approval by the Council (including other Local Authorities) and funders for the relevant Lot, availability of funding and satisfactory performance of the Contractor.

Funding has been secured for service activity up to 31 March 2025 initially. Any activity following this date will be subject to securing additional funding.

The appointed Bidder for each Lot must have the potential to scale up or down to meet demand and availability of future funding.

As such there is no guarantee of any delivery post the 31st March 2025 until funding has been secured.

In addition to delivering Components 1 and 2 of the core service requirements as described in the Specification, throughout the Contract Period the Contractor may also be required to deliver one or more optional services which are additional to the core services described above. These optional services will be in areas related to the core services described above and may for example include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Intelligence gathering.
- Business plan assessments and challenge.
- Management of financial incentives and administering grant funding to businesses in the Growth Element with Lot Councils' target markets (where relevant). Indicative number of grants per Council, for this have been included in Appendix 1 of the Specification. The average grant offer per business is £3,500.
- Managing and monitoring access to finance for participants on behalf of the Lot Councils.
- Collaborative space development and delivery; and
- Managing access to test trading space.

If required, these services will be agreed with the Contractor in advance and the costs for the delivery of the services will be agreed by reference to the daily rates contained within the Contract.

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) Description

II.2.1) Title

Lot 3 - Enabling Growth and Scaling Belfast City Council

Lot No

3

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 79400000 - Business and management consultancy and related services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKN06 - Belfast

Main site or place of performance

Belfast City Council

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

Enabling Growth is aimed at stimulating growth within existing businesses across the area. All businesses receiving support through this element have potential to be 'employer enterprises'. They will receive differentiated and tailored support focused on cohorts such as SME start-up enterprise founders, who can be the life blood of high streets and local economies; and innovation-driven enterprises with a strong aspiration to grow, with a focus on regional/ export markets. Support would include; access to 'live' masterclasses, post-start mentoring, connections to sources of finance and 'grow-on' accommodation; and peer support/ networks.

The scaling element entails a hand-holding support for scaling companies in the early phases of their transition to other provision.

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: £2,800,000

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

Duration in months

48

This contract is subject to renewal

No

II.2.10) Information about variants

Variants will be accepted: No

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: Yes

Description of options

The Contract for each Lot shall be effective from the date of award for an initial period up to 31st March 2025 (approx. 18 months based on contract start date of 1st October 2023). Any extension may be subject to further approval by the Council (including other Local Authorities) and funders for the relevant Lot, availability of funding and satisfactory performance of the Contractor.

Funding has been secured for service activity up to 31 March 2025 initially. Any activity following this date will be subject to securing additional funding.

The appointed Bidder for each Lot must have the potential to scale up or down to meet demand and availability of future funding.

As such there is no guarantee of any delivery post the 31st March 2025 until funding has been secured.

In addition to delivering Components 1 and 2 of the core service requirements as described in

the Specification, throughout the Contract Period the Contractor may also be required to deliver one or more optional services which are additional to the core services described above. These optional services will be in areas related to the core services described above and may for example include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Intelligence gathering.
- Business plan assessments and challenge.
- Management of financial incentives and administering grant funding to businesses in the Growth Element with Lot Councils' target markets (where relevant). Indicative number of grants per Council, for this have been included in Appendix 1 of the Specification. The average grant offer per business is £3,500.
- Managing and monitoring access to finance for participants on behalf of the Lot Councils.
- Collaborative space development and delivery; and
- Managing access to test trading space.

If required, these services will be agreed with the Contractor in advance and the costs for the delivery of the services will be agreed by reference to the daily rates contained within the Contract.

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) Description

II.2.1) Title

Lot 4 - Enabling Growth and Scaling Ards & North Down Borough Council, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council; and Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Lot No

4

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 79400000 - Business and management consultancy and related services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKN - Northern Ireland

Main site or place of performance

Ards & North Down Borough Council, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council; and Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

Enabling Growth is aimed at stimulating growth within existing businesses across the area. All businesses receiving support through this element have potential to be 'employer enterprises'. They will receive differentiated and tailored support focused on cohorts such as SME start-up enterprise founders, who can be the life blood of high streets and local economies; and innovation-driven enterprises with a strong aspiration to grow, with a focus on regional/ export markets. Support would include; access to 'live' masterclasses, post-start mentoring, connections to sources of finance and 'grow-on' accommodation; and peer support/ networks.

The scaling element entails a hand-holding support for scaling companies in the early phases of their transition to other provision.

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: £3,800,000

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

Duration in months

48

This contract is subject to renewal

No

II.2.10) Information about variants

Variants will be accepted: No

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: Yes

Description of options

The Contract for each Lot shall be effective from the date of award for an initial period up to 31st March 2025 (approx. 18 months based on contract start date of 1st October 2023). Any extension may be subject to further approval by the Council (including other Local Authorities) and funders for the relevant Lot, availability of funding and satisfactory performance of the Contractor.

Funding has been secured for service activity up to 31 March 2025 initially. Any activity following this date will be subject to securing additional funding.

The appointed Bidder for each Lot must have the potential to scale up or down to meet demand and availability of future funding.

As such there is no guarantee of any delivery post the 31st March 2025 until funding has been secured.

In addition to delivering Components 1 and 2 of the core service requirements as described in the Specification, throughout the Contract Period the Contractor may also be required to deliver one or more optional services which are additional to the core services described above. These optional services will be in areas related to the core services described above and may for example include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Intelligence gathering.
- Business plan assessments and challenge.
- Management of financial incentives and administering grant funding to businesses in the Growth Element with Lot Councils' target markets (where relevant). Indicative number of grants per Council, for this have been included in Appendix 1 of the Specification. The average grant offer per business is £3,500.
- Managing and monitoring access to finance for participants on behalf of the Lot Councils.
- Collaborative space development and delivery; and

- Managing access to test trading space.

If required, these services will be agreed with the Contractor in advance and the costs for the delivery of the services will be agreed by reference to the daily rates contained within the Contract.

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) Description

II.2.1) Title

Lot 5 - Enabling Growth and Scaling Fermanagh & Omagh District Council, Mid Ulster Council and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

Lot No

5

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 79400000 - Business and management consultancy and related services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKN - Northern Ireland

Main site or place of performance

Fermanagh & Omagh District Council, Mid Ulster Council and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

Enabling Growth is aimed at stimulating growth within existing businesses across the area. All businesses receiving support through this element have potential to be 'employer enterprises'. They will receive differentiated and tailored support focused on cohorts such as SME start-up enterprise founders, who can be the life blood of high streets and local

economies; and innovation-driven enterprises with a strong aspiration to grow, with a focus on regional/ export markets. Support would include; access to 'live' masterclasses, post-start mentoring, connections to sources of finance and 'grow-on' accommodation; and peer support/ networks.

The scaling element entails a hand-holding support for scaling companies in the early phases of their transition to other provision.

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: £4,300,000

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

Duration in months

48

This contract is subject to renewal

No

II.2.10) Information about variants

Variants will be accepted: No

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: Yes

Description of options

The Contract for each Lot shall be effective from the date of award for an initial period up to 31st March 2025 (approx. 18 months based on contract start date of 1st October 2023). Any extension may be subject to further approval by the Council (including other Local Authorities) and funders for the relevant Lot, availability of funding and satisfactory performance of the Contractor.

Funding has been secured for service activity up to 31 March 2025 initially. Any activity following this date will be subject to securing additional funding.

The appointed Bidder for each Lot must have the potential to scale up or down to meet demand and availability of future funding.

As such there is no guarantee of any delivery post the 31st March 2025 until funding has been secured.

In addition to delivering Components 1 and 2 of the core service requirements as described in the Specification, throughout the Contract Period the Contractor may also be required to deliver one or more optional services which are additional to the core services described above. These optional services will be in areas related to the core services described above and may for example include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Intelligence gathering.
- Business plan assessments and challenge.
- Management of financial incentives and administering grant funding to businesses in the Growth Element with Lot Councils' target markets (where relevant). Indicative number of grants per Council, for this have been included in Appendix 1 of the Specification. The average grant offer per business is £3,500.
- Managing and monitoring access to finance for participants on behalf of the Lot Councils.
- Collaborative space development and delivery; and
- Managing access to test trading space.

If required, these services will be agreed with the Contractor in advance and the costs for the delivery of the services will be agreed by reference to the daily rates contained within the Contract.

II.2.13) Information about European Union Funds

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

Section III. Legal, economic, financial and technical information

III.1) 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

As stated in the procurement documents

Section IV. Procedure

IV.1) Description

IV.1.1) Type of procedure

Open procedure

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: [2022/S 000-035769](#)

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

Date

3 August 2023

Local time

12:00pm

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

English

IV.2.6) Minimum time frame during which the tenderer must maintain the tender

Duration in months: 6 (from the date stated for receipt of tender)

IV.2.7) Conditions for opening of tenders

Date

3 August 2023

Local time

12:30pm

Place

via eSourcing NI

Section VI. Complementary information

VI.1) Information about recurrence

This is a recurrent procurement: No

VI.2) Information about electronic workflows

Electronic ordering will be used

Electronic invoicing will be accepted

Electronic payment will be used

VI.3) Additional information

Additional CPV codes associated with the procurement:

79410000-1 Business and management consultancy services.

79411000-8 General management consultancy services.

79411100-9 Business-development consultancy services.

79412000-5 Financial management consultancy services.

79413000-2 Marketing management consultancy services.

79900000-3 Miscellaneous business and business-related services.

Belfast City Council, as Lead Council, shall enter into a Services Contract with the preferred Contractor in respect of each Lot. Each Local Authority that wishes to avail of that Lot shall enter into an SLA with Belfast City Council and the preferred Contractor that will detail the requirements of that Local Authority and the outputs required from the preferred Contractor. Each individual Local Authority shall then be responsible for liaising directly with the preferred Contractor in respect of the Services to be delivered to that Local Authority under the SLA. As Lead Council, Belfast City Council shall be responsible for Contract management with the preferred Contractor, and shall have legal responsibility for the Contract. Any contract disputes must be actioned through Belfast City Council.

VI.4) Procedures for review

VI.4.1) Review body

Royal Courts of Justice

Belfast

Country

United Kingdom

VI.4.3) Review procedure

Precise information on deadline(s) for review procedures

Approval to award a contract to the highest ranked Bidder for each Lot will be subject to internal approvals in line with Council procedures.

Following internal approvals to proceed with award of contract in accordance with the Regulations, there will be a standstill period of 10 calendar days following notification of award of the contract to the successful Bidder and the contract being entered into.

All Bidders for a Lot will be notified in writing via eSourcing NI at the start of the standstill period notifying them of the outcome of the evaluation exercise for that Lot, in accordance with the requirements of the Regulations.

Following the standstill period, subject to there being no substantive challenge to the decision and the Council's discretion not to award any contract, the contract between the Council and the successful Bidder will be entered into. This will be confirmed via eSourcing NI with an award letter.

Economic Operators are advised to seek their own legal advice regarding any further action they wish to take following notification of intent to award/ awarded of contract regarding this procurement.