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Tender

T2407b - Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service 'NISS' Framework A (preferred Contractors) Engage and Foundation

Belfast City Council

F02: Contract notice

Notice identifier: 2023/S 000-021138

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

Published 21 July 2023, 2:36pm

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

T2407b - Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service 'NIESS' Framework A (preferred Contractors) Engage and Foundation

Reference number

T2407b

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 which will:

- Be proactive and flexible to address market needs.
- Incentivise market development activity.
- Provide a core programme of service delivery across the region.
- Provide access to specialists in certain sectors / target groups.
- Be flexible in responding to future variability in demand and funding.

- Provide quality services that meet user needs; and
- 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:

- i. NIESS Framework A (preferred Contractors) – Growth and Scaling;
- ii. NIESS Framework A (preferred Contractors) – Engage and Foundation; and
- iii. NIESS Framework B (Subject Matter Experts and Sector Experts);

This procurement relates to the award of a contract to a Contractor for the regional delivery of the NIESS Framework A (preferred Contractors) covering the Engage and Foundation requirement. The purpose of this exercise is for the provision of ‘engage and foundation’ level supports as further described in the Specifications and in the ITT documents

Please note – this T2407b 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
- T2407b - NIESS Framework A (preferred Contractors) Engage and Foundation i.e. this ITT

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: £12,000,000

II.1.6) Information about lots

This contract is divided into lots: No

II.2) Description

II.2.2) Additional CPV code(s)

- 72221000 - Business analysis consultancy services
- 79410000 - Business and management consultancy services
- 79411100 - Business development consultancy services
- 79900000 - Miscellaneous business and business-related services

II.2.3) Place of performance

NUTS codes

- UKN - Northern Ireland

II.2.4) Description of the procurement

This relates to the procurement for a contractor to deliver enterprise support services across Northern Ireland – with a focus on activities related to the “Engage” and “Foundation” stages. The core services to be delivered include recruitment of eligible businesses and individuals interested in starting a business, support with the development of start-up business plans and delivery of a package of support to include one-to-one coaching/advice sessions, one to many masterclasses and establishment of peer support

networks. All activities are underpinned by robust management and reporting mechanisms to comply with funding requirements.

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: £12,000,000

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

Duration in months

48

This contract is subject to renewal

Yes

Description of renewals

The Contract 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).

The Council reserves the right to extend/renew the Contract up to a further 30 months (1 year + 1 year + 6 months). Total Contract Period including all extension options is 4 years (48 months).

II.2.10) Information about variants

Variants will be accepted: No

II.2.11) Information about options

Options: Yes

Description of options

The Contract 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).

The Council reserves the right to extend/renew the Contract up to a further 30 months (1

year + 1 year + 6 months). Total Contract Period including all extension options is 4 years (48 months).

Any extension may be subject to further approval by the Council (including other Local Authorities) and funders, 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 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 above, 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 to inform and shape future service delivery in line with good practice.
- Business plan assessments and challenge.
- Management of financial incentives and administering grant funding to businesses in the Foundation Element with Councils' target markets (where relevant). Indicative number of grants per Council, have been included in the Specification. The average grant offer per business is £3,500.
- Delivery of a number of community outreach activities targeting underrepresented groups/ hard to reach groups.
 - o This may include females, persons with a disability, individuals who are economically inactive, students / graduates, minority ethnic community, place-based interventions. This list is not exhaustive and may change aligned with Councils' policies and requirements based on local need
 - o Types of outreach sessions can include events, workshops, best practice visits, drop-in clinics, networking, and are expected to be a mixture of in person and online.
 - o The councils are currently responsible for delivering this element of the service, and

delivery is therefore will not be the responsibility of the contractor. The councils will work with the successful delivery partner to ensure alignment to and drive participation to services delivered through this contract.

- Managing and monitoring access to finance for participants on behalf of the 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.2.14) Additional information

Any value of contract included in this notice is indicative only and includes for potential optional services requirement and potential additional funding. Please refer to tender documents for more accurate forecasts of contract budget and forecasted spend/ usage.

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

21 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

21 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 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 will be notified in writing via eSourcing NI at the start of the standstill period notifying them of the outcome of the evaluation exercise, 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.