

# Enhanced Growth Hub RFQ Q&As

Last updated: 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021

**1. Will you accept a response from a micro-SME?**

Yes, a micro Business can respond and will be considered. Any business can respond to the RFQ.

**2. Can an organisation submit a proposal for a fraction of the amount/value mentioned?**

No, we are looking for one organisation to be awarded the entire contract.

**3. Is the enhanced programme to run in parallel with the existing programme, or is the existing programme to be enhanced/superseded?**

The enhanced programme is to run in parallel with the existing Growth Hub programmes.

**4. The specification states a supplier to 'set up', implement, manage and deliver a best in class Growth Hub offer for Oxfordshire, can further details be provided on the difference as it relates to an 'enhanced programme' verses the new 'set up' as stated?**

The OxLEP Growth Hub offer consists of two European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) projects, Innovation Support for Business and eScalate, alongside some short-term business resilience and one to one advisor support. These projects cannot be changed with the agreement of the nation managing Authority, therefore the enhanced Growth Hub offer sought by this RFQ needs to be set up by the successful supplier. The activity funded under this RFQ will complement the existing offer available under the Growth Hub banner.

**5. Is the successful bidder expected to run the enhanced programme or provide resources to support?**

We anticipate that the successful bidder run the enhanced programme that they are providing but will support the overall management of the Growth Hub in terms of monitoring and reporting.

**6. Is there a preference for single source supply or prime contract / subcontractor arrangement, and if the latter any views on what the sub contract elements' should ideally be?**

There is no preference. OxLEP would expect bidders to explain their chosen delivery model and demonstrate how this can be effectively managed to deliver the services being sought.

**7. What existing resources are there and can these be included in the project?**

Existing Growth Hub resources are currently funded by other sources so cannot be directly involved in the project. Existing resources, such as marcomms support will expect to work alongside the selected supplier to deliver the services.

**8. Are there a defined of criteria in regards of Industry sectors and Companies (Start up, Micro, SME) that the initiative is targeting. If so, can these be shared?**

Any industry sectors and target companies can be supported, although as we anticipate that the support will be delivered through De Minimis, the exclusions relating to De Minimis eligibility must be observed. The expectation is that the support will target SMEs and that it will not duplicate our existing projects.

**9. In respect of the requirements to triage and provide recovery plans is there any correlation to the 12 hours of 1:2:1 support? e.g. Triage is 1 hour of support with 11 hours of economic recovery planning. In this example the bid would need a minimum of 1500 hours for triage and 5500 hours of 1:2:1 support.**

There is no correlation to 12 hours of support. The 12-hour target is an ERDF target which applies to our ERDF funded projects, not to this activity.

**10. In light of the Corona lockdown experience, and what we have learnt from this, is it envisaged that alternative methods for face-to-face delivery can be used?**

Yes. OxLEP would anticipate that suppliers propose and justify the most appropriate and effective methods of delivery for the services they are proposing to offer.

**11. In respect of the targets, and delivery against them, are there penalty clauses in place should they not be met? If so, can these be shared?**

The OxLEP contract does not include penalty clauses explicitly linking targets, delivery and payment. We would anticipate that the contracts will include a delivery profile against which the contract can be managed alongside a series of monthly milestones. Failure to achieve the milestones could result in termination of the contract, depending on the circumstances. We would expect the successful bidder to undertake their best endeavours to meet the targets.

**12. The Pricing Schedule requests a cost per day however the original tender indicates a fixed price of £180K. Is it intent to award a fixed price contract and/or a time and materials rate card based contract purely for the consulting engagements with Oxford LEP clients on an 'as needed' basis. Or a combination and if so is the fixed price element to cover management type activity and if so please provide further details and scope.**

The tender states that “the maximum available for this service is £180,000 excluding VAT” and that price accounts for 30% of the total score for the response. We would not anticipate the contract being fixed price, but that does not mean that bidders may not submit a fixed price response. We would expect bidders to submit costings up to a maximum of £180,000 excluding VAT and to demonstrate how these costs have been calculated. Basing costs on time and materials is acceptable, though you must demonstrate the assumptions you have used to calculate the total price.

**13. The Pricing Schedule indicates that this is within IR35 Legislation. The current understanding of the scope, the confirmation of fixed price or time and materials as well as the tender process all introduce financial risk for a bidder. Has the CEST tool been used to confirm that this is the tax position?**

The wording in the pricing schedule is misleading, it is meant to be interpreted as saying that the contract is within the range that need to be considered and checked for IR35 compliance. We have used the CEST tool with answers based on the legal status of the most likely bidders, and the tool confirms that the contract is outside of the scope of IR35. We would expect to rerun the test with the selected bidder to confirm that the contract as awarded is outside of the scope of IR35.

**14. If training has to be delivered at a non-LEP location, e.g. client site, then the delivery team are responsible for transport to and from the location. This would use no resources from Oxford LEP in the delivery, would this fall outside of IR35?**

Yes, we believe so.

**15. What is the position should a bid submission be received which is clearly IR35 exempt?**

This would be acceptable.

**16. Is £172,000 a fixed cost?**

We have decided to increase the tender with a maximum budget of £180,000 available.

**17. Are the outputs fixed as detailed in RFQ?**

We have amended the outputs as follows:

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Target</b>
Number of businesses triaged - evidenced through personal summary plans	1500 - 2000
Number of new jobs created	Up to 25

Economic recovery plans developed and monitored after 6 months	1000
Referrals to other programmes/activities	600
Produce monthly data/reporting – end of contract reporting and recommendations	Monthly
Number of business surviving for at least 6 months as a result of receiving support	300
Jobs safeguarded in supported businesses	200

**18. To what extent are the suppliers expected to provide marketing resource, plan and supporting materials vs working with OxLEP comms team.**

Further develop current triage diagnostic tool that can be embedded into activities.

And

Supporting the ongoing work to develop the CRM system used by OxLEP

**19. Is there a development team in place or are suppliers responsible for sourcing the development team? Are the triage and CRM tools bespoke builds or do they use a pre-existing framework?**

**Support** Oxfordshire’s businesses including early stage through;

One to one support, light touch through to intensive support where required

One to many activities including workshops and webinars

Peer to peer events and activities in Oxfordshire’s key sectors as identified in the [Local Industrial Strategy](#)

Local supply chain development

**20. You have a parallel RFP out asking for facilitators, so we assume this is a simple tech task of making the support visible rather than providing the support?**

Provide programme management support for the Growth Hub, i.e. non-ERDF funded activities, including significant back office administration, data entry, programme monitoring and reporting where required

**21. On Page 14, “Purpose”, there is a requirement - “Peer to peer events including Workshops etc” is this to support, to arrange and provide, or both?**

Both

**22. The RFQ mentions the provision of first- and second-line triage against a menu of business support options. Is this menu available for review now or is it the list bullet pointed in the RFQ?**

Some of the business support available to view on the website. We will work with you to further develop these as they are constantly evolving. [Our support and events | OxLEP \(oxfordshirelep.com\)](#)

**23. What MarComms materials are currently in place and can we access examples?**

Examples on website, LinkedIn and social media posts

**24. Given the requirement to further develop the diagnostic tool, can/will we get access to this tool now or when the tender is awarded?**

Available on OxLEP website- [Our support and events | OxLEP \(oxfordshirelep.com\)](#)

**25. Do you have any estimated workload for the requirement to provide programme management support for the Growth Hub?**

Dependant on number of clients that engage

**26. Does the programme management support have to be provided in a specific location or is this expected to be remote provision?**

Remote initially, there will be access to office premises on a part time basis.

**27. What is the CRM system which the RFQ mentions under the requirement to support the ongoing work to develop the CRM system used by OxLEP? Will the winning bidder have access to this CRM system for reporting purposes going forward?**

CRM system used by OxLEP is Evolutive. Please note that the programme requires significant back office support.