



Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership

Funding and Investment Ready Programme Consultancy Brief

September 2023



Contents

1. BACKGROUND	3
2. BACKGROUND	3
3. BUDGET AND DURATION	4
4. OBJECTIVES	4
5. COMMISSION	5
6. OUTPUTS	6
7. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING	6
8. TIMETABLE	7
9. TENDER ASSESSMENT AND COMMISSIONING PROCEDURE	7
10. TENDER GUIDANCE	8
11. ANNEXE 1: FIRM-LEVEL DATA	9

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has been awarded funds by the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) to provide specialist business support to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) within Dorset.
- 1.2. The purpose of this function is to be a free service offering advice and support for businesses within the county. This includes providing them with business diagnostics and signposting to the most appropriate commercial or public funded assistance available to help them grow.
- 1.3. A need has been identified for specialist funding and investment advice and support so this programme will deliver a Funding and Investment Ready programme with a minimum of 50 interventions. Businesses taking part will comprise of high-growth or high-growth potential SMEs based in Dorset.
- 1.4. This programme is expected to support the growth of SMEs across the Dorset LEP area. These businesses should align with one (or more where there is an overlap) of the priority sectors listed below under section 5.3.)

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. SME businesses in Dorset, like most other SME businesses in the UK, are continuing to experience a range of challenges in obtaining debt or equity finance to propel their business growth. 2022 was a challenging year for business with high energy prices and inflation causing issues for many. Gross bank lending saw a significant rise in 2022 however this was not reflected in the number of smaller businesses accessing external finance which fell compared to 2021.
- 2.2. Dorset LEP wants to help ensure businesses are well placed to address and overcome these challenges whilst being able to take advantage of opportunities that arise through local and national programmes; these include but are not limited to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Innovate UK funding, Angel Network investment and the South West Investment Fund.
- 2.3. The 2022/23 Small Business Finance Markets report published by British Business Bank found that UK economic growth lost momentum and broadly ground to a halt in 2022 and that innovation, and access to finance, are an important driver of productivity and economic growth.
- 2.4. The 2022/23 Small Business Finance Markets report stated that lack of finance and funding can hold back companies from developing and commercialising innovation and this programme seeks to address that. The finance and funding

ecosystem is complex and difficult to navigate and this programme also seeks to provide Dorset SMEs with the best chance of success in terms of accessing finance and funding for their business to grow.

3. BUDGET AND DURATION

- 3.1. The contract is to run from 01 Dec 2023 until 31 March 2024.
- 3.2. There will be an optional 12 month extension which would lead to a potential contract end date of 31 March 2025, which would be triggered by Dorset LEP.
- 3.3. Any extension will be subject to the agreement of both parties and will require a new contract.
- 3.4. Any offer to extend the contract by a further 12 months will be made with a minimum of one month's notice, prior to the expiration of the existing original term.
- 3.5. The budget allocated is up to £10000 for the four month contract exclusive of any VAT charges that the supplier might incur.

4. OBJECTIVES

- 4.1. An increasing number of government funded programmes are looking at models that utilise equity co-investments with private sector investors in growth stage R&D-intensive British companies operating in high growth sectors or that help to address key economic and societal challenges such as Net Zero and automation.
- 4.2. This programme is aimed at supporting leaders and senior managers from the SME business community in Dorset who meet the eligibility criteria below:

UK based SME (<500 employees) company with active operations in Dorset
Actively seeking to grow, innovate and increase productivity
Early-stage businesses with a minimum viable product or established businesses seeking to scale-up

- 4.3 There may be some scope to work with some businesses outside of these criteria.

5. COMMISSION

- 5.1 Dorset LEP is seeking to appoint a supplier to deliver a Funding and Investment Readiness Programme to over 50 businesses across the Dorset LEP area. These businesses should align with one (or more where there is an overlap) of the priority sectors or themes listed below under section 5.3.
- 5.2 The provider(s) will need to clearly demonstrate in their tender response how they will meet the required deliverables within the available budget and timescales.
- 5.3 Dorset LEP is keen to ensure that this provision is aligned with Dorset's Local Industrial Strategy and capitalise on existing and emerging growth sectors and capabilities. As a result, we are particularly interested to receive proposals that seek to work in/with areas such as the following:

Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing
Agritech and Aquaculture
Digital Creative including Fintech
Defence and Security
Marine and Maritime

- 5.4 Each business taking part in this support should be offered 3+ hours of in-group / one to one support covering areas including but not limited to:

Understanding and navigating the business finance landscape
Grant funding, debt and equity finance
Alternative finance including crowdfunding
Designing and delivering pitches
Business planning including financials

- 5.5 It is anticipated that this programme will be delivered via a series of 5+ workshops covering different topics or aimed at different levels of finance knowledge or aimed at different sectors / business owner characteristics e.g. underrepresented groups. Businesses can access one workshop or a whole series including one to one support where a need is identified.
- 5.6 Dorset LEP would require that participating businesses receive a baseline assessment at the start of the programme and a further assessment at the

end of the programme. The aim of this is to help demonstrate the benefits that business have derived through their participation in this support.

- 5.7 The supplier will be required to record all activity onto the Dorset LEP's CRM system to ensure support for business through the service is coherent and that referral destinations and effectiveness of the service can be monitored.
- 5.8 The supplier will collect, as a minimum, firm-level data for those businesses who receive 'medium' or 'high' intensity business support as detailed in **Annexe 1**.
- 5.9 The supplier will be required to use the Dorset LEP brand and comply with the associated brand guidelines.

6. OUTPUTS

- 6.1. The following outputs, outcomes and service levels are required by the LEP by 31 March 2024:
 - Successful delivery of a minimum of 50 finance and investment support interventions
 - One overarching impact report detailing the support and outcomes of customers who have received support;
 - Two business case studies detailing the support provided and outcomes for that particular business
 - Liaising with the LEP around potential high-growth, investment ready businesses; and
 - Minimum 80% satisfaction from businesses receiving support.

7. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

- 7.1. The work will be overseen by Dorset LEP's Head of Business Growth & Inward Investment (HoBG&I).
- 7.2. The supplier must nominate a dedicated point of contact to act as Contract Manager to oversee the work and liaise with and report into the HoBG&I. This will include some face-to-face meetings (either virtual or online), and updates in writing, including advising of any service delivery issues.
- 7.3. Dorset LEP requires a high level of accuracy in this piece of work, particularly in relation to the data and management information provided. The Contract

Manager is responsible for ensuring the quality of the work and the accuracy of the information provided.

- 7.4. The supplier must be able to demonstrate that they have proven experience of working with businesses in an advisory capacity. In doing so, they must show examples of good customer engagement and feedback.

8. TIMETABLE

Invitation to Tender	02 October 2023
Deadline for the submission of Tenders	22 October 2023
Interviews (if required)	Week commencing 30 October 2023
Appointment	Week Commencing 13 November 2023
Inception meeting	Week Commencing 20 November 2023
Contract start date	01 December 2023

9. TENDER ASSESSMENT AND COMMISSIONING PROCEDURE

9.1. Evaluation criteria

Supplier selection will be made at the discretion of Dorset LEP.

Scoring weightings are broken down as follows:

- Process – 20%
- Engagement – 20%
- Systems – 10%
- Resources – 30%
- Price – 10%
- Due Diligence – 10%

9.2. Scoring criteria

5 Excellent	Proposal meets and, in some places, exceeds the required standard.
4 Good	Proposal meets required standard.
3 Acceptable	Proposal meets the required standard in most respects but is lacking or inconsistent in others.
2 Poor	Proposal falls short of expected standard.
1 Unacceptable	Completely or significantly fails to meet required standard or does not provide the relevant answer.

Dorset LEP reserves the right not to make any appointment.

10. TENDER GUIDANCE

10.1. Developing and submitting your quote

- Take the time to read and understand this document
- In particular, develop a strong understanding of the objective and outputs sections
- In structuring your response, consider how it will be evaluated
- If anything is unclear or you have any questions please direct these to our point of contact, Shelley Collins-Trevett, via email in the first instance to scollinstrevett@bournemouth.ac.uk
- Your response must be submitted via email for the attention of Shelley Collins-Trevett to scollinstrevett@bournemouth.ac.uk by no later than **23:59, 22nd October 2023**.
- Responses may be submitted at any time before the deadline but late responses will not be accepted under any circumstances

10.2. Conflicts of Interest

Dorset LEP may exclude the supplier if there is a conflict of interest which cannot be effectively remedied. The concept of a conflict of interest includes any situation where relevant staff members have, directly or indirectly, a financial, economic or other personal interest which might be perceived to compromise their impartiality and independence in the context of the procurement procedure.

Where there is any indication that a conflict of interest exists or may arise then it is the responsibility of the supplier to inform Dorset LEP, detailing the conflict in the supplier response to this tender.

11. ANNEXE 1: FIRM-LEVEL DATA

The following tables set out the **minimum** data to be collected for all businesses benefiting from either “Medium intensity” or “High intensity” by the supplier.

Business details and unique identifiers

	Type	Format	Notes
1.1	Contact name	Free text (no character limit)	
1.2	Contact e-mail address	Free text (no character limit)	
1.3	Contact telephone number	Free text (no character limit)	
1.4	Business name	Free text (no character limit)	Validate with lookup service
1.5	Company Registration Number (CRN) Issued by Companies House	8 digit number or 2 upper case letters and 6 digits e.g. 89675265 e.g. SL007945	Find/validate with lookup service If not a limited company and lookup failed, then leave blank If company is being registered soon, collect this once registered
1.6	HMRC VAT Registration number (VRN)	9 digits e.g. 123456789	Found on business VAT certificate

	[only needed if no CRN reference is available]		<p>Validate with lookup service</p> <p>Find VAT service from name</p> <p>If not VAT registered then leave blank</p>
1.7	<p>HMRC employers PAYE reference number</p> <p>(not accounts office reference)</p> <p>[Only needed if CRN or VAT references are not available]</p>	<p>DDD/LDDDDD</p> <p>or</p> <p>DDD/LLDDDDD</p> <p>e.g. 135/A56789</p> <p>e.g. 135/AB56789</p>	<p>L = Letter (upper case)</p> <p>D = Digit</p> <p>Also called Employer reference</p> <p>It can be found on HMRC business ePAYE letters OR by asking an accountant</p> <p>If not employing anyone on payroll then leave blank</p>
1.8	Number of FTE employees at local business's office receiving support	<p>Decimals allowed.</p> <p>e.g. 13.5</p>	Full time, part time and subcontractors only
1.9	Turnover (£)	XXX,XXX	Total income/sales
1.10	Full address of local business's office receiving support	<p>Free text</p> <p>(no character limit)</p>	

1.11	Postcode of business local business's office receiving support	Free text (max 8 characters)	
1.12	Is this a multi-site business	"Yes" or "no"	
1.13	Brief description of what the business does	Free text (100 words max)	The product/service it delivers. The customers it serves.
1.14	Growth/Scale-up potential	Free text (100 words max)	Brief description of the firm's levels of ambition and potential to grow
1.15	Month business started trading	MM/YYYY	Month the business first started making sales Provides an objective measure of the maturity of the business

Note: In relation to unique business identifiers, Only one of CRN, VAT registration or PAYE reference number need be collected. For non-employers, who are not limited companies, and who are below the VAT threshold, all three fields can be left blank.

Summary of support

	Type	Format	Notes
1.16	Cumulative length of interaction since very first contact with the Growth Hub	Hours (whole number digits)	Roundup to nearest hour
1.17	Summary of what support the business says it needs	Free text (no character limit)	What is the nature of their enquiry and subsequent business need

Support given in each interaction (1 or more) - Separate spreadsheet cells for each interaction

1.18	Type of support	Free text (no character limit)	Brief description of the support given during an interaction. Examples: Diagnostic, Referrals, Answer question, Ongoing support, Follow up. A single interaction can involve several types of support.
1.19	Date of this support	DD/MM/YYYY	This is the date of interaction (not the date a referral is taken up).

Referrals and signposting (0 or more) - Separate spreadsheet cells for each referral

	Type	Format	Notes
1.20	<u>Name</u> of referral program / service	Free text (no character limit)	Included all referrals of any kind made by the hub.
1.21	<u>Purpose</u> of referral	Free text (no character limit)	e.g. developing management capabilities, access to finance, recruiting technical skills
1.22	Date of referral?	DD/MM/YYYY	
1.23	Was the referral accepted and taken up?	Free text	If known, please record whether a referral was

		(no character limit)	<p>"accepted" or "not progressed".</p> <p>If pending, please record as "pending".</p> <p>If not known, please record as "unknown".</p>
1.24	Notes about this referral (optional)	Free text (no character limit)	