**TENDER QUERIES**

* VAT – section 4.2.1.2 asks for prices excluding VAT, but section 5.4. implies VAT should be included. Please can you clarify?

Prices should be submitted exclusive of VAT.

* On award criteria, section 4.1.1 is a pass/ fail based on understanding of the brief. I’m not clear if this is an overall assessment based on compliance with 4.1.2 and 4.1.3 or whether we should include an extra section with our overall understanding of your brief. Please can you clarify whether we can provide something additional which demonstrates our overall understanding?

This will be assessed based on completion of the technical element of the submission and does not require a separate response.

* How keen is the client team to get involved in stakeholder engagement and is there staff resource available to actively participate in engagements?

The LEP client team will be involved in all the stakeholder engagement activity within the project. An engagement programme involving the consultants will be agreed upon inception, led by the LEP with consultancy support to deliver presentations and answer related questions. Please refer to the engagement paragraphs in the specification including provisional sum required for additional engagement activity.

* Can you signpost us to the 2022 evidence base or will this be made available to successful tenderers?
* Could you clarify any local data sets which a successful bidder might have access to, to support research work?

The wider evidence base is available on the LEP’s website (SEP, LIS, Recovery Plan etc). There have been two presentations to the Strategy Programme Board on the evidence base in 2022 which are available on the LEP’s website via the minutes and papers for the meeting (Strategy Programme Board page – June 2022 and November 2022 (shortly to be published)). The updated evidence base includes economic development related material on the themes of sustainable, healthy, inclusive and growing which stem from the LEP’s recent vision. The full evidence base will be made available to the successful consultants.

* Are there existing engagement structures/groups which you anticipate utilising? Do you envisage a thematic or geographical approach to engagement? Will it be a mix of face to face and virtual?

The tender brief (section 3) specifies that initial engagement will be via the subregional Growth Directors’ Meeting (including Local Authorities), the LEP Board and/or its subcommittee the Strategy Programme Board, and LEP Executive Team. Additional sessions will be arranged as part of a programme of consultation and engagement with business and stakeholders, which will be discussed upon inception.

* Will the LEP be responsible for producing the plan, and the consultancy support sought will provide strategic advice and inputs?

The consultancy support will produce the outputs as specified in section 3 – specification. This will include the following:

Summary of deliverables:

* Review/evaluation of progress on previous subregional strategies
* Desktop review of local authority key economic and associated strategies
* Thinkpiece on development of a sustainable and inclusive economic plan
* Comprehensive report/material on potential areas of intervention
* Presentational materials
* Advice/proposal on targets/KPIs
* Presentation and attendance at 3 stakeholder engagement sessions
* Provisional sum for 6 additional stakeholder engagement sessions

Please refer to the specification for further details.

* Can you provide further clarification on the product desired for the bid submission in terms of approach to project management and quality assurance, including project plan and timetable?

A written response covering the key elements of this question is required within the tender return. Tenderers may additionally wish to submit a separate appendix with a project plan/timetable.

* Does the LEP have a monitoring and evaluation team that the supplier might be able to engage with during this project?

Please see the LEP’s website for details of staffing. While we don't directly monitor & evaluate our performance against our SEP in-house, we commission regular updates to our evidence base and we monitor & evaluate our annual delivery plan. This piece of work includes a review/evaluation of progress on previous subregional strategies to be completed by the consultant with input from LEP staff.

* The tender states “the successful consultants will need to demonstrate extensive experience of economic analysis, developing economic strategies, scenario testing, sector analysis and sector propositions, with demonstrable experience of and insight into proactive, innovative, sustainable and inclusive economic strategies.” Could you provide a view on the relative importance of these experiences?

Consultants should ensure that their wider team has adequate expertise across the full range of economic analysis and strategy activity and use their own judgement about the relative importance of skills and experience required to complete this piece of work.

* Budget – We can’t see a budget specified within the documentation. Can you give an indication of budget for the work, and clarify whether this includes the provisional sum for stakeholder engagement activity?
* Please can you advise on the available budget?

To confirm the anticipated budget range is £30k-50k.

* Word limits - Please could we also clarify whether the word limit for each question on the submission form is 750 words? It specifies this for the method, but not for the other questions – does the same limit apply?

Some questions have word/ page limits, others don’t. Are you happy for us to use our judgement for questions where the page limit is not specified?

* Appendix 3’s ‘approach to methodology’ section includes word limit guidance. Can you provide recommendations on the word limits for appendix 3’s other sections?

Please note that it is not a word limit, but an advised word count of 750 for certain questions, to ensure that you are aware of our expected level of detail. If there are no word counts advised then we have decided to not set any expectations on length of response, and this is therefore for you and your organisation to determine the appropriate length of response.