

Invitation to Tender

ITT Reference	S2G001		
Tender for	Provision of Signpost 2 Grants brokerage service for SMEs in the GCGP LEP area		
Date issued	15 March 2017	Submission deadline	29 March 2017
Contact details	Jane Rodger, HR & Communications Manager		

Invitation to tender

Norfolk & Waveney Enterprise Services Ltd (Nwes) invites tenders for the provision of a grants brokerage service for eligible SMEs within the GCGP LEP area, assisting them to access, apply for and claim a grant through the Signpost 2 Grants scheme. The scope of services to be provided and the manner in which you should respond are defined in this document.

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1 TENDERING INSTRUCTIONS

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 It is your responsibility to obtain, at your own expense, all information necessary for the preparation of your tender.
- 1.1.2 Should you be in doubt as to the interpretation of any part of the Invitation to Tender documents, please contact the individual, below, by email in the first instance who will endeavour to answer written queries submitted before 29 March 2017. Contact details are:

Jane Rodger, HR & Communications Manager
Nwes
Norwich Enterprise Centre
4B Guildhall Hill
Norwich NR2 1JH

Email: jane.rodger@nwes.org.uk
Phone: 01603 227861

- 1.1.3 Responses to queries will be made in writing. If you would like to be included in responses made to questions, please advise the above in writing.
- 1.1.4 The tenders will be evaluated against the criteria stated within Section 1.8 of this document.
- 1.1.5 The tender must remain open for acceptance for a period of 90 days from the closing date.
- 1.1.6 Suppliers will be expected to provide references, if possible.
- 1.1.7 Tenderers will be notified by 7 April 2017 of the decision.
- 1.1.8 Prices should be quoted inclusive and exclusive of VAT. Please refer to Section 4 for more information.

1.2 Statement of confidentiality

- 1.2.1 The Invitation to Tender document is, and shall remain the property of Nwes and must be returned on demand.
- 1.2.2 All information supplied by Nwes shall be regarded as private and confidential and may only be disclosed on an *in confidence* basis to those who need to know or be consulted for the purpose of preparing the response.
- 1.2.3 It is appreciated that confidential information will be supplied to Nwes and two signed copies of a Confidentiality Statement are enclosed (see Section 7) which are binding on both parties. One copy should be signed by a Director of your company and returned to Nwes with your Tender submission.
- 1.2.4 The tenderer shall also complete the Form of Tender (see Section 9) and the Declaration as to Collusive Tendering (see Section 8). These should be attached to the end of the tender submitted.

1.3 Tendering rules

- 1.3.1 THE TENDER MUST BE RECEIVED AT NWES'S NORWICH OFFICES NOT LATER THAN 17:00 ON WEDNESDAY 29 MARCH 2017. Any tender which is received after the date for return will NOT be considered and Nwes will not consider requests for extension of the closing date and time.
- 1.3.2 All tenders must be in a plain sealed envelope and addressed to the Individual identified in Section 1.1.2 bearing the words "Tender for S2G001 Grants Brokerage for GCGP Area" and shall not be valid if the envelope bears any such name or mark indicating the identity of the sending organisation.

- 1.3.3 Responses must be returned together with the Declaration of Collusive Tendering (see Section 8) and Form of Tender (see Section 9) completed.
- 1.3.4 Any supplier who directly or indirectly canvasses any employee of Nwes, concerning the award of the contract for the provision of the service will be disqualified.
- 1.3.5 Every tender received by Nwes shall be deemed to have been made, subject to the terms and conditions of the Invitation to Tender documents, unless the clause heading and paragraph number of any clauses to which you object have been specified in your response, together with the reason for your objection.

1.4 Timescale

Stage	Date
Tender documents issued	Wednesday 15 March 2017
Queries to be answered by	Monday 27 March 2017
Tenders to be submitted	Wednesday 29 March 2017
Evaluation of tenders	Monday 3 April 2017
Interviews (if applicable)	Thursday 6 April 2017
Tender(s) awarded by	Friday 7 April 2017
Contract(s) commences	Friday 7 April 2017

1.5 Scope of service required

- 1.5.1 The provision of a grants brokerage service for eligible SMEs within the GCGP LEP area, assisting them to access, apply for and claim a grant through the Signpost 2 Grants scheme (see Sections 2.2 - 2.4) between the start of the contract (above) and the end of the contract on 31 November 2018. Further details are provided in Section 3.
- 1.5.2 For information, the GCGP LEP area comprises the following boroughs and districts: Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Forest Heath, Huntingdonshire, King's Lynn & West Norfolk, North Hertfordshire, Peterborough, Rutland, South Cambridgeshire, South Holland, South Kesteven, St. Edmundsbury and Uttlesford.
- 1.5.3 The indicative budget allocated to this activity (£80,000 plus VAT) relates directly to the number of grant settlements that the project must achieve. Should this number be reduced for any reason, the maximum value of the contract will be reduced proportionally. This is the total budget whether one or more contactors are selected.
- 1.5.4 Payment will be performance-based with stage payments of a maximum of £500 for each grant application approved by the Grants Panel and a maximum of £500 for each grant successfully claimed by the SME. Further details are presented in Section 3.2. The tender submission is, therefore, an opportunity to demonstrate your capacity to a) access and engage potentially-eligible SMEs seeking access to capital grant funding to support growth initiatives, b) provide the required assistance (onsite, if necessary) to generate high quality grant applications and supporting materials, and c) provide the required assistance to enable successful applicants to claim their grants in a timely manner.

1.6 Form of tender

- 1.6.1 The tender response must consist of a proposal that responds directly to all the requirements outlined in this tender document, especially in relation to Sections 1, 3, 4 and 5.

- 1.6.2 The proposal must be presented in a clear and legible format in the form of one hard copy (paper) of no more than 15 pages (excluding Appendices) and an electronic copy (Word or PDF format placed on a CD/memory stick).
- 1.6.3 The proposal should be presented in a way that is straightforward to interpret
- 1.6.4 The proposal presented must:
- Give a brief introduction setting the context for the proposal.
 - Provide background information about the organisation making the proposal, including profiles and CVs of the team that will contribute;
 - Provide a point of contact for correspondence;
 - Outline how the specification of requirements of this tender are going to be addressed, showing why the tendering organisation should be selected. This should be structured in line with the contract award criteria (see Section 1.8);
 - Detail any assumptions that have been made;
 - Provide the appropriate costing and company information requested in Section 5;
 - Include the contact details of any references relating to similar work that you have undertaken.
- 1.6.5 Throughout the proposal, the tenderer must clearly indicate to what extent any proposal does or does not satisfy the specified requirements. If the tenderer believes that there is an alternative proposal which may not fully meet the requirements but which is likely to be judged superior on benefit grounds, then an appropriate comment and supporting details should be included.

1.7 Evaluation

- 1.7.1 Nwes reserves the right to write to or meet with tenderers for clarification of any point. Replies will be required in writing.
- 1.7.2 Tenders will be evaluated against the criteria laid down in Section 1.8 in relation to specification of requirements (see Section 3).
- 1.7.3 Tenderers will be informed of the outcome in writing/email.

1.8 Contract award criteria

- 1.8.1 Selection of contractors will be based on the following criteria:

Assessment scoring:	
Score	Description
5 Points	<i>Outstanding response</i> : covers all areas expected with strong evidence and relevant ideas not previously known/thought of which will enhance the service provided.
4 Points	<i>Excellent response</i> : demonstrates a thorough understanding of the requirements. Gives real confidence that the supplier will add value with excellent understanding/knowledge, skills, resources and/or quality measures. Response includes strong evidence.
3 Points	<i>Good response</i> : demonstrates a sound understanding of the requirements. Gives confidence that the relevant understanding/knowledge, skills, resource and/or quality measures will be available. Response includes appropriate evidence.
2 Points	<i>Acceptable response</i> : demonstrates some understanding/knowledge of requirements and ability to deliver; provides some confidence that relevant understanding/knowledge, skills, resource and/or quality measures will be available. Response includes some evidence
1 Point	<i>Unsatisfactory response</i> : reservations about the service provider's ability in relation to the requirement; little or no evidence to support the response.
0 Points	Unacceptable response: failed to address the requirement appropriately, lacks convincing evidence of ability to meet the requirements; the response gives no confidence of the tenderer's ability to satisfy the requirement.

1.8.2 The weightings applied are summarised in the following table:

Assessment criteria and weightings:		
Selection Criteria	Specific requirement	Weighting
1. Relevant track record	1a. Experience and/or track record in relation to each element of the stated requirements demonstrated	20%
2. Ability to meet key requirements	2a. Methodology meets/exceeds the aims/scope of the requirements, i.e. identifying/engaging eligible SMEs, securing completed grant applications and securing completed grant claims	50%
3. Fees	3a. Experience working with staged payments	5%
	3b. Value for money, calculated as <i>weighting x (lowest fee ÷ your fee)</i> *	15%
4. Additional requirements	4a. Unique selling point	5%
	4b. Added value	5%

* i.e. the costs that you quote in relation to the maximum stage payments of £500 per successful grant application and £500 per successful grant claim, as outlined in Section 3.2.

2 CURRENT STATUS

2.1 Norfolk & Waveney Enterprise Services Ltd

2.1.1 Nwes is a BIS-registered Enterprise Agency, which means that we comply with the highest standards of integrity and propriety and adhere to standards enshrined within the legislation. Formed over 30 years ago, Nwes is now recognised

as the leading enterprise agency in the country and has recently merged with the London Small Business Centre and NBV in the East Midlands. We are a true social enterprise with every single penny of surplus being used to deliver our social purpose of supporting and developing the local economy. We are ranked sixth in the Sunday Times 100 Best Companies Best Places to Work in the Not for Profit Sector 2017.

2.2 The Signpost 2 Grow Growth Programme

2.2.1 Building upon the success of previous Nwes-managed projects, The Signpost 2 Grow Growth Programme is an EU-funded project delivered in partnership with the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough (GCGP) Local Enterprise Partnership. The advice/support element of the Project provides support at two critical stages of business development: a) encouraging start-ups and entrepreneurship, and b) growing those newly-established firms, which, various studies note, rarely re-visit initial business plans and strategy after they start trading. Until mid-November 2018, it will provide the following – of which (d) is the focus of this contract:

- a) signposting and information, diagnostics and brokerage support for individuals and businesses;
- b) an intensive start-up support service for individuals seeking to unlock their enterprise potential;
- c) free/confidential/impartial business growth support to established SMEs;
- d) an innovative package of discretionary capital grant-based support for 113+ SMEs.

2.2.2 The Programme must meet its highly-prescriptive targets, including – critically – administering its integrated grant scheme to catalyse the investment by SMEs of £2,825,000.

2.2.3 The contract awarded under this tender is predicated upon Nwes maintaining its current Signpost 2 Grow Growth Programme contract with DCLG. Upon unforeseen termination of the contract with DCLG, the contract awarded under this tender would be terminated and no new grant applications/claims will be authorised.

2.2.4 The following table summarises the minimum overall requirement of this contract. The contractor(s) is expected to achieve these results. A 40% deviation from this schedule in any given period will trigger termination of the contract.

Period	No. successful grant applications	No. successful grant claims
Apr-17	1	0
May-17	5	0
Jun-17	5	1
Jul-17	5	5
Aug-17	5	5
Sep-17	5	5
Oct-17	5	5
Nov-17	5	5
Dec-17	5	5
Jan-18	5	5
Feb-18	5	5
Mar-18	5	5
Apr-18	5	5
May-18	5	5
Jun-18	5	5
Jul-18	5	5
Aug-18	4	5
Sep-18	0	5
Oct-18	0	4

2.3 Overview of the Signpost 2 Grants scheme

- 2.3.1 The Signpost 2 Grants scheme provides a flexible capital subsidy to help businesses grow is available to any small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) working with the Project, as long as it fulfils the criteria and conditions outlined in the Guidance (see Section 2.4.1). The aim of the Grant is to provide a flexible capital subsidy to assist SMEs to implement initiatives to realise growth and efficiency opportunities. The Grant can be used to assist where the SME has not previously invested or in areas that will potentially make the business more viable, or act as a catalyst for competitiveness.
- 2.3.2 Grants for equipment are available up to a maximum of 20% of eligible costs or £20,000, whichever is lower. The average grant value is £5,000 and the minimum grant value is £1,000. The other 80% of costs are met by the applicant. Multiple grant applications from the same applicant cannot be considered. Our grants are discretionary and not all applicants will be awarded the full 20% of eligible costs. Grant applications are subject to both due diligence and consideration by an independent Grants Panel.
- 2.3.3 Not all grant applications will be successful and the success rate is related directly to the quality and completeness of applications. It is anticipated that at least 80% of complete grant applications from eligible beneficiaries will be successful. The winning contractor will be expected to spend a day in Norwich at the contract's inception to meet the project team and shadow the processing of grant applications; this will provide useful insights into how to maximise applications' chances of success.
- 2.3.4 We cannot retrospectively fund initiatives that applicants have already been commissioned, paid for in full or in part or otherwise definitively initiated. All grant payments are made as reimbursements to the applicant subject to the satisfactory provision of proof of expenditure in accordance with the original application – i.e. paid in arrears.

2.4 Grant guidance and eligibility of applicants/expenditure

- 2.4.1 Key grant application and claim documentation is appended to this invitation to tender, as follows:
- *QF 402 Signpost 2 Grants Guidance* (which provides an overview of how to complete the application form);
 - *QF 394 Signpost 2 Grants Application Form* (the grant application form to be completed in each case and submitted, along with the supporting information);
 - *QF 398 Signpost 2 Grants Advisor Recommendation Form* (a short form providing the grants broker the opportunity to comment on the proposals)
 - *QF 396 Signpost 2 Grants Claim Form* (the grant claim form to be completed in each case and submitted, along with the supporting information).
- 2.4.2 Eligible applicants are SMEs that satisfy the following conditions:
- An applicant's business should be in GCGP LEP area or undertaking a project that will directly benefit the GCGP LEP area;
 - For the last 3 years, an applicant's business has employed fewer than 250 fulltime staff and has either a) an annual turnover not exceeding £40 million or b) an annual balance sheet total not exceeding £35 million;
 - Other organisations own less than 25% of the shares or voting rights of the applicant's business and the applicant's business or its beneficial owners control less than 25% of the shares or voting rights of another organisation;
 - During the past 3 years, the applicant's business has received less than £165,000 of publicly-funded assistance (for example, support, grants or reliefs);

- The applicant's main business activity is not retail, fisheries or aquaculture, agriculture or the processing of agricultural products, coal, steel, shipbuilding, synthetic fibres, banking, insurance, healthcare or school age education.

2.4.3 It should be assumed that the winning contractor(s) will generate sufficient leads to meet the schedule in Section 2.2.3, although project Business Advisors in the GCGP LEP area will also be referring prospects/contacts across to the contractor(s) to follow up.

3 SPECIFICATION OF REQUIREMENT(S)

3.1 Key requirements

3.2 An appropriately-experienced contractor is required to engage with and facilitate/broker Growth Grant applications by eligible SMEs within the GCGP LEP area (comprising the following boroughs and districts: Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Forest Heath, Huntingdonshire, King's Lynn & West Norfolk, North Hertfordshire, Peterborough, Rutland, South Cambridgeshire, South Holland, South Kesteven, St. Edmundsbury and Uttlesford)

3.3 Stage payments

3.3.1 The output from the application process will be a complete, signed hardcopy of the *QF 394 Signpost 2 Grants Application Form* and *QF 398 Signpost 2 Grants Advisor Recommendation Form* (appended to this invitation to tender) plus supporting information (typically, copies of two years' financial accounts but – on occasion – additional information including, up to date management accounts if financial accounts are more than six months old, copies of three months' bank statements and at least one written quote for each item that grant support is sought for – or at least three written quotes for each item over £25,000 in value) posted to the Nwes office in Norwich. Application packs are screened and subject to due diligence by Nwes. Successful applicants will be issued with a Grant Offer Letter and the first stage payment to the contractor will be authorised.

3.3.2 The output from the claim process will be a complete, signed hardcopy of the *QF 396 Signpost 2 Grants Claim Form* (appended to this invitation to tender) plus supporting information (certified copies of relevant invoices and bank statements showing the payments made, Asset Log Form and Impact Form) posted to the Nwes office in Norwich. Claim packs are screened and subject to checks by Nwes. Successful claimants will be cleared for payment by Nwes and the second stage payment to the contractor will be authorised.

3.3.3 Your tender submission should clearly set out the inclusive costs, excluding VAT, of delivering each output (i.e. the cost per successful grant application and the cost per successful grant claim). The absolute maximum in each case is £500.

3.3.4 A deviation of 40% or more from the schedule in Section 2.2.3 in any given period will trigger termination of the contract.

3.4 Additional requirements

3.4.1 The successful contractor(s) will be expected to provide brief weekly summaries of pipeline activity and performance against objectives.

4 COSTS AND SCHEDULE OF WORK

4.1 Cost requirements

4.1.1 Tenders are required to clearly identify all costs in relation to the provision of the two steps – application and claim – outlined in Section 3.2.

- 4.1.2 The contractor must make their travel carbon-neutral. Associated costs can be included for this and should be highlighted – including the name of the provider. For example, the calculator at climatecare.org/calculator provides a very simple carbon offset for 1,000 miles in a 30mpg car for £2.50.

5 REQUEST FOR COMPANY INFORMATION

5.1 Company details

5.1.1 You are requested to provide the following written information about your company:

- Name of company
- Address for all correspondence
- Telephone number
- Fax number
- Email address
- Registered office (if different from above)
- Is the company a sole trader, partnership, private limited company, public limited company, or other (please state)?
- Brief description of the activities of the company
- How long has your company been in business?

5.1.2 If your company is a limited company, please supply the following additional information as applicable:

- Date of registration and registration number under the Companies Act 1985
- Date of registration and registration number under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965-1978
- If a member of a group of companies, the names and addresses of the ultimate holding company and all other subsidiaries

5.1.3 Please give information about the person applying on behalf of the company:

- Name
- Position in the company
- Telephone number
- Fax number
- Email address

5.1.4 Please provide details of any past/present employment with Nwes, of any of the directors, partners or associates. This should include details of name, department, post held and dates of employment.

5.1.5 If any of the Directors, partners or associates is related to any member of staff employed by Nwes, give details of the name, department, post held, relationship and dates of employment.

5.1.6 Details of any director, partner or associate who has/have been involved with any company which has: become bankrupt; made a composition with its creditors; had a winding up order made; had a resolution for voluntary winding up passed; had a proposed liquidator, receiver or manager appointed; or, had an administrators order made. These details must include the person's name, company name, position in the company and date of event.

5.2 Financial information

5.2.1 Please provide the following summary of your last two years' annual trading results of your company and your parent company, if your company is a subsidiary:

- Annual Report and Full Accounts for your latest submitted tax year;
- Net assets;
- Turnover for the two years preceding your last tax year;
- Profit before tax for the two years preceding your last tax year.

5.2.2 Nwes may take up credit references if you choose to Tender.

5.2.3 Please give details of insurance held by including copies of your policies showing:

- Insurer;
- Policy Number;
- Extent of cover;
- Expiry date.

5.2.4 Insurance for the following should be included:

- Employer's Liability Insurance held;
- Public Liability (Third Party) Insurance held;
- Professional Indemnity;
- Service Quality Information.

5.3 Quality

5.3.1 Has your company any British Standards or ISO accreditations? If so, please give details.

5.3.2 Does your company have any other accreditations e.g. Investors in people? If so, please give details.

5.3.3 Has your company an Equal Opportunities/Equalities policy. If so please provide a copy.

5.4 Environmental sustainability criteria

5.4.1 Does your company have an environmental/sustainability policy or operates an Environmental Management System? If so please provide details of any certification such as ISO14001/EMAS and a copy of your policy.

5.4.2 What evidence does your company have to show that it is seeking to minimise or reduce its environmental impact?

6 CONTRACTS

6.1 Contracting arrangements

6.1.1 A formal contract, precise delivery requirements and agreed cost will be negotiated and formalised once the successful contractor is appointed. The contractor must follow Nwes's policies in respect of insurance, liability and codes of practice.

6.1.2 The successful contractor(s) will be offered a contract with Nwes based upon the tender submitted and will be expected to deliver the activities and outputs specified. The period of the contract is until the end of October 2018; all expenditure and activity must be completed by that date.

7 CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

Norfolk & Waveney Enterprise Services Ltd (Nwes)

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF SIGNPOST 2 GRANTS BROKERAGE SERVICE FOR SMES IN THE GCGP LEP AREA

To be signed by the applicant, a partner or authorised representative in his/her own name and on behalf of the company. Please note that the term "company" refers to: sole proprietor, partnership, incorporated company, co-operative as appropriate.

I/We accept that no part of this Invitation to Tender document may be reproduced in any material form (including photocopying or storing it in any medium by electronic means) without the written permission of the Copyright owner except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988. Application for the Copyright owner's written permission to reproduce any part of this Invitation to Tender document should be addressed the Individual identified in Section 1.1.2 of the Invitation to Tender

I/We accept that the information supplied in this Invitation to Tender, the draft contract, and the tender is confidential and will not be revealed to any third party except where this is necessary for the provision of the tender or the completion or operation of the contract.

SIGNED ON BEHALF OF NORFOLK & WAVENEY ENTERPRISE SERVICES LTD			
Signed		Print name	
Position		Date	/ /

SIGNED ON BEHALF OF			
Signed		Print name	
Position		Date	/ /

8 DECLARATION REALTING TO COLLUSIVE TENDERING

Norfolk & Waveney Enterprise Services Ltd (Nwes)

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF SIGNPOST 2 GRANTS BROKERAGE SERVICE FOR SMES IN THE GCGP LEP AREA

- I. The tender submitted herewith is a bona fide tender, intended to be competitive.
- II. We have not fixed or adjusted the amount of the tender under or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other person.
- III. We have not done and we undertake that we will not do at any time before the hour specified for the return of the tender any of the following acts:
 - communicating to a person other than the person calling for these tenders the amount or approximate amount of the proposed tender (except where the disclosure in confidence, of the approximate amount of the tender was essential to obtain an insurance premium quotation required for the preparation of the tender);
 - entering into any agreement with any other person that he shall refrain from tendering or as to the amount of any tenders to be submitted; and
 - offering or paying or giving or agreeing to give any sum of money or valuable consideration directly or indirectly to a person for doing or having done or causing or having caused to be done in relation to any other tenders any act or thing of the sort described above.

IN THIS CERTIFICATE:

- I. *person* includes any person and anybody or association corporate or incorporate.
- II. *any agreement or arrangements* includes any transaction of the sort described above, formal or informal and whether legally binding or not.

Full legal name of tenderer			
Signed		Print name	
Position		Date	/ /

(same signatory as in Form of Tender in Section 8)

9 FORM OF TENDER

Norfolk & Waveney Enterprise Services Ltd (Nwes)

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF SIGNPOST 2 GRANTS BROKERAGE SERVICE FOR SMES IN THE GCGP LEP AREA

I/we		(full legal name of tenderer)
of		(address)

(being the tenderer's principal place of business or registered office)

Hereby tender for *S2G001 Grants Brokerage for GCGP Area* and offer to perform the Service at the prices shown in the attached Tender Documentation.

I/We confirm that this is a Bona Fide Tender.

I/We acknowledge that Nwes is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender.

I/We understand that the successful tenderer will be required to execute a formal agreement and until the execution of the formal agreement all correspondence and negotiation between us and Nwes remains subject to contract.

Signed		Print name	
Position		Date	/ /

(to be signed on behalf of the tenderer by a partner if the tenderer is a firm or by a director or other person authorised to bind the company if the tenderer is a company)

QF 402 Signpost 2 Grants Guidance

This guidance provides a summary of the Signpost 2 Grants scheme for potential applicants.

The grant is available to any small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) working with the Project, as long as it fulfils the criteria and conditions outlined herein. The aim of the Grant is to provide a flexible capital subsidy to assist SMEs to implement initiatives to realise growth and efficiency opportunities. The Grant can be used to assist where the SME has not previously invested or in areas that will potentially make the business more viable, or act as a catalyst for competitiveness.

Signpost 2 Grants provides a flexible capital subsidy to help your business grow. Grants for equipment are available up to a maximum of 20% of eligible costs or £20,000, whichever is lower, and the average grant value is £5,000.

Your Business Advisor is there to help you put together your application . the **QF 394 Signpost 2 Grants Application Form** . and you are strongly advised to discuss your application with them prior to submission. They will explain any issues around eligibility and help you to complete the paperwork. If you are successful in securing a grant offer, they may also be able to help you submit your claim.

About our grants

Our grants are available up to a maximum of 20% of eligible capital expenditure, with the other 80% of costs met by the applicant. Typical grant awards are around £5,000 and the maximum grant award possible is £20,000. Multiple grant applications from the same applicant cannot be considered. Our grants are discretionary and not all applicants will be awarded the full 20% of eligible costs.

What the Grant **can** support

- investment in the purchase and installation of equipment, machinery, technology or processes that facilitates business growth, improves resilience or productivity or creates jobs
- investment in efficiency initiatives in the form of equipment to realise materials/utilities optimisation, recovery or reduction
- improvements to business premises that create extra capacity and enable growth

What the Grant **cannot** support

- paying-off debts or refinancing
- the purchase of stock, land, buildings, building maintenance or renewal
- research and development costs, financial investments
- salaries, travel, subsistence, training or accreditations
- ongoing normal business costs (i.e. business rates, overheads etc.)
- costs associated with a statutory or legislative requirement for the organisation

Please note that we **cannot** retrospectively fund initiatives that have already been commissioned, paid for in full or in part or otherwise definitively initiated. Grant funding cannot be awarded as retrospective payment for goods or services procured before a formal offer of a grant has been received and accepted.

Issue No. 4	Date changed: 14/03/2017	Circulated to: All Staff
QF 402 Signpost 2 Grants Guidance		

Help completing the **QF 394 Signpost 2 Grants Application Form**

There are a limited number of grants available and your response to the questions on the application form will directly influence the application appraisal process and should be answered as fully as possible. The following guidance . along with your Business Advisor . will help you to make a strong case for grant support.

- **Questions 10-13** . these questions demonstrate your organisation's status as an eligible small or medium-sized enterprise (SME). The information is the same that you will have provided when you originally completed your **QF 390 Signpost 2 Grow Enrolment Form** and is a requirement of our European funding.
- **Question 14** . The Grants Panel is looking for evidence of your ability to deliver growth; you should use this section to demonstrate an understanding of the market that you operate in.
- **Question 15** . ~~to~~ purchase a piece of machinery+would not be sufficient detail. A better response would include details of how the machinery can contribute to your organisation's growth or efficiency, why you need it, how it will be used and how it compliments other processes. The Grants Panel is looking for *additionality*; you should use this section to demonstrate how the Grant would make a difference, not simply fund something that's going to happen anyway. The Grant could, however, be used to a) bring forward programmed initiatives, b) extend/expand programmed initiatives, or c) enhance the specification/benefits of a programmed initiative.
- **Question 16** . aspects that could be included in response to this question include competitiveness, productivity, viability, future growth and/or efficiency, increased capabilities or labour force, new products or new areas of investment or research activity.
- **Question 17** . the Grants Panel is looking for information about any factors that might affect your ability to claim your grant on time. For example, if preparatory works or certain consents are required before implementation of the supported initiative(s) can take place.
- **Question 18** . please outline the specific benefits that the initiative will realise. For example, will this initiative or initiatives generate a measurable increase in turnover? Will it result in the organisation being able to offer a new product to its customers . if so, what? The Grants Panel attaches particular importance to a) job creation, and b) supporting enterprises to introduce new products or services, including *process innovation* as long as the process contributes to the development of the product or service.
- **Question 19-20** . these questions cover any additional benefits that the investment will realise. The Grants Panel is looking for any *added value* that could strengthen your application.
- **Question 21** . this can include reasonable installation costs for equipment, as well as purchase costs. These values should not include VAT. You can apply for whatever grant assistance you wish, but levels exceeding 20% of eligible costs or £5,000 in value are unlikely to be considered unless the initiatives and outcomes that you propose clearly justify this.
- **Question 22** . to ensure transparency and that the publicly-funded Growth Grant provides value-for-money, you must ensure that you procure the goods or works each cost listed in **Question 21**. Please be aware of your own company policy on procurement procedures. In order to provide realistic costs in response to **Question 21**, some procurement activity will need to have been carried out, anyway. If you have sought a quote for goods/services but a supplier has declined to provide one, you can provide evidence of having done so in lieu of a quote.

Please note that suppliers linked to your own organisation should not be used. Items that appear to have been artificially divided to avoid the thresholds will be challenged by the Grants Panel, as will costs that are deemed ~~excessive~~ You are not obliged to accept the cheapest available cost, but if you appear to be paying too much, you would need to demonstrate best value or the *most economically-advantageous* option (taking into account full-life cost, quality, technical merit, aesthetic/functional characteristics, environmental characteristics, delivery date and/or period of completion, functional added-value, aftercare considerations . e.g. process-critical equipment requiring an engineer onsite within one hour etc.). You would need to indicate which of these criteria apply and provide a written explanation; the bigger the price difference, the more robust the justification would need to be.

The specific procurement requirements are summarised in the following table:

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Cost	Cost type	Procurement requirement
£0 - £24,999	Equipment (e.g. machinery), supplies, goods or works (e.g. improvements to business premises that create extra capacity and enable growth)	Provide at least one written quote, published price or price comparison from your preferred supplier. Carefully annotate these sheets carefully to a) include the Ref from the table in this section and from Section 21 , and b) highlight the relevant cost excluding VAT.
£25,000 +	Equipment (e.g. machinery), supplies or goods	Provide at least three written quotes, published prices or price comparisons from different suppliers Carefully annotate these sheets carefully to a) include the Ref from the table in this section and from Section 21 , and b) highlight the relevant cost excluding VAT.
£25,000 +	Works (e.g. improvements to business premises that create extra capacity and enable growth)	At the point of claim, you will need to provide evidence that the contract was advertised openly on your website for a period of at least ten days, in such a way that all interested parties were able to submit bids and be considered for the advertised contract, which must be awarded in a fair and transparent manner. Enter an accurate indicative cost in this section for grant application purposes.

Please note the thresholds for advertising in the Official Journal of the EU. General guidance is that projects exceeding £100,000 in total value must adhere to EU rules on public procurement, which are designed to open up the EU's public procurement market to competition, to prevent buy national policies and to promote the free movement of goods and services. For more information, please refer to www.ojec.com.

- **Question 23** . your response outlines how you are planning to fund the proposed investment. Ideally, you will purchase physical assets outright. In some cases, it's possible to combine our grants with other external sources of funding, but this is more complex and you would need to obtain advice from your Business Advisor. In terms of the other 80% of eligible costs that grant applicants are expected to meet, the most straightforward option is to invest using company reserves, cash or equivalent. Other points to note:
 - a) you can't use other EU funding at all;
 - b) you can use non-EU public funding;
 - c) you can use non-public funding, provided payment to the supplier of the goods/services will be made by your organisation (i.e. not paid directly by the grant/loan provider).
- **Question 24** . If you are in any doubt as to whether previous assistance received would constitute State Aid, please raise your concerns with us as soon as possible. Examples of state aid include publicly-funded grants, interest rate relief, tax relief, tax credits, state guarantees or holdings, direct subsidies and tax exemptions.

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Other points to note

- Please ensure that you provide all the evidence required to process and verify your grant application, paying particular attention to the checklist presented in **Questions 32-36**.
- Please provide any evidence or workings to support the savings, outputs and outcomes attributable in whole or in part to the initiative(s) outlined and the provision of a grant.
- You are asked co-operate, if requested, with the project to promote and publicise any outcomes in the form of press releases, case studies or other communications unless there are clear reasons not to (for example, confidentiality around intellectual property or patents etc.).
- A **QF 396 Signpost 2 Grants Claim Form** must be submitted within 3 months of receiving a grant offer.
- All grant payments are made as reimbursements to the applicant subject to the satisfactory provision of proof of expenditure in accordance with the original application. Grants will be settled within 3 months of the submission of the claim form.
- If applicant intends to pay for goods or services (which are the subject of their grant application) on HP or other asset finance facility, interest payments are not eligible for grant reimbursement. Any grant will be paid in instalments upon receipt of confirmation that the applicant has incurred eligible costs. You must inform us of your intention to make use of such a facility at the point of grant application, in response to **Question 23** of your **QF 394 Signpost 2 Grants Application Form**, not at the point of grant claim. From the Grants Panel's perspective, the most straightforward option is to invest using company reserves, cash or equivalent.
- As a grant recipient, you must agree to support the principle of equal opportunities to ensure that all employees and beneficiaries of support are treated fairly, with dignity and respect and oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, disability, age, religious belief, sexual orientation or marital status. If your organisation has a diversity/equality policy, please append it to your grant application.

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QF 394 Signpost 2 Grants Application Form

Signpost 2 Grants provides a flexible capital subsidy to help your business grow. Grants for equipment are available up to a maximum of 20% of eligible costs or £20,000, whichever is lower. **Please ensure that you discuss this application with your Business Advisor and complete all sections of this form before you submit it.**

1. Company name			
2. Company address			
3. Contact name			
4. Contact position			
5. Phone number		6. Mobile number	
7. Email address			
8. Company number		9. VAT number	

10.	What is your expected turnover for the current or next full financial year?	£
	In the previous 2 years, has your turnover been more than " 50m (approx. £40m)?	YES NO
11.	What is your expected balance sheet value for the current or next full financial year?	£
	In the previous 2 years, has your balance sheet value been more than " 43m (approx. £35m)?	YES NO
12.	How many fulltime equivalent employees excluding apprentices? *(please insert number)	
	In the previous two years, have you had more than 250 fulltime equivalent employees? *	YES NO

* Please **include**: full-time, part-time, temporary and seasonal staff. **Don't include**: employees on parental leave

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13.	Do other organisations own more than 25% of the capital or voting rights of your business?	YES NO
	Do your business own more than 25% of the capital or voting rights of another organisation?	YES NO
	If you answered YES to either of the above, please provide details (continue on a separate sheet if required):	

14. Please provide a brief summary of your business activities (including customer base, key products, current position etc.) and an overview of your strategy or ambitions.

15. Please specify what you intend to use the Grant for. Please give full details, including details of any plant or equipment that you intend to purchase and details of suppliers or subcontractors involved:

16. How would the Grant help you? Please be specific. What are the implications of not receiving a grant?

17. Are there any dependencies . i.e. necessary steps before you can start, such as obtaining planning permission? If there are, please provide a summary of these and the likely timescales involved.

18. Please outline the specific outcomes that the Grant will help you achieve. Will turnover increase? Will it have any wider growth or productivity benefits? (please append a separate justification, if necessary)

19. If you will create any new jobs as result of our support, please provide us with details:			Estimated date of post creation
Job title or description of new post	Hours/week	Approx. annual salary	
		£	
		£	
		£	

20. Will this investment result in you introducing a new product, or implementing process innovation that contributes to the development of a new product? If it will, please provide details, below:

21. Please provide a breakdown of the total expenditure required to implement the proposal, excluding VAT

Ref	Brief description of eligible capital expenditure	Cost ex. VAT	Estimated investment date
1.		£	
2.		£	
3.		£	
4.		£	
5.		£	
6.		£	
7.		£	
8.		£	
Total eligible capital expenditure to be incurred		£	
State the value of Grant that you are applying for *		£	

* this value cannot be more than 20% of the total eligible cost stated in the box above it. Please note that the size of grant applied for will be a material consideration in the appraisal of this application.

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22. Please obtain and a **written quote or published price** in relation to each item of capital expenditure listed in *Section 21* so that we can ensure value for public money. It is acceptable to use print-outs from websites if you wish. For any item costing more than £24,999, please provide **three written quotes or published prices** from three different suppliers. Please ensure that you carefully annotate those sheets carefully to a) include the *Ref* from the table, below and in *Section 21*, and b) highlight the relevant cost excluding VAT. For each item, please enter your preferred supplier in the *Quote No.1* column.

Ref	Information required	Quote No.1 (preferred)	Quote No.2	Quote No.3
1.	Name of supplier			
	Cost quoted for item(s)	£	£	£
2.	Name of supplier			
	Cost quoted for item(s)	£	£	£
3.	Name of supplier			
	Cost quoted for item(s)	£	£	£
4.	Name of supplier			
	Cost quoted for item(s)	£	£	£
5.	Name of supplier			
	Cost quoted for item(s)	£	£	£
6.	Name of supplier			
	Cost quoted for item(s)	£	£	£
7.	Name of supplier			
	Cost quoted for item(s)	£	£	£
8.	Name of supplier			
	Cost quoted for item(s)	£	£	£

Please note that suppliers linked to your own organisation should not be used. Excessive costs will be challenged by the Grants Panel, as will items that have been artificially divided to avoid the £24,999 threshold. If any of these costs relates to works costing more than £24,999 (rather than equipment goods or supplies), the contract will need to be advertised on your website for a period of at least ten days (please refer to **QF 402 Signpost 2 Grants Guidance** for further details) and an indicative cost should be provided in this section.

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23. What sources of funding . apart from our grant . will you use to fund your investment? In the *status of funding* column, please state whether it's been *agreed*, *agreed-in-principle* or *applied for*. In the *Source of funding* column, examples are *Company reserves*, *cash or equivalent*, *Business*, *bank or director loan* or *asset finance*. Please attach details to this form before you submit it.

Source of funding	Value	Status of funding
	£	
	£	

State Aid is publicly-funded help and support and it includes the grant support that we provide to you. Under our State Aid scheme, businesses can receive an absolute maximum of around " 200,000 of *de minimis* State Aid in any three year period. Organisations providing this will have provided you with written notification of the value of *de minimis* aid provided. For further information, please contact your Business Advisor.

Our own funding requires us to provide you with the following information. Under the EC regulation 1407/2013 (*de minimis* aid regulation) there is a ceiling of " 200,000 for all *de minimis* aid provided over a period of three fiscal years (including the fiscal year in which the grant of *de minimis* aid is to be given). Any *de minimis* aid (including our support and advice) awarded to you will be relevant if you wish to apply, or have applied, for any other grant aid. It is your responsibility to report on this and any other aid received from a public source. Failure to advise of a grant or exemption from a cost otherwise due (i.e. rate relief from public authority) could lead to the claw back of the funds.

24. Has your business or any of those organisations listed in <i>Section 13</i> received any <i>de minimis</i> grants or State Aid (e.g. reliefs, state-funded support or grants) in the past 3 years?	YES NO

If you answered **YES**, above, please complete this table (continue on a separate sheet if required):

Date of payment	Name of the State Aid provider	Value of State Aid	Reason for payment
/ /		£	
/ /		£	
/ /		£	

Are you currently seeking any other State Aid . for example, grants? If **YES**, please complete the following:

Status of the State Aid	Name of the State Aid provider	Amount sought	What you're seeking support for
APPLIED AWARDED		£	
APPLIED AWARDED		£	

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25. Are you knowingly related to any employee of Nwes or GCGP LEP?	YES NO
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26. Have any of your owners or directors ever been involved in businesses that have been placed into administration or liquidation? If yes, please provide details on a separate sheet	YES NO
27. Have any of your owners or directors ever been bankrupt or established an IVA? If yes, please provide the court details and reference number(s) on a separate sheet	YES NO
28. Do any of your owners or directors have any County Court Judgements? If yes, please provide the court details and reference number(s) on a separate sheet	YES NO
29. Have any of your owners or directors ever been disqualified as a company director? If yes, please provide details on a separate sheet	YES NO
30. Have any of your owners or directors ever been disqualified as a company director? If yes, please provide details on a separate sheet	YES NO
31. Are your VAT (if relevant), local taxes (including Business Rates and PAYE) paid to date? If no, please provide details on a separate sheet	YES NO

32. I have attached financial accounts for the two most recent complete financial years ^{NOTE 1}	YES NO
34. I have attached up-to-date management accounts if the above are more than 6 months old	YES NO
35. I have attached 3 months bank statements	YES NO
36. I have attached at least 1 quote for each item in <i>Section 21</i> and indicated my chosen supplier ^{NOTE 2}	YES NO
37. I have attached a signed copy of my organisation's equality/diversity policy (if applicable)	YES NO

NOTE 1 If you are a new business and don't have any audited financial accounts, please provide a robust business plan instead

NOTE 2 If you have not provided sufficient quotes for each product and/or service, you must provide a written explanation of the process used to select a supplier. For further information, please refer to **QF 402 Signpost 2 Grants Guidance**.

Please note that due diligence is carried out on all Signpost 2 Grants applicants – please check your answers.

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Please sign complete and sign the declaration, below, and return this form and the attachments referred to in Questions 32-36 to your Business Advisor or Essex Growth Programme Office at:

Signpost 2 Grow, Enterprise Support, Nwes, Norwich Enterprise Centre, 4B Guildhall Hill, Norwich NR2 1JH

I confirm that the investments outlined in this form have not already been commissioned or otherwise ordered, invoiced for or secured with a deposit.

I confirm that the information that I have provided is correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that my information is protected under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, that it will be retained on Nwes and/or GCGP LEP databases in order to provide me with appropriate support and assistance and that it may be shared with partner organisations in order to provide further support. The information is used to help develop new services to meet the needs of businesses and monitor trends. In producing these statistics, individual businesses are not and cannot be identified. I agree that the data that I have provided may also be used by the Government to collate reports on national and regional ERDF activity for publication. In accordance with Data Protection regulations, any data on individuals will not be shared with anyone else without their expressed permission.

Signed		Print name	
Position		Date	/ /

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FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

QF 398 Signpost 2 Grants Advisor Recommendation Form

Applicant organisation's name:

Growth Grants for equipment are available up to a maximum of 20% of eligible costs or £20,000, whichever is lower. **Please ensure that businesses discuss their applications with you and complete all sections of the QF 394 Signpost 2 Grants Application Form before they submit it.** Grant applications will not be assessed by the Grants Panel until this form has been completed and returned.

I confirm that I	AM AM NOT	recommending this application to the Grants Panel for appraisal.
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Please briefly provide your reasoning, expressed in terms of one or more of the following: its contribution to Signpost 2 Grow Growth Programme outputs, associated cost/carbon savings, job creation/safeguarding, growth, GVA, value for money, local/strategic significance and practicability, additionally or general sustainability/equality:

I confirm that the information provided herein is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signed		Print name	
Position	Business Advisor	Date	/ /

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Development Fund

QF 396 Signpost 2 Grants Claim Form

When the products, services or works described in your **QF 395 Signpost 2 Grants Offer Letter** are complete and paid for, please complete this form, sign it on the third page and return it to us to claim your Grant.

Business name:		DAISI Ref *	
Your name:			

* This is the Reference number (labelled *Your Ref.*) on the front of your **QF 395 Signpost 2 Grants Offer Letter**.

Please provide the full bank details so that we can settle successful grant claims directly to your account by BACS. Payments can be made to the registered name of your business only.

Bank name:			
Bank address:			
Account number:		Sort code:	- .

Please provide a breakdown of any other grant funding received in relation to the goods or services described on the following page that does not originate from the Signpost 2 Grants.

Source	Total	£
Source	Total	£
Source	Total	£

In the table on the following page, please provide a breakdown of **TOTAL** expenditure incurred on the products or services for which the Grant was awarded (excluding VAT). You must provide certified copies of invoices and bank statements confirming payment to support your claim. Please give each of these a *Ref* number, corresponding to the applicable *Ref* number from the table, overleaf, to enable us to cross-reference individual items. *Defrayal dates* in the right hand column should correspond to the payments highlighted in your bank statements.

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Please provide a breakdown of **TOTAL** expenditure incurred on the products or services for which the Grant was awarded:

Ref.	Supplier name	Description (from QF 395 Signpost 2 Grow Grants Offer Letter)	Net cost (ex VAT)	Invoice date	Defrayal date
1			£	/ /	/ /
2			£	/ /	/ /
3			£	/ /	/ /
4			£	/ /	/ /
5			£	/ /	/ /
6			£	/ /	/ /
7			£	/ /	/ /
8			£	/ /	/ /
Total eligible capital expenditure incurred			£		
Amount of your own funds used against total expenditure incurred			£		
Amount claimed (cannot exceed the value stated in your QF 395 Signpost 2 Grants Offer Letter)			£		

Where costs claimed form only part of larger payments made, we require evidence of the other costs paid. If any of these costs relates to works (e.g. improvements to business premises that create extra capacity and enable growth) costing £25,000 or more, you'll need to provide evidence that the contract was advertised openly on your website for a period of at least ten days.

Please see **QF 402 Signpost 2 Grants Guidance** for further details.

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Failure to complete the form accurately or supply the required documents may result in payment to you being delayed. Please use the checklist below to ensure that the correct documents are enclosed:

a) invoice(s) or receipt(s) for the items purchased, labelled with <i>Ref</i> numbers *	YES NO
b) bank statements with the item(s) purchased highlighted (other expenditure can be redacted) *	YES NO
c) signed QF 391 Signpost 2 Grow Impact Form	YES NO
d) countersigned QF 395 Signpost 2 Grow Grants Offer Letter (if not already returned)	YES NO
e) if relevant, a copy of signed/dated Finance Agreement showing the repayment schedule *	YES NO
f) signed QF 397 Signpost 2 Grow Grants Asset Log Form **	YES NO

* Document copies should be certified as being a true copy of the original, signed and dated by the person submitting the claim. Please use a rubber stamp or write the following phrase onto each: *%certify that this document is a true, exact and complete copy of the original+*

** Only necessary for items with a value over £1,000.

If not supplied previously, please enclose copies of quotes obtained to demonstrate compliant procurement of goods and services in line with Conditions 1 and 2 of the **QF 395 Signpost 2 Grants Offer Letter**. Grants are settled via BACS to the registered name of your business.

I confirm that the information that I have provided is correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that my information is protected under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, that it will be retained on Nwes and/or GCGP LEP databases in order to provide me with appropriate support and assistance and that it may be shared with partner organisations in order to provide further support. The information is used to help develop new services to meet the needs of businesses and monitor trends. In producing these statistics, individual businesses are not and cannot be identified. I agree that the data that I have provided may also be used by the Government to collate reports on national and regional ERDF activity for publication. In accordance with Data Protection regulations, any data on individuals will not be shared with anyone else without their expressed permission.

Signed		Date	/	/
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Please return the completed form and supporting documentation to **Signpost 2 Grants, Enterprise Support, Nwes, Norwich Enterprise Centre, 4B Guildhall Hill, Norwich NR2 1JH.**

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