DOCUMENT 8

northwest
development agency

INVESTING IN
englandsnorthwest
EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

Business Start Up Service Specification

Contents

Figures and Tables

Appendices

DOCUMENT 8

1 Background and Context

Introduction

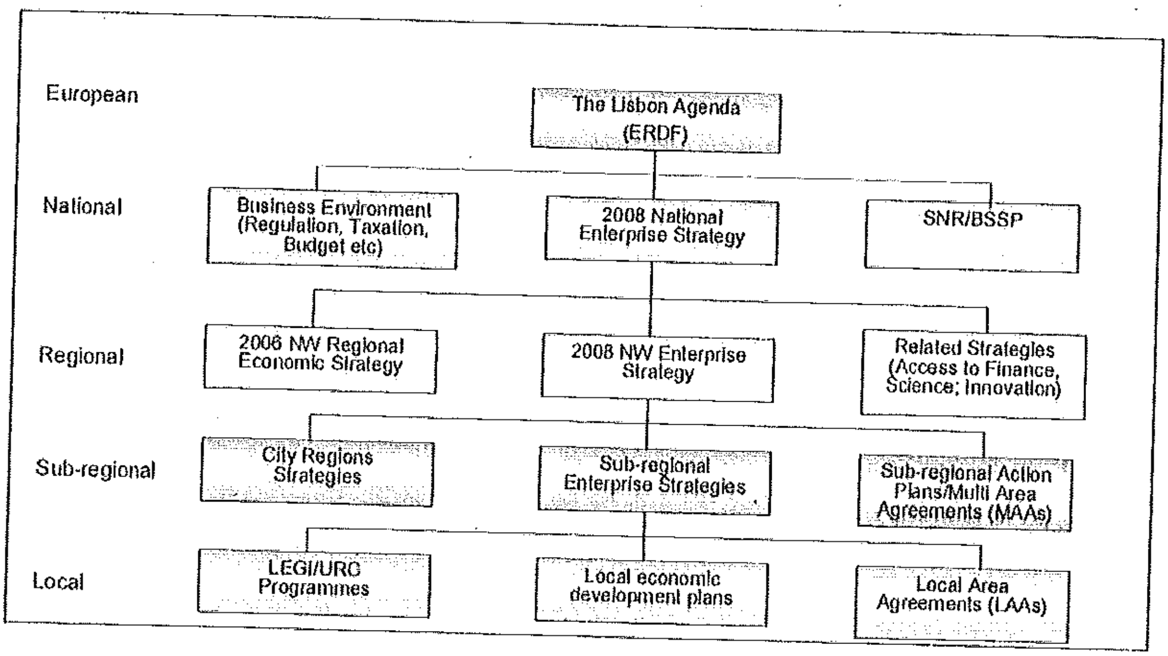
This document sets out the service specification for the Northwest Regional Development Agency's ('the Agency') Business Start Up (BSU Project) which is additional to the support offered through the Business Link NW "Starting a Business" service. It is intended to be a 5 year Programme (2009 – 2014) starting April 2009

The National Enterprise Strategy highlights Business Start Up as a key priority for developing the economy. This is also reflected in the Northwest Enterprise Strategy. Currently the Northwest has some 18% fewer businesses (per 10,000 adults) than the England average, resulting in a gap of 91,000 businesses (VAT registered and self employed).

Therefore, the purpose of BSU Project is to contribute to closing this gap. This will be achieved through building on the good practice and learning from Business Start Up Phase I due to be completed by 31st March 2009 and through developing new approaches to funding, delivery arrangements and the involvement of key partners.

The BSU Project will provide an intensive and specialist support service for people from target groups/areas considering setting up in business in the Northwest. To do this, the Agency has developed a new delivery approach focused on co-funding partnerships (with Local Authorities), leading to the procurement of a regional Project Management partner (Lot 1), and a Framework of start up providers (Lot 2) to deliver the services from April 2009.

Figure 1 – Enterprise Policy Context



Business Support Simplification (BSS)

The process of Business Support Simplification builds on the Transformational Government commitment which aims to simplify businesses' and citizens' experience of Government services and specifically for business support aims to reduce the number of intervention options to less than 100 by 2010.

The Government's vision for publicly-funded business support is for support that is:

- Easier for business to understand and access
- Better value for public money
- Has a measurable impact in achieving economic and public policy goals

The Agency has developed a Business Support Simplification (BSS) framework to facilitate the implementation of BSS across the region. The framework inspires collaboration from public sector stakeholders, providing opportunities for co-investment, co-commissioning and ultimately deliver a co-ordinated, consistent offer across the North West. The BSU Project supports BSS in that it fits with the 'Starting a Business: Intensive Start Up Support' product and provides targeted additional support for priority groups and areas.

Further details of the BSS products are available on this ITTs extranet site.

Purpose of the document

The purpose of this document is to provide a detailed specification for the BSU Project, drawing together the various key components critical to the Project.

The document is critical to the new delivery approach as it will inform:

- Co-funding partners (Funding Partners) on the service they are investing in
- Inform delivery agencies on the service they will provide
- Define the service BSU clients can expect to receive

The Service Specification (or any amendments thereof) will form part of the contract between Funders and Lot 2 providers to deliver the BSU Project and therefore Contractors must be fully compliant.

2 Overview of the BSU Project

Introduction

This section provides an overview of the BSU Project, outlining the aims and objectives of the Project and key client groups. It also outlines the role of the Agency and of key partners (e.g. Local Authorities (LAs), Sub Regional Partnerships (SRPs) etc.).

The new approach

To deliver the BSU Project, the Agency is taking a new, innovative approach. The BSU Project will provide intensive and specialist services and support for people from target groups/areas considering setting up in business. It will improve survival rates of businesses through targeted support for up to 36 months, and will contribute towards increased levels of enterprise activity.

Through the BSU Project, the Agency along with key partners aims to:

- Achieve a balance of economies of scale, value for money and local flexibility/access in the provision of start up business support;
- Assemble and package together relevant funding, e.g. from the Agency, European Regional Development Funding (ERDF), Local Authorities and any other relevant sources. This funding will provide the resource for participating partners to draw off delivery capacity from the Panel;
- Tailor national and regional priorities to local need - achieve a clear, accountable, and simplified delivery structure in each area;
- Deliver one Service Specification that fits with BSSP & Business Link NW as the primary access point for public funded support;
- Work with partners to deliver a quality, tailored service with easy local access;
- Integrate locally with employment programmes and other regeneration initiatives with clear referral mechanisms; and
- Have more businesses in the target groups/areas identified below starting and growing.

The service will complement and add to the BSSP defined service - "Starting a Business Service" provided by Business Link that is available to any individual in the North West.

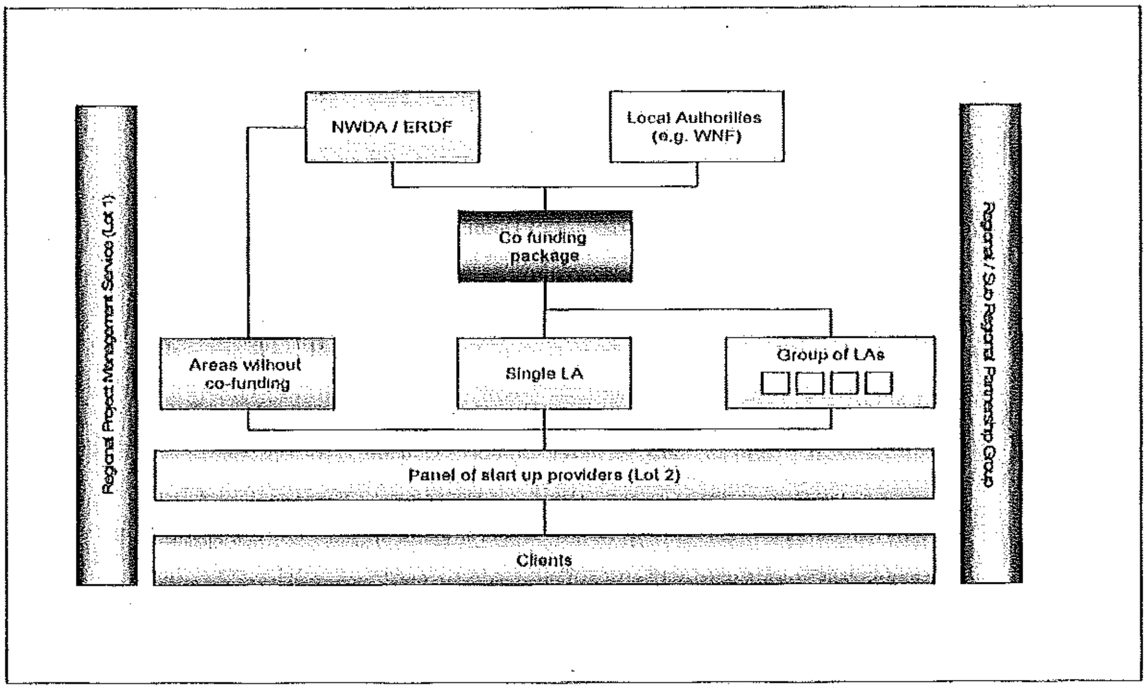
The BSU project will be the subject of periodic independent evaluation including its first two years of operation. Lot 1 and Lot 2 suppliers will need to provide information and other resources to support these evaluations and to respond to the findings as part of the continuous improvement objectives.

The Project will consist of 2 key elements:

- Lot 1 - Regional Project Management; and
- Lot 2 - Local business start up support delivered through a Framework (hereinafter referred to as the Panel or Panel Members).

The specific role of Lot 1 and Lot 2 is discussed in further detail in section 3; however, figure 2 below outlines the overall structure.

Figure 2 - Funding/Delivery Model



Project Value and Duration

The Agency is seeking approval for a 5-year package of funding up to £35 million NWDA Single Programme and ERDF funding to deliver this new approach. However, the total Project value could be up to £75 million dependant on the amount of co-funding committed by LA / groups of LAs. The exact value will be determined through negotiations/approvals with participating partners before and during the life of the project.

The Clients

The BSU Project target client group are those people with a desire to start a business or have started a business less than 3 years old - VAT registered business, social enterprises or self employment. Support will be available to individuals whilst they are in the process of creating and starting their businesses, as well as ongoing support to the business for up to 36 months from the commencement of trading.

This service will be available to any person who is considering setting up a business/becoming self employed in the Northwest region or is resident in the region, from the client groups identified below:

Priority targets will be agreed by the Agency partners by tailoring national targets to local needs and opportunities. This principle has been accepted in ERDF Investment Framework 4.1 and provides an example of the type of criteria that will be considered.

Under Represented Groups

The key client base will be those demographic groups which under-perform in terms of enterprise. These groups have been identified in relevant national and regional policies and robust evidence is in place outlining the barriers to starting up a business. The key groups are:

- The 2006 Regional Economic Strategy target groups of:
  - women
  - BME communities
  - people with disabilities
  - social enterprise
- Other under represented groups:
  - young people
  - older workers
  - lone parents
  - other key groups supported under the national ESF Programme
  - (offenders, ex-offenders, asylum seekers and refugees)

Disadvantaged Communities

The Project will provide support to any resident or individual considering setting up a business or becoming self employed in key target areas of the North West. These areas – as identified in the 2006 Regional Economic Strategy – include:

- Most of Merseyside (especially in the Heartlands Housing Market Renewal Area)
- Barrow and Halton
- The Urban Regeneration Company (URC) areas of East Manchester, Central Salford, Liverpool City Centre, West Cumbria and Furness and Blackpool
- Housing Market Renewal (HMR) areas (Manchester/Salford, Oldham/Rochdale, and East Lancashire)

Other priority areas that the Project will support include the following:

1. Priorities identified in City Employment Strategies or other sub regional equivalent strategies
2. 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation 15% most deprived Super Output Areas
3. Other indicators of concentrations of benefit claimants
4. Rural, coastal and coalfield areas

Indicators representing groups/areas have been factored into the funding model to determine the potential allocation of the Agency and ERDF funding at a local authority level. Priority targets will then be agreed between the Agency and partners and included in the mini tender specification and used to call off delivery capacity from relevant business start up providers on the Panel.

3 Service Delivery Specification

Introduction

This section sets outs how the BSU Project service will be delivered. Specifically, it describes the relationship between Lot 1 and Lot 2, and provides detailed information on the procurement process, aims and objectives, roles funding and contract management arrangements for each Lot. Within the scope of this specification, providers are able to apply their innovative approaches providing the overriding terms and objectives of the specification are met.

Lot 1 – Regional Project Management

The purpose of Lot 1 is to provide a Regional Project Management service to the Agency and, participating partners and to enhance delivery and impact of the project.

Objectives

The key objectives of Lot 1 are:

- To provide regional management of the overall project;
- To undertake quality assurance of the performance of Lot 2 Panel Members and individual advisors employed or contracted to the panel members;
- To monitor and evaluate the overall project;
- To aggregate and analyse expenditure, outputs and the impacts of the project including collation of outputs to meet ERDF requirements and submission of reports to funding bodies;
- Communication with other partners and stakeholders on the overall performance of the project;
- To manage the Lot 2 Panel Members procured by the Agency.

Role

The Lot 1 provider will undertake a range of tasks to meet the above objectives. Specifically, these are:

- To collect information relating to the programme and the funding:
    - Monitoring of outputs and spend;
    - Monitoring of target group / beneficiary take up and progress through the client journey;
    - Monitoring of Lot 2 panel members panels and their uptake;
    - Collection of materials relevant to evaluation.
- To collect and monitor information that enables QA review:
    - Customer feedback;

  - Panel member feedback;
  - Funders/Stakeholder feedback;
  - Queries and concerns, complaint resolutions;
  - Client satisfaction surveys and mystery shopping;
  - Compliance with accreditations and standards;
- To monitor the performance of Lot 2 Panel Members;
- To contract manage where the Agency contracts directly with Lot 2 panel members for delivery of start up services;
- To ensure delivery and branding is compliant with BSS and the specification agreed for the project;
- To provide communications, performance data and update mechanisms to partner organisations;
- To ensure overall programme expenditure is in line with agreed activities and spend profiles and identify opportunities to re-profile.

Relationships

The Lot 1 provider will be required to develop a series of relationships with key partners to facilitate the successful delivery of the project. The key relationships are outlined below:

1. The Agency:
   - To report directly to the Agency on all aspects of the overall programme, including funding, outputs monitoring and evaluation and programme status;
   - To work with the Agency to ensure all appropriate contracts are put in place between Local Authorities and Lot 2 providers to delivery projects;
   - To work with the Agency to manage contracts where the Agency purchases directly from the Lot 2 panel.
2. Local Authorities:
   - To ensure compliance of the Service Specification in contracts between Local Authorities and Panel Members (e.g. programmes aimed at specific target groups, branding, CRM maintenance etc);
   - To act as a support service, where required, to Local Authorities during the mini-tender to appoint start-up support providers from the panel and ensure that the Agency's/ERDF procurement requirements are met.
3. Lot 2 providers:
   - Co ordinate the skills development of advisors participating in the delivery of the project

- Facilitate best practice and innovation dissemination across the Lot 2 Providers
- Work with Lot 2 providers/their funders to collate and manage the information collected on clients receiving the start up service.

4. Business Link NW:
   - Liaise with Business Link NW on engagement activity (including marketing and branding) and referrals
   - Ensure sharing of information and data
   - Ensure effective support to access other business support products

Lot 2 – Local Service Delivery

Framework of Providers ("Panel")

The Agency will establish a Panel of start up providers that have the capability to deliver this service specification in spatial areas e.g. agreed regional, sub regional or local authority areas and to target groups e.g. women, BME, disabled and other under represented groups.

Up to 70 organisations may be selected for the Panel and the Agency is seeking to select a range of delivery organisations/consortia able to deliver as per this specification. The Agency will also give due regard to relevant Equality legislation and ensure that third sector suppliers are afforded equal opportunities.

The Agency will award a framework agreement ("contract") to organisations or consortia to deliver the service from 1 April 2009 and other dates during the lifetime of the Project. LAs, groups of LAs and the Agency will draw deliver capacity from the Panel as required. The drawing down of any service from the Panel will be subject to (a) legal contract(s).

Following the appointment of the Panel, the Agency and/or its partners will carry out mini tender exercises to appoint the most suitable Panel member(s) able to deliver the required service in the specific area and target group. Panel member(s) will respond to mini tender exercise(s) with a quote covering delivering, availability etc.

Being selected as a Panel Member does not guarantee the award of any individual contracts under the Panel.

The Service

The focus of this project is to provide intensive and specialist services and support for people from target groups/areas considering setting up in business, including social enterprise, improve survival rates of businesses through targeted support for up to 36 months, and to contribute towards increased levels of enterprise activity - particularly within the underperforming groups/areas of the North West region.

The target client group for support are those people with a desire to start a business or have started a business less than 3 years old - VAT registered business, social enterprise or self employment. Support will be available to individuals whilst they are in the process of creating and starting their businesses, as well as ongoing support to the business for up to 36 months from the commencement of trading.

This project aims to ensure that individuals who are in need of support to start a business receive the relevant skills, confidence and practical assistance to set up their business, and that a subsequent level of support is available to improve business survival rates and potentially growth in the future years.

The project will include on going support to individuals and businesses that have been assisted by the Agency's current BSU Project which is due to conclude on 31 March 2009.

Aims and objectives

Panel members will provide locally accessible specialist and intensive support to target groups and areas. The emphasis is on reducing barriers to business start up, providing support that is tailored and targeted to different groups (e.g. under represented groups, disadvantaged communities etc.)

Role

Panel members will perform a variety of tasks including:

- Engaging and encouraging start up activity with potential clients and developing referral mechanisms with relevant local agencies
- Providing one-to-many workshops and sessions covering the range of business issues encountered at start up. These workshops may be delivered in appropriate settings and with suitable methodologies to meet the needs of the client group
- Providing personalised support from an advisor, coach or mentor who can work with the individual or business to overcome particular barriers
- Provide aftercare support for up to 36 months

This provision will build on the Universal Service "Starting a Business" provided by Business Link.

Engagement, Marketing and Communications

The focus of promotional activity should be on engagement with other organisations already active in communities/networks where client groups reside and establish effective referral mechanisms e.g. Jobcentre Plus, community groups, LA social services and local business support networks etc

Each Panel member will be required to develop and implement an annual Marketing/promotion plan which complies with the BSSP framework and which will be agreed with the Agency, Regional Project Management Service, and co-funding partners. Panel members will be required to make available suitable staff to attend any events organised by the Agency or key stakeholders which are deemed to contribute to the objectives of the project.

Branding is extremely important to the integrity of the project, the Agency's and Business Link NW corporate image. The Panel Member will:

- Follow all brand communication guidelines issued by the Agency e.g. BSSP, ERDF etc;
- Only use approved images, designs and logos obtained directly from the Agency; and

- Submit all local campaigns and PR activity to relevant funders provider for approval prior to implementation

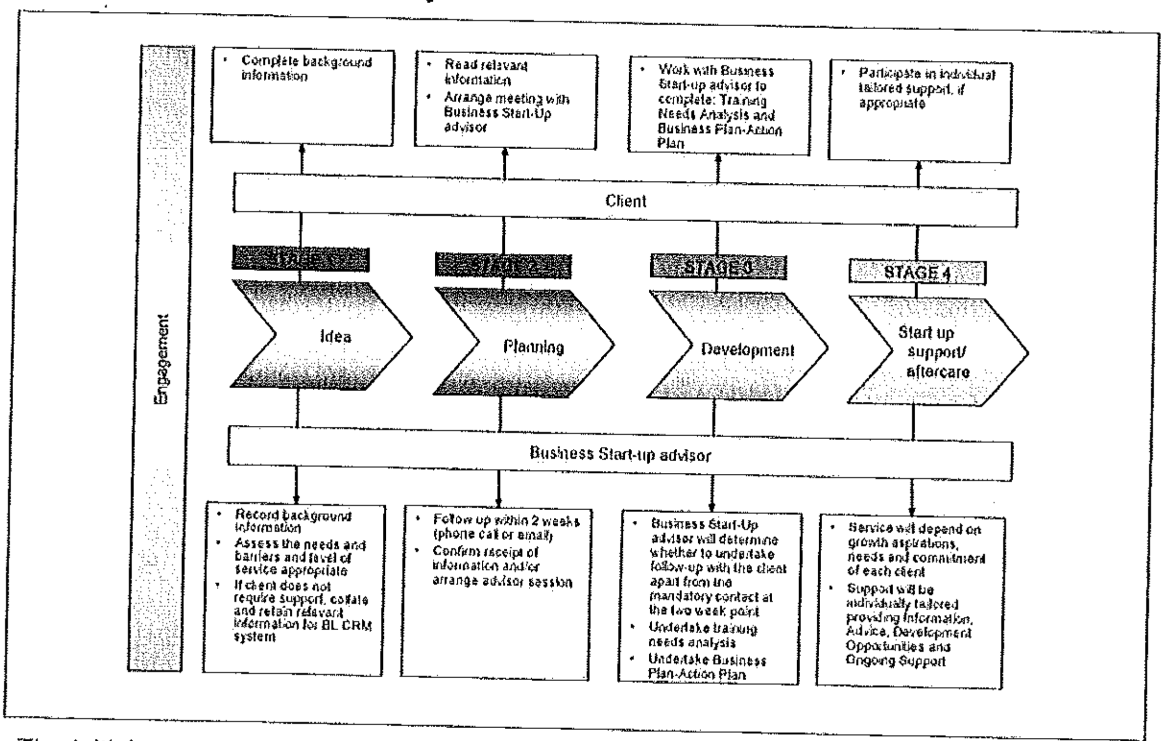
In addition to the obligation to provide operational information as required, the Panel Member must inform the Agency of any incidents or occurrences that may in any way affect the reputation or services provided by the Agency and Business Link NW and other partners.

The Client Journey

The client journey is central to the success of the project. The approach developed means that clients will be able to access support tailored to their requirements and delivered by providers at a local level.

A typical client journey, after engagement, will have 4 stages. At each stage, the needs of the client will dictate the level of support given and support will be tailored by the provider accordingly (as shown in Figure 3 below).

Figure 3 - The Client Journey



The initial engagement of potential clients into the business start up process is essential. The supplier will promote the project at the local level; engage with potential clients through outreach initiatives, via referrals from Business Link NW, community groups and other relevant local business support networks etc.

The stages can be summarised as:

- **Stage 1 – Idea:**
    - At the initial contact, background information should be recorded as set out in Appendix 2 of this document. Support relative to enquiries is based on the responses to the questions detailed in Appendix 3.

  - The provider will assess the needs and barriers of the client and level of service (information and advice) appropriate to the aspirations of each individual client.
  - If the client does not appear to require an advisor session (stage 2) the supplier will collate and retain the relevant information by reference to Appendices 2 to 4 for the Business Link NW CRM system.

- **Stage 2 – Planning:**
  - All clients will receive information packs relevant to their need
  - All contacts will be followed up within two weeks (by either phone call or e-mail) either to check they have received the relevant information and are satisfied or to arrange a meeting with a Business Start Up advisor.

- **Stage 3 – Development (Business Plan):**
  - The Business Start Up advisor will determine whether there is benefit in undertaking follow-up with the client apart from the mandatory contact at the two week point.
  - If additional support is required, the provider will arrange to meet with the client to take forward a "Training Needs Analysis" (a suggested format is contained in Appendix 4)
  - At this point, a Business Plan - Action Plan (contained in Appendix 5) should be completed as a suggested basic template for the on-going relationship with the client.

- **Stage 4 – Start up support/aftercare:**
  - Contact with the business start up at 3, 6 and 12 months from trading start date.
  - At 12 months a review should be undertaken to identify appropriate ongoing support requirements and presented in the form of an action plan. This action plan will be agreed by the Agency, its' funding partners and Lot 1 Project Manager.
  - The level of aftercare service provided to start up business will depend on the growth aspirations, needs and commitment of each client and the support will be individually tailored providing information, advice, and development opportunities.
  - Where business is identified as having growth potential , the supplier will continue to provide on going support and where appropriate refer to Business Link NW for access to other business support products e.g. CDFI, International Trade, Innovation etc.
  - Where the business does not meet the criteria for "growth potential" the client should be referred to Business Link NW for on-going monitoring and support.
  - The level of service offered, and resource allocated, to any client will be based on:
    - The stage the client has reached in planning the growth of their business;
    - The level of continued commitment demonstrated by the client; and

  - Level of business skills and knowledge of the client.

- On-going monitoring through direct contact, either by the supplier or Business Link NW with the business start up at 24 & 36 months from trading start date.
- Where the business has been identified as having "growth potential" it is expected that a further business review and action planning session will be conducted at 24 and 36 months.

Referral out of the Programme

If at any stage the client does not wish to start/continue a business, the Business Start Up advisor will refer the client to relevant support organisations

Developing the Business Plan

The key objective of any support during the client journey process is to help the client move towards completing their business plan and starting their business. This progress needs to be assisted by allowing them to work on their plans in bite-sized chunks at a pace that is determined by them.

Start up businesses can be categorised as:

- Lifestyle
- Aspirational
- Growth

Different levels of support and material need to be prioritised to the requirements of each of the above. Although the core Business Planning topics will be the same for each group, the focus and level of detail covered will change i.e. the level of detail required in a business requiring £10,000 finance will be different from a business trying to raise £500,000 and tailored to the clients existing skills and barriers.

Panel members will offer a range of support, using various media to suit client needs. This support may include:

- Awareness sessions;
- Motivation workshops;
- Idea Generation/Development Workshops;
- Self help work books;
- Web based service for online information, materials and support tools including an "ask the advisor" tool;
- Workshops;
- Business planning material;

- Business advisor session. The Business Advisor role is to provide advice and support to allow the production of a viable business plan (suggested format and headings are attached as appendix 5); and

- Formatted Business Plan as appropriate.

The support should be designed to help the clients move from one stage in the Start-Up process to the next. The initial meeting between the client and advisor should result in an agreed Action Plan to aid the development of the Business Plan. The Action Plan will be informed by information from the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) (Appendix 4) along with any skills development needs/action identified during early meetings. An outline structure for a Business Plan is contained at Appendix 5.

Operational Standards

The provision of a high quality service is vital to clients; therefore the Panel Member will be required to meet service levels which will include the following:

Performance:

- Generating the number and quality in line with agreed targets for each stage of the Project

- The capability of tracking clients, individually and collectively, through appropriate events, advisor sessions, seminars, workshops and other interventions as required

- Attaining output milestones on progress through client journey stages such as personal action plans, business plans and trading start ups

- Provide accurate performance data to the funders of the contract and to the regional project management service

- Monitoring the business start up survival rates and survival for all business supported during the course of the project. Survival should be measured at 12 months, 24 months and 36 months whilst the Panel member is contracted. Beyond March 2014 this monitoring will be the responsibility of the Agency.

- Improving levels of market penetration through the implementation of innovative and practical marketing and promotional initiatives tailored to known barriers to business support of target groups

- Provide on going support to individuals and businesses that are receiving support under the Agency's current BSU Project which is due to conclude on 31 March 2009

- Maintain and keep records for future performance evaluation e.g. beneficiary records

- Comply with EU Structural Fund regulations and EU State Aid rules

- Comply with the Agency's policy and reporting requirements on Cross Cutting Themes:

    - Environmental Sustainability

    - Equality and Diversity

Service:

- Provide access to a range of project specific and other material to assist clients in the business start up process

- The service will be free to each eligible client. Clients may be eligible for start up grants or other financial incentives to help establish their business. This type of support is not included in this project but is available from other sources provided by the private sector, the Agency and other public sector bodies. Suppliers must refer clients to the appropriate sources.

- Liaise with Business Link NW to help client access other business support products.

- Engage with Lot 1, the Agency, funding partners and other relevant bodies to promote the service, forge practical operational links and provide performance updates.

- Develop proactive links and establish referral mechanisms with other providers of employment support programmes e.g. Jobcentre Plus and promoters of regeneration initiatives, especially where these provide facilities suitable for start up and early stage businesses.

Quality:

- Accurately record each client contact and provide this information to funders, Regional Management Service (Lot 1) and Business Link NW CRM system

- Ensure that all advisors meet the required quality standard/accreditation within 6 months of joining the Panel Member's organisation

- Develop innovative and specialist approaches with the aim of enhancing start up survivability

- Quality of the service offer and performance will be monitored by the Regional Project Management (Lot 1) and the Agency. Panel members must provide access to information on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. In addition, formal face-to-face reviews will be undertaken.

- Lot 1 will carry out Customer Satisfaction Surveys, Mystery Shopping Assessments and feedback will be sought from relevant stakeholders on the service delivered by Panel members. Individual results will be shared with the Panel Member.

- Lot 1 will undertake initiatives to spread best practice across the BSU Project. Lot 2 suppliers must enable advisors to participate in such initiatives as part of their personal development

Performance Reporting

The Panel Member will report monthly on a number of different measures. These will include:

- Activities:

    - Marketing and promotional activity

  - Start Up/Aftercare key stages
  - Stakeholder engagement
- Outputs:
  - Clients in the pipeline
  - Total number of trading starts
  - Starts by Women
  - Starts by ethnic minorities
  - Starts by disabled clients
  - Starts by other agreed groups
  - Starts in specified geographic areas
  - Starts by sector
  - Starts by Social enterprises
  - Type of intervention (1:1, 1:many etc)

The above list is not exhaustive and other reporting measures may be required as deemed appropriate by the Agency or partners.

Panel members will be required to provide information on clients that is compatible with the Business Link NW CRM system.

Service provider experience and accreditation

The Supplier must either have Investor in People status or achieve accreditation within the first 12 months of award of contract. Similarly, the Panel Member will be expected to have achieved the PROWESS quality kitemark (or other relevant national standards) or have plans to achieve the kitemark within 12 months of the award of this contract.

The Supplier must recruit, train and maintain the required number of delivery personnel to carry out the service.

The Panel Member will appoint a member of its management team for the continuous development of skill/knowledge of Business Advisors. The Agency requires all Suppliers to have advisors that meet the required National Occupational Standards within 6 months of contract award for individuals , and commit to staff training and development (including CPD and accreditation to National Occupational Standards) relevant to the contract.

The Supplier's professional business advisory personnel will be required to:

- Diagnose client needs and learning styles
- Provide appropriate, tailored, customer focused approach to support

- Maintain standards and accountabilities as would be expected from a public service provider

The Panel Member will be responsible for the costs of travel and accommodation (where necessary) for all training courses.

Role of Business Link North West

Background

In line with the Business Link National Framework, the services of Business Link NW are available to all individuals and businesses within the Northwest, either through its Universal Service (phone, email or web) or Targeted Brokerage (face-to-face). Furthermore, the National Enterprise Strategy, NW Enterprise Strategy and Business Support Simplification reinforce the position of Business Link as the primary access channel to services.

Business Link NW seeks to service customers through its core activities:

- The Universal Service (Starting a Business) is available to all segments of the business base.
- The Targeted Service focuses on the priority sectors noted in the RES[1] and those non-RES companies who have high growth potential

The Universal Service supports all individuals thinking about starting a business and established businesses. In terms of start up activity the target groups are: owner managed pre starts, owner managed start-ups and owner managed lifestyle.

The service, which is primarily reactive, has been designed to handle high volumes of Information, Diagnostic and Brokerage (IDB) engagements, principally through the provision of information via web, phone and email.

The targeted service focuses on the RES priority sectors and growth firms in order to produce the Gross Value Added (GVA) improvements for the region. The service is proactively managed by Business Link NW and deals with fewer businesses in more depth. The focus is on:

- Owner managed growers;
- Corporate steady state; and
- Corporate high growth businesses.

In terms of the North West business base, this equates to some 123,000 businesses.

Business Link Starting a Business Offer

[1] RES Priority sectors are noted as: Biomedical, Energy and Environmental Technologies, Advanced Engineering and Materials, Food and Drink, Digital and Creative Industries and Business and Professional Services

The intention is that the service contracted for will provide additional support to that provided as the universal start up product, which provides the information and expertise that a business needs to be able to start trading by:

- Web based information - the Business Link website
- Telephone information and support - Business Link
- Self help materials-guides, diagnostic tools, skills development
- Standardised one to many workshop programmes
- In certain circumstances, one to one diagnostic support.

Branding and Advertising

Business Link NW has provided the primary access channel for the 2007-09 Regional Start Up programme, working in partnership the consortium members delivering the service. All literature and marketing materials have contained the Business Link NW logo and used the 0845 0066 888 telephone number and the Business Link NW information email/web address.

It is envisaged that this process will be used for all future North West publicly funded business support activity as part of the implementation of the Business Support Simplification process.

The Agency/partners will provide branding guidelines for use by Suppliers and the Business Link's trademarks, logos and other marketing devices, such as colour schemes, advertising templates and promotional materials that the Supplier must follow in all its publications, stationary and advertising in relation to this Project.

The Supplier will be entitled to devise their own materials or change the standard materials to be relevant to specific target groups; however, the Agency will have the right to veto any material it feels unsuitable. No non-standard materials may be used without the Agency's written approval.

BSSP Branding Guidelines

A new 'Solutions for Business' brand has been created to help simplify the range of business support products and services available from Government. To avoid confusion in the marketplace partners from central, regional and local Government have developed a streamlined portfolio of support which can help address market failures or equity gaps. This portfolio is drawn together under the 'Solutions for Business' brand.

The brand will introduce a standard look and feel across all government business support and will categorise support according to business need. All government-funded business support activity must be recorded and available to access via Business Link.

Detailed branding guidelines will be provided by the Agency to ensure that contractual obligations of anyone delivering business support activities on behalf of the Government are met.

DOCUMENT 8

Appendix 1 – Local Delivery Panel Performance Reporting

The Panel Member will report monthly on the measures listed below.

1. Activities

Measure	Marketing & Promotional Activity
	All relevant activities carried out in line with the agreed marketing/promotional plan. Evidence should include timesheets; hard copy of brochures etc. and other items. Updates should be provided on market conditions, client needs having to be addressed and number of prospects in the pipeline
Attendees at Events	
Pre start-up	Attendees at pre start-up workshops, seminars, awareness sessions etc...A client can be counted more than once if they attend further workshops, seminars, awareness sessions in that month that focus on distinctly different topics.
Number of assists	
Pre Start-up	An assist comprises at least 3 hours input or intervention (including one-to-one contact) leading to a defined outcome (e.g. development of a personal development plan, development of a business plan). What will not be counted as an assist is a short telephone enquiry, a general monitoring visit to a business or attendance at workshops, seminars or training courses (these are captured elsewhere). The 3 hour input can include preparatory time (excluding travel) or be an amalgamation of a number of interactions over time (e.g. three one hour interactions can count as one assist).

Measure	Aftercare/Business Support
Attendees at Events	
Aftercare/Business Support	Attendees at workshops, seminars, awareness sessions etc...A client can be counted more than once if they attend further workshops, seminars, awareness sessions in that month that focus on distinctly different topics.
Number of assists	
Aftercare/Business Support	An assist comprises at least 3 hours input or intervention (including one-to-one contact) leading to a defined outcome (e.g. development of a personal development plan, development of a business plan). What will not be counted as an assist is a short telephone enquiry, a general monitoring visit

	to a business or attendance at workshops, seminars or training courses (these are captured elsewhere). The 3 hour input can include preparatory time (excluding travel) or be an amalgamation of a number of interactions over time (e.g. three one hour interactions can count as one assist).

2. Outputs

Measure	Definition
Total Number of Trading Starts	A trading start up[2] is defined as a client who has utilised any aspect of the Project (e.g. one-to-one advisor session, attended a workshop etc.) and has established a business and who subsequently begins to trade. If partners start up a joint business and all partners have taken advantage of the services offered by the Project, this is counted as one start only.
Sub Measures	**Definitions**
Starts by Women	Either of the following: • A woman owned business is defined as a concern that is at least 51% owned by one or more women; • A business run by a women is defined as one where the majority of leadership, management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more women. • If partners start up a joint business and all partners have taken advantage of the services offered by the Project, this is counted as one start only.
Starts by Black & Ethnic Minorities	Either of the following: • a concern that is at least 51% owned by one or more people who are from a black & ethnic minority background; • A business where the majority of leadership, management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more people who are from a black & ethnic minority background. • If partners start up a joint business and all partners have taken advantage of the services offered by the Project, this is counted as one start only.
Starts by Disabled	Either of the following:

[2] One of the following is acceptable as proof of trading:

- Details and confirmation that the business is registered with the Inland Revenue. The customer should be asked for their Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR) number. This is a 10 digit number and will be given on the Inland Revenue confirmation of registration letter, a copy of which should be held in the customers' file; or
- Confirmation of the allocation of a VAT registration number; or
- Proof of trading through a business bank account

Clients	• a concern that is at least 51% owned by one or more people who are registered disabled; • A business where the majority of leadership, management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more people who are registered disabled. • If partners start up a joint business and all partners have taken advantage of the services offered by the Project, this is counted as one start only.
Starts in Specified Geographic Areas	Either of the following: • a concern that is at least 51% owned by one or more people who are resident of the area; • A business where the majority of leadership, management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more people who are resident in the area. • If partners start up a joint business and all partners have taken advantage of the services offered by the Project, this is counted as one start only
Starts by Sector	Using up to date SIC codes
Social Enterprises	A business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners.

Note – these are not mutually exclusive i.e. a start can classified as both "women" and "ethnic minority" or "women" and "disabled" etc (but these would only count as one start under the "total Starts" measure)

Appendix 2 – Start-up form

To be completed for all clients entering the start up process. This may be a hard copy or held within the CRM system

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

TITLE (MR/MRS/MS)	HOME TELEPHONE
FIRST NAME	WORK TELEPHONE
SURNAME	MOBILE TELEPHONE
ADDRESS	FAX
POSTCODE	E-MAIL ADDRESS
DATE OF BIRTH	MALE or FEMALE

POTENTIAL STATUS OF CO

Community Bus.	Co-operative	Franchise	Limited
Non-Trading	Partnership	PLC	Sole Trader

STATUS OF INDIVIDUAL

Job Seeker	Student	Working	Not Working

BUSINESS SECTOR

Agriculture/ Forestry/Fishing	Arts/Music	Biotechnology/ Healthcare	Business Services	Chemicals
Construction	Crafts	Distribution/Wholesale	Educational Services	Energy
Engineering	Financial Services	Food & Drink	Information Industry (Electronics)	Instrumentation
Leisure/Sports	Mining/	Multi-media	Other	Other Services

	Quarrying		Manufacturing	
Leisure/Sports	Mining/ Quarrying	Multi-media	Other Manufacturing	Other Services
Personal Services	Retail	Software	Textiles	Tourism

SOURCE OF ENQUIRY

Accountant	Advertising Where?	Bank Which?	Bill Board	Bus
Business Link	Casual Caller	Chamber of Commerce Which?	Citizen Advice	Client Referral
Enterprise Agency	Other RDA	Job Centre Which?	Leaflet Where?	Web Site Business Link
Web Site Other	Library	Local Authority Which?	Mail shot	Personal Referral
Solicitor Which?	LSC	Poster	PYBT	Press Where?
Prof. Advisor/ Mentor	Publication	Radio Which station?	Business Link Other area	Business Link Partner other area
	TV	Word of Mouth	Yellow Pages/Phone Directory	Trade Association

METHOD OF ENQUIRY

Phone	Personal Caller	Web	E-Mail	Letter

Appendix 3 – Client Idea Questionnaire

To identify the level of service required by the client this should be completed at the earliest opportunity as it will this will guide the input required from the Project.

Introductory Questions

Individuals contacting the Project for the first time about setting up their own business should be asked four questions:

1 When are you thinking of setting up in business (timescale):

- a Within 6 months;
- b Within 1 year;
- c Within 2 years; or
- d Over 2 years

2 How many employees will you have after 3 years (aspiration/vision)?

- a Self and one other (Lifestyle);
- b 2 – 15 employees (Aspirational); or
- c More than 15 employees (Growth).

3 How well thought out is your business idea:

- a Still thinking about it
- b No idea or only rough idea;

4 Do you have access to the Internet?

Signed (Business Advisor): -

Name: -

Date: -

Having identified "where" the client is and from the matrix (Appendix 3) and identified what services may be offered, it is essential to identify any training needs the client may have. The business advisor should discuss with the client and complete a copy of this Appendix.

A copy should be retained in the file and a copy given to the client.

Training Needs Analysis

Area	Performance	Advisor Rating Tick as appropriate Y=Need identified N=No requirement	
		Y	N
Success & Motivation	**Lifestyle/Aspiration and Growth**		
	Understand the advantages and disadvantages of business ownership		
	Understand qualities, attributes and skills required to be a successful owner manager		
	Understand the key components of successful owner management		
	Recognise own personal strengths and weaknesses		
	Identify any gaps in skills and personal development		
	Develop a personal action plan outlining training needs and actions to be taken to address these		
	Understand the key factors influencing the growth of the business		
Understanding Growth	Be able to create an outline strategic review		

DOCUMENT 8

	Area	Performance	Advisor Rating Tick as appropriate Y=Need identified N=No requirement	
			Y	N
2	Ideas Development	**Lifestyle/Aspiration and Growth** Have an awareness and a framework for generating and developing business ideas Utilise idea generation tools and techniques Review behaviour and understand its impact on the development of their ideas Produce a personal action plan		
3	Marketing Marketing Strategy	**Lifestyle/Aspiration and Growth** Understand the role of marketing in the business environment Define typical client and how best to communicate with them Have an appreciation of the importance of client perception and buying influences Produce a basic Marketing Action Plan *Aspirational/Growth* Identify and exploit market opportunities Identify areas for effective networking Understand the importance of a planned logical approach to marketing		

Area		Performance	Advisor Rating Tick as appropriate Y=Need identified N=No requirement	
			Y	N
4	Planning	**Lifestyle/Aspiration and Growth** Understand the importance of planning in terms of own businesses Have an appreciation of how they can utilise the planning process to advantage Understand how planning will enable avoiding common pitfalls Begin the development of own business plan		
	Strategic Planning	**Aspirational/Growth** Appreciate the value of strategic planning to the growth of the business Recognise the role of the entrepreneur in leading the growth of the business Understand the importance of building effective teams		

Area		Performance	Advisor Rating Tick as appropriate Y=Need identified N=No requirement	
			Y	N
6	Raising Finance	**Lifestyle/Aspiration and Growth** Understand the key sources of funding and how to approach financing the new business Appreciate the financial requirements on business operators Understand the principles of VAT and other tax obligations Understand the function of the balance sheet and profit & loss account Be able to produce a business finance action plan		
	Financial Management	**Aspirational/Growth** Have an understanding of how to interpret financial statements Recognise the importance of having effective financial controls in a business Appreciate the importance of financial planning		

	Area	Performance	Advisor Rating Tick as appropriate Y=Need identified N=No requirement	
			Y	N
6	**Employing People**	**Lifestyle/Aspiration and Growth** Understand the processes required to successfully recruit, motivate and part with staff Have an appreciation of the legal framework within which a business is required to operate Lifestyle/Aspiration and Growth		
	People Development	Appreciate the importance of "People Planning" Understand the key issues to be addressed when recruiting new staff Understand best practice in managing staff		
	Team Building	**Aspirational/Growth** Have an understanding of the roles that exist within a team Recognise the various stages of team development Appreciate the importance of being able to focus a team towards a common goal and motivating them for maximum results		
7	**Other**			

DOCUMENT 8

Details the minimum Learning Outcomes to be achieved in each area. Learning can be delivered in a number of ways through a variety of opportunities and methods i.e. word, text, workshop and online.

Signed (Business Advisor): -

Name: -

Date: -

Appendix 4 – Training Needs Analysis

The completion of Appendix 4 Training Needs Analysis will identify areas for development, which will ensure the client has a full understanding of what is needed to run a successful business. These development areas should be recorded on an action plan and agreed by the client. A copy of the completed action plan should be given to the client and one kept on file.

BUSINESS START UP – ACTION PLAN

ENQUIRY REF NO ....

COMPANY NAME ....

Action 1

Issue	
Proposed Action	
Approach	
Person responsible	
Deadline for completion	

Action 2

Issue	
Proposed Action	
Approach	

DOCUMENT 8

Person responsible	
Deadline for completion	

AGREED BY: CLIENT

NAME ....

POSITION ....

DATE ....

AGREED BY: Business Advisor

NAME ....

POSITION ....

DATE ....

Appendix 5 – Business Plan Format and Headings

I Introduction

II The Business

1 Aims and Objectives

2 Business Structure

3 Bank Details

4 Accountant Details

III Market Information

1 Products and Services

2 Markets

3 Competition

4 Marketing Plan

5 Prices and Margins

6 Sales Plan

IV Location

V People

VI Capital Expenditure

VII Finance

1 Viability

2 Direct Costs

3 Overheads

4 Cash Flow

5 Funding

6 Projected Balance Sheet

Financial Appendices (as appropriate)

1 Projected Profit and Loss Account

2 Monthly Cash Flow Projections

3 Projected Balance Sheet

4 Monthly Analysis of Sales/Purchases

5 Monthly Analysis of Key Cash Flow Figures

6 Monthly Analysis of Employment Costs

General Appendices

1 Curriculum Vitae

2 Business Information

3 Quotes etc.

4 Business Opportunities Profile

Use the following checklist to ensure your client's Business Plan contains adequate information to meet the needs of the business and those of potential funding organizations. Once you are happy with the content of the Business Plan sign this Checklist and attach it to a copy of your client's Business Plan and retain in the client file. **Introduction/Executive Summary** Is there adequate information in the introduction/executive summary to give the first time reader a good overview of the business? **Content of the plan** Market Information Are the products and/or services the business will provide clearly explained, including the benefits to potential clients? Is it clear who will make or supply the products/services? Is there sufficient information about the market the client wants to operate in — how	**Location** Has your client included details of where the business will operate from and why? **People** Has your client considered the need for additional staff? If there is a need, have numbers and job roles been identified? Will there be a need for training or will skilled staff be recruited? **Capital Expenditure** Has your client detailed the capital expenditure required for the business? Is there a reasonable explanation for the levels of expenditure? **Financial Information** You must ensure your client has considered all costs, produced a cash flow forecast and a Projected profit and loss account. **Additional Information** Ensure that any additional and appropriate information is given, for example the

DOCUMENT 8

big is the market, is it growing or reducing, is there research to back this up? Within this overall market has your client identified His/her client group? Has your client spoken to a number of these potential clients to see what they thought about his/her products/services? Is there sufficient information about marketing the product e.g. • Image and brand • Promotional material • Web presence • Advertising In terms of prices and margins has your client identified his/her level of required profit? • What about competitor product prices? • What will the end client be willing to pay? Has your client indicated how he/she will get the level of sales needed to make the business viable and sustainable?	Curriculum Vitae of your client. **Declaration** **I have read** **Business Plan and am satisfied it includes all the appropriate information as detailed in the above checklist and it is of an acceptable standard.** **Signed Print name** **Organization** **Date** **Verified by** **Sign and print name** **Organisation and position held**

DOCUMENT 8