



Consultancy Brief:
Regional Approaches to Maximising Inclusive Economic Growth
(A review for Scotland's local government partners)

Summary

Introduction

The Improvement Service is commissioning this work in partnership with a number of local government bodies involved in supporting Scotland's economic development network – SLAED, SOLACE and CoSLA.

Suitably qualified consultants are invited to bid for this commission, in line with the tender submission information set out within this brief.

Aim

The overall aim is to **engage key stakeholders** involved in regional economic working across local government in Scotland in order to **better understand the experiences, opportunities and challenges of regional working**. The consultation with key stakeholders will help **assess the extent to which there is a clear, shared vision for regional approaches**. It will also help **identify any concerns or barriers** regarding regional approaches that require consideration.

The ultimate purpose of this work is to provide actionable intelligence, which will help the local government partners develop a **practical improvement agenda that can result in enhanced inclusive growth across Scotland**.

Scope

This work has a particular focus on local government, but should also engage a range of relevant wider stakeholders.

The work will have a focus on Scotland, but should also draw upon relevant international experience and good practice.

The primary focus is regional approaches aimed at enhancing sustainable economic outcomes, which reflect and support inclusive growth principles. This will include a primary focus on economic development and related services, but should also consider complementary service areas critical to achieving a joined-up approach to inclusive growth objectives. (e.g. planning, roads & transportation, asset management, etc.). In effect, what type of approach is required to shape effective policy in relation to place-making, both regionally and locally?

Establishing the rationale for regional approaches is also likely to highlight issues of subsidiarity. Accordingly, it is anticipated that there will be a broad exposition of the optimal relationship between local, regional, national and international dimensions required to achieve sustainable inclusive growth. This will likely set out broad principles and include examples of appropriate service design, management and delivery at each spatial level.

Whilst the main focus of the work is on the technical aspects of achieving optimal inclusive economic growth, it is recognised that the subsidiarity issue underpins issues of governance. Accordingly, the work should also assess the extent to which governance models and relationships have been clearly articulated, as well as the extent to which consensus has been achieved in respect to this. In particular, this aspect of the work should consider models of governance capable of achieving the benefits of regional approaches, in a manner that does not undermine appropriate local decision-making and delivery. Whilst exposition of these issues will likely include theoretical models, real world experience within Scotland of these issues should also be set out. Examples both from within and beyond Scotland of governance approaches that are seen to balance competing tensions should also be included.

Objectives

Specific objectives include:

- 1.) Succinctly **articulate the case for regional approaches** to enhancing economic outcomes (See *Footnote¹*). This will include an exposition of the main benefits and dis-benefits that may be expected to arise, drawing both upon economic theory and practical examples;
- 2.) Provide an overview of **current progress and medium-term (5-10yr) plans** concerning regional economic working across Scotland. This should include reasonably detailed information broken down for each regional area;
- 3.) Assess the overall **appetite and attitudes** towards regional approaches amongst key local government stakeholders;
- 4.) In broad terms, assess **capacity issues** within local government in relation to implementing regional economic approaches;
- 5.) Considering **lessons that may be learned from previous and existing shared capacity approaches** within Scotland's public sector and beyond. (See *footnote²*)
- 6.) Set out an exposition of the main issues concerning **subsidiarity and governance** and, in particular, how any tensions may best be addressed via governance models that can achieve the benefits of regional approaches, whilst safeguarding appropriate local decision-making regarding delivery and variation. The report should highlight solutions to any barriers explored. For example, these may be associated with common challenges linked to any change and transformation activity, but may also address concerns such as those held by local politicians with regard to a perceived diminution of local decision making. The review should, therefore, help to promote a clearer understanding of what aspects ought to remain local – in the sense of delivery, decision-making, planning, etc. In this context, there requires to be consideration of the role of

¹ For example, this will likely cover issues such as economies of scale, critical mass, resilience issues in a context of reducing resources, etc. Whilst the context for the recent focus in Scotland has, at least partly, been driven by the resources associated with City Region/Growth Deals, articulation of the rationale for regional approaches requires a fully rounded assessment beyond initial financial inducements.

Further, in considering the regional 'place agenda', exposition of the rationale should also reflect the reality of Scotland's economic geography, rather than only focusing on current administrative boundaries. This consideration partly relates to an assessment of Scotland's current and future economic competitors, given the global nature of the economy. A key question, therefore, may be whether Scotland's current approach to 'regions' is of sufficient scale and character to deliver the potential of, arguably, more ambitious regional approaches.

² Note: A complementary piece of work on the issue of learning from shared capacity / shared service approaches is likely to be commissioned by the Improvement Service and the emerging outputs will be made available to the appointed consultant.

local democracy within a system that includes regional elements. In essence, this aspect of the review will seek to support the development of coherent regional collaboration frameworks through a joined-up and connected system that respects local decision making, reinforces regional economies and supports shared local, regional and national objectives.

- 7.) As well as covering regional-local governance issues, there should also be a focus on appropriate **local-regional-national governance and relationship issues**. This should include not just what current local services might be better delivered regionally, but also **what aspects of current national policy, delivery and decision-making might better be delivered regionally and/or locally** in order to enhance inclusive growth. The latter aspect will include clarifying key **local government 'asks' of national government**;
- 8.) Overall, help **develop a shared understanding and articulation** of local government approaches to regional economic development; and
- 9.) Identify any potential **barriers or support requirements** that, if addressed, could help achieve the optimal development of inclusive economic growth across Scotland. This element is of prime importance to the work, as it will be the basis of a **practical action plan for driving improvement**.

Methodology

Consultants' suggestions on appropriate methodologies that will deliver the Aims and Objectives of the work are welcomed. Accordingly, whilst the following is set out as an example of the broad approach that may be expected, this is not prescriptive.

- Desk research relating to models and examples of regional approaches that successfully deliver inclusive growth. The work should link to existing knowledge and expertise on regional working from academia, Scottish Government, Enterprise agencies, etc., as well as from councils' experience and aspirations
- Consulting with a wide range of key stakeholders involved in regional working, particularly in order to ascertain views on issues such as (*but not limited to*):
 - the rate and nature of progress,
 - any barriers, challenges or concerns, that may be hindering progress or endangering the full realisation of potential benefits;
 - capacity issues concerning delivery of regional approaches
 - issues of governance, and
 - any support needs that may be useful.
- The consultation will likely include a range of methods, including online survey, 1-2-1 discussions, workshops on key themes, etc. It is critical that all 32 local authorities have ample opportunities to engage in this work. It is anticipated that a series of consultation events will take place in locations across the country.
- Consultations should include senior officers as well as Elected Members.
- The consultation will have a particular focus on key stakeholders from across local government, but should also include relevant wider organisations. Therefore, discussions should also be carried out with a range of non-local government stakeholders. For example, this may include business representative groups, Scottish Government, Skills & Enterprise agencies, etc.

Outputs

The main deliverables include:

1. A report that addresses the key Aims and Objectives set out within this brief. This should include;

- An outline of the methodology
 - Key findings
 - A next steps Improvement Action Plan
 - An Executive summary
 - A Powerpoint presentation reflecting the Executive Summary
2. Presentations and Briefings / Discussions delivered to a range of senior local government stakeholders. (*Approx. 6 meetings. One of these will likely include a recorded webinar*)
 3. A Briefing Note (*See footnote³*) for Elected Members, which sets out the main issues covered in the report, particularly focusing on issues likely to be of greatest relevance to the role of Elected Members within local authorities

Input available to successful consultant

Input will be available from the local government partners to assist with certain aspects of the contract.

For example, this could include facilitating access to key stakeholders, discussing methodologies, commenting on draft research instruments, reports, etc.

Management of Contract

A Steering Group of the local government partners involved in commissioning this work will oversee this contract.

The Steering Group will be chaired by SOLACE and will also include SLAED, CoSLA and Improvement Service.

There will a minimum of 2-3 meetings of the contractor with the Steering Group to assess progress.

The contract will be managed on a day-to-day basis by the Improvement Service, on behalf of the local government partners.

Budget

The budget for this work is up to £25,000, including expenses but excluding VAT.

³ For examples of Improvement Service Elected Member Briefing Notes, see: <http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/elected-member-guidance-and-briefings.html>

Timescales

Submission of tenders – 17th December 2018

Appointment of successful consultant - 20th December 2018

Commissioning meeting / commencement of work – 7th January 2019

Interim progress meeting (1) – 4th February 2019

Interim progress meeting (2) – 4th March 2019

Draft Report and Draft Elected Member Briefing Note – 25th March 2019

Final report and Final Elected Member Briefing Note – 22nd April 2019

Presentations / webinar – May 2019

Tender Submission

Proposals to carry out this work should be marked 'Confidential' and submitted to:

Andrea Balogh
Improvement Service
i-Hub
Quarrywood Court
Livingston
EH54 6AX

The deadline for submission is **4pm on Wednesday 19th December 2018.**

Completed proposals should include the following information:

- A short outline of the consultant's understanding of the brief and relevant experience
- The proposed methodological approach
- Confirmation of the key outputs that will be delivered
- Confirmation that the broad timetable can be adhered to, including details concerning dates for delivery of various stages of the work / key outputs
- A description of the skills, qualifications and experience of the team that will deliver the work, including key roles & responsibilities, day rates, number of days, total cost for each team member, summary CVs
- Details of proposed expenses
- Total overall cost, including VAT
- A short statement covering any ethical issues relating to the research
- A statement of any inputs required from the local government partners to assist with delivery of the work

Assessment of Tenders

Proposals to carry out the brief will be assessed by the local government partners, using their judgement and applying the following criteria and weightings:

- 50% - Understanding of brief and relevant experience of Team
- 20% - Proposed methodological approach
- 30% - Value for money

Appendix: Context – Scottish Government Enterprise & Skills Review

The Scottish Government, in the Enterprise and Skills Review Report on Phase 2: Regional Partnerships, set out that they considered a need to support and encourage the development of regional economic partnerships which, building and expanding on the experiences, structures and learning from City Deals, should be self-assembled and tailored to the bespoke requirements of each region.

The Government indicated that it wished to see a Scotland characterised by the different models of economic partnerships which local circumstances suggest will best stimulate local economies; they want to deliver improved regional economic performance which is also inclusive and to ensure that enterprise and skills services can be delivered at the most appropriate level for the end user.

This will involve promoting coherent regional collaboration frameworks through a joined-up and connected system that respects local decision making, reinforces regional economies and supports shared local, regional and national objectives.

These partnerships are anticipated to be able to support the development of the Government's inclusive growth ambition which seeks to:

- Support strong and productive inclusive economic growth across Scotland;
- Maximise the opportunities of places that have been disadvantaged by adverse impacts of economic change;
- Spread the benefits of growth more evenly within and across different parts of Scotland; and Ensure economic and socially sustainable communities