

## Memorandum of Understanding with Pipeline ESIF Projects

### Practical Collaboration With Boost –Lancashire’s Business Growth Hub

This document is intended to provide high level guidance on what the requirement for projects to show that they are well aligned with the activity of Boost – Lancashire's Business Growth will actually mean in practice. This relationship brings both benefits and responsibilities but is driven by the aspiration to ensure businesses are receiving the best mix of services to realise and drive their growth.

### Core Principles

The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership through its Business Support Management Board is trying to ensure that there is a coherent business support offer in Lancashire which:-

- Meets the identified needs of businesses and allows them to grow
- Is clear and easily navigable
- Makes best use of limited public resource
- Doesn't "crowd out" private sector activity

Boost – Lancashire’s Business Growth Hub sits at the centre of this and is resourced to fully understand what business support is available, to conduct and manage a dialogue with businesses to determine a hierarchy of needs and to draw in those who are not currently using business support services.

### Use of the Boost Gateway Service (Provided by RPL)

The Boost Gateway consists of the web portal and a business advisory team who generate and respond to enquiries from a variety of communications activity and channels.

The Gateway Service is the premier provider of Information Diagnosis and Brokerage services to business and is impartial (running no other projects of its own).

Whilst it is recognised that individual projects will have their own diagnostic and client outcome planning processes, we will aim to ensure processes are aligned in order to liberate as much time and resource as possible to work to address the business requirements.

#### Principle 1:

Business support organisations are encouraged to direct initial business enquiries to the Boost Gateway so that company needs can be independently assessed and they can be directed to the most appropriate source of assistance

### Project Advocacy and Referral

In order for the Gateway to be fully able to refer businesses to another ESIF funded programme, it is vital that the staff are well briefed on what the individual projects offer and can match the profile of the typical beneficiary business/ individual to the offer. In order to do this, projects must be prepared to brief and update the gateway staff and commit to keep product knowledge current, through scheduled regular briefings.

#### Principle 2:



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Business support organisations undertake to provide the Boost Gateway with up to date information on the availability of their business support products and services.

### **Tracking Business Engagement**

It remains the aspiration of LEP to understand which publicly funded projects are working with which Lancashire businesses at any given time. This is an aspiration shared by Local Authorities who are keen to see the impact of activity within their own boundaries.

Boost has worked with RPL and Alcium over a number of years to develop a bespoke CRM system run on the Evolutive platform. All Boost activity is recorded on this system.

Whilst we respect the need for individual projects to show that they have properly procured their own CRM solutions, we would suggest that Evolutive be considered as part of that process.

Should projects choose to retain or select a separate CRM, we would request a monthly upload of data in a form which could be imported into the Evolutive system and which contains sufficient data to evidence which businesses are engaged, the nature of the project, how far the intervention has progressed and what the state aids value of the intended intervention is.

The exchange and use of this data will be subject to an appropriate data sharing and use policy.

The Growth Hub is also charged by BIS to understand and report business satisfaction with local services.

### **Principle 3:**

ESIF funded business support projects must undertake to share data on the businesses they are assisting in order that an accurate assessment of the effectiveness of business support in Lancashire can be obtained.

### **Co-ordination, Arbitration and Cumulative State Aids accrued by individual businesses**

As a corollary of the data sharing set out above, gateway systems are able to provide some key benefits to projects in respect of co-ordinating engagement.

Where a business is identified as working with two initiatives simultaneously the Gateway / LCC can:-

- Identify if the two programmes are discrete and can be delivered as a dual assist
- Reference IDB information to determine which programme should be the priority for the client.

In addition, the Gateway/ Evolutive system can provide projects with a cumulative value of the state aids assistance received by an individual business in the past 3 years if De Minimis is the chosen form of state aid exception.

### **Principle 4:**

Organisations accept that LCC as agent of the LEP will have the ability to arbitrate between providers in the event of any dispute regarding the most appropriate provider of support and the allocation of relevant ERDF outputs.

### **Co-ordination of the Lancashire Business Support Offer**



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In addition to co-ordination activity through the gateway, the Growth Hub Management Team will run specific business support co-ordination forums. Initially these forums will be run quarterly and we will review frequency as the landscape of provision becomes more established.

Given that there are likely to be a number of organisations with multiple projects, the request is that at least one representative should attend but be capable of speaking for all that organisations projects.

As well as briefing partners on the project offer, representatives will also be required to report on the current performance of the programme.

Show unique and complementary nature of intervention

In addition to this co-ordination activity, the Boost marketing contract will convene a separate marketing sub group. Attendance arrangements as above.

#### **Principle 5:**

Organisations will commit to attendance at business support coordination meetings organised by LCC.

#### **Incubation / Capital Projects**

Revenue based support to develop businesses within new incubator facilities should first call on Growth Support Programme or Boost Mentoring (for more mature businesses) where that offer is appropriate to their tenants.

Other (in project) business support should only be used where it provides:-

- Specific sector expertise
- Technology based expertise, or where
- A greater intensity of provision is required.

#### **Principle 6**

New publicly funded business support services should only be provided if the do not duplicate existing support available through the growth hub and its aligned partners.

#### **Partner Agreement**

We acknowledge the above MOU and its core principles and will work with Boost and LCC as described, to ensure that business support in Lancashire meets the needs of businesses, is well aligned and is easily reported to those seeking to validate its impact and impact.

**Signed on behalf of partner organisation:-**

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_



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Position \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed on behalf of Boost / LCC**

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



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