SOLENT
LOCAL
ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

SOLENT GROWTH FUND:
SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAMME

Beginner's Guide February 2017

GROWTH
DEALS

Image: Fareham Innovation Centre

WHAT IS THE SOLENT GROWTH FUND SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAMME...?

The Solent Growth Fund Small Business Programme, supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), is a competitive £1.8 million capital and revenue fund managed by the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). This Fund seeks to support the Solent business community by:

- Providing funding to a minimum of 60 small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs);
- providing funding to SMEs seeking to grow their business quickly through new processes / products / services, and / or developing new markets;
- providing funding to start-up businesses that can demonstrate credible high growth potential;
- providing funding to SMEs that are experiencing challenging trading conditions;
- supporting projects that seek to leverage the significant research and innovation assets within the Solent LEP area;
- building on the Solent's industrial strengths such as marine and maritime, advanced manufacturing, aerospace, defence, life sciences and healthcare, digital and creative technologies, oil and gas, the information economy, construction and clean / green technologies.

To date, Solent LEP has committed over £7.5 million in support to businesses, which is projected to deliver in excess of 1,200 jobs and generate over £30 million in private investment.

Since launching SME support funds in 2012, the fund has supported over 70 brand new start-up SMEs with an investment of over £1.5 million. The remaining funds have been committed to over 100 established SMEs who either grew their business, or protected jobs that were under threat.

This Fund seeks to support a minimum of 60 SMEs (including 30 new start-up businesses) to create 100 new jobs and safeguard 100 existing jobs.

Previous rounds of business support funding have been oversubscribed, with demand for funding exceeding the total of funding available. Through the Solent Growth Fund Small Business Programme, the Solent LEP will be looking to support the strongest bids which return best value for money and generate sustainable growth and develop new processes, products or services and / or that are seeking to develop new markets. We will announce which bidders have been successful throughout the year on our website.

This is a Fund for established high-growth SMEs and start-ups that require investment to progress their project to enable their business to expand, or mitigate challenging trading conditions and seeking to protect jobs.

Funding will have to be claimed by 31st March 2019, and jobs created by 31st March 2019. If you believe your business meets the criteria but requires some extra investment to get started, perhaps you could benefit from the Solent Growth Fund: Small Business Programme.

READ ON TO FIND OUT MORE...

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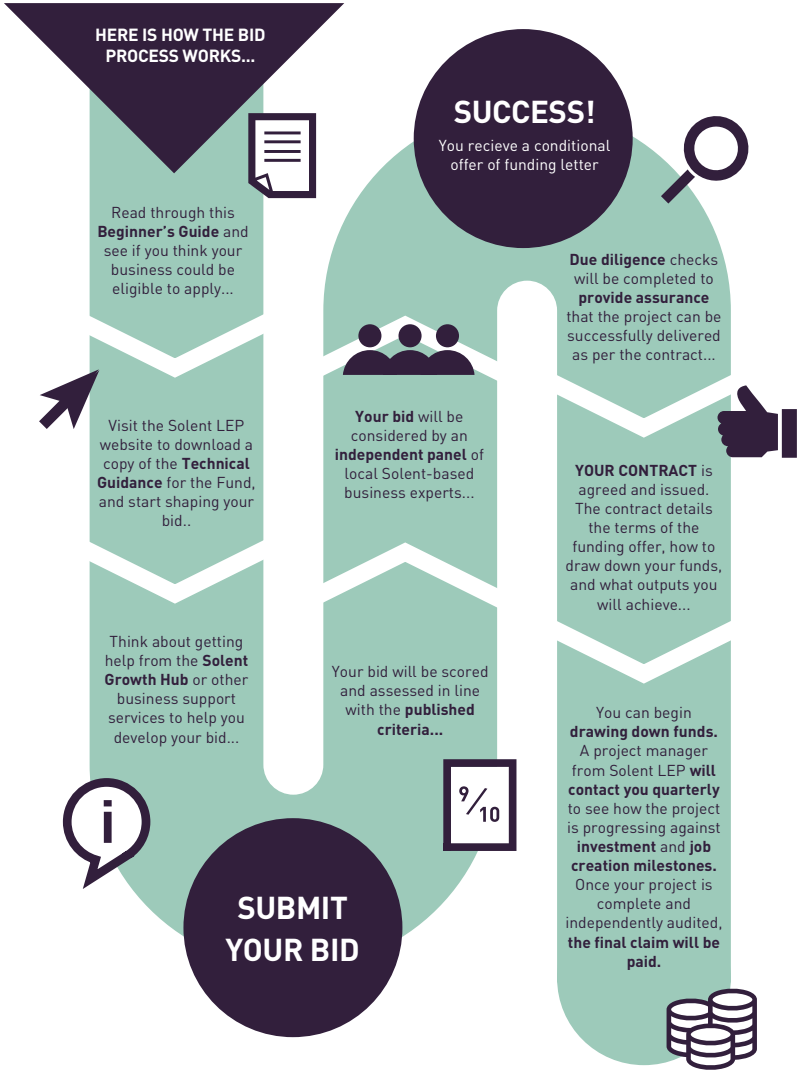
THE SUCCESSFUL BID JOURNEY

The Solent Growth Fund Small Business Programme could help your business unlock new growth opportunities.

If your project needs an injection of between **£10,000 to £75,000** in order to proceed and has the rest of its funding in place, then the **Solent Growth Fund Small Business Programme** could be the answer.



SOLENT GROWTH FUND ▸ **SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAMME**

WHAT ARE THE KEY ELIGIBILITY CRITERA...?

To be eligible, applications must meet the following criteria:

- Business premises must be located in the Solent LEP area.
- The bid must be seeking to secure between £10,000 and £75,000 of LEP funding support.
- The bid must raise private investment, whether through the company's own resources, investors or borrowing.
- The bid needs to demonstrate that it will grow quickly (20% growth in turnover or employees over a three year period) through:
  - delivery of new processes / products / services; **or**
  - developing new markets; **or**
  - directly creating new, or safeguarding existing, sustainable jobs.
- For existing businesses, the fund can provide up to 20% of your total project costs, up to a maximum funding of £75,000. This means that the bid must lever in **at least** £4 of private investment for every £1 of LEP funding.
- For start-up businesses that can demonstrate credible high growth potential the fund can provide up to 40% of your total project costs, up to a maximum funding of £75,000. This means that the bid must lever in **at least** £1.50 of private investment for every £1 of funding support.
- For businesses experiencing challenging trading conditions the fund can provide up to 40% of your total project costs, up to a maximum of £75,000. This means that the bid must lever in **at least** £1.50 of private investment for every £1 of funding support.
- Bids must come from a wholly private organisation such as a limited company.
- Bids from third sector organisations, charities and community interest companies are eligible for consideration.
- Bids must not involve the delivery of a public sector project or service.

WHAT KIND OF ACTIVITY CAN BE SUPPORTED?

- Funding cannot be used for a business' existing working capital costs. For clarity this includes items such as salaries, rent, rates, utilities, stock and raw materials.
- Funding offers will only be made to businesses with proposals which are compatible with EU state aid regulations, and applicants should be aware that their proposal will be scrutinised accordingly.
- For more information, please refer to "Solent Growth Fund – Technical Guidance for Applicants".

WHAT NEXT?

We recommend potential bidders contact the Solent Growth Hub who will be able to provide further advice and guidance on the fund, free of charge.

Web: solentgrowthhub.co.uk
Email: info@solentgrowthhub.co.uk
Tel: 01329 820 898

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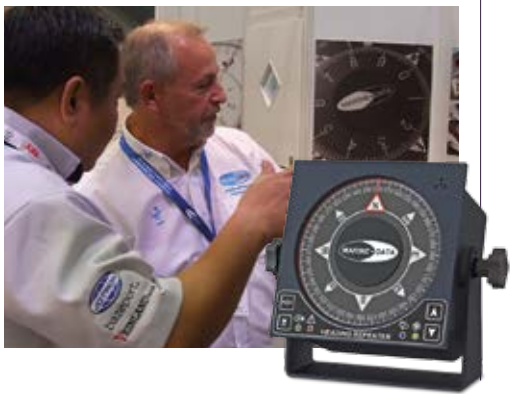
MARINE DATA SYSTEMS LIMITED
ISLE OF WIGHT

Marine Data Systems Limited develop and manufacture marine navigation and control systems from their base on the Isle of Wight. Their equipment is fitted in the military naval ships of NATO, the Gulf States and the Far East, and is also in use on the liners of the world's leading leisure shipping lines - including P&O™ and Disney®.

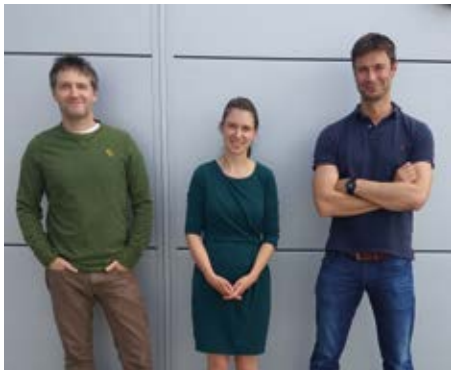
MDSL's challenge was a lack of space in which to expand to meet the demands of their growth program. BTG funds were secured to contribute to the extension and renovation of their current facility, resulting in a high quality reception area with improved access and increased purpose built space for housing environmental test equipment. This enabled MDSL to safeguard eight jobs and create three brand new engineering roles.

Marine Data Systems Limited Managing Director, Tim Ingram, said:

"This project is a key part of our continuing company development plan and we are very pleased to have been selected as a recipient of the Solent LEP grant funding".



3-SCI LIMITED
SOLENT ENTERPRISE ZONE, LEE-ON-THE-SOLENT



3-Sci ltd is a British company run by a unique team of technical specialists who have experience in research, product and business development in the engineering, physical and materials sciences. The company requested funding to support the development of a sensor system that can assess the corrosion of pipelines and monitor them for safety in the oil and gas sector.

Mark Maylin, Account Director of 3-Sci, said:

"3-Sci Ltd is an innovative engineering SME, which aims to create 'hi-tech' manufactured products which provide our clients with capability and options that they previously didn't have. Product development and certification can be lengthy and expensive, so we were very pleased to receive support from the Solent LEP to accelerate our development of a revolutionary new system that automatically monitors corrosion ('Wi-Corr'®) on any metallic structures, large or small."

3-Sci Technical Director, Adrian Bowles, commented:

"The team was already very committed to building Wi-Corr® before we became involved with the LEP, and the support we gained got us more rapidly to the first-version of the product which is now fully certified. With our first manufacturing runs and initial sales now achieved, we are looking forward to growing the company further."

ZINCH DESIGNS
SOUTHAMPTON

Zinch Designs are a Southampton based start-up company specialising in the design, manufacture and distribution of a range of innovative silicone based covers. Their first product to be developed was the SafeSip® - the world's first universal drinks cover designed to fit a variety of drinking vessels. The silicone drinks cover provides an instant cover for drinking vessels of any size, while still allowing drinking through a straw. One of the key benefits of Safesip® is that it provides those with limited mobility a way to increase independence and reduce the chance of dehydration.

SafeSip® and Zinch Designs have since gone on to win awards at the British Invention Show in October 2014, with company Founder and product designer Melissa Edmunds winning British Female Inventor of Year 2014. and SafeSip® winning Best Consumer Product Platinum.

Melissa Edmunds said:

"The response to SafeSip® has been amazing. This is one of those products that grows to include just about everyone – it can be used by so many people in so many ways. We're getting interest from all over the world and we have a number of new and complimentary products in the pipeline. The BTG funding was crucial in getting the business off the ground and launching the first product."

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