



## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

### DESIGN THINKING CONSULTANTS

#### **1. About Catalyst Inc**

Catalyst Inc is Northern Ireland's next generation science park. An independent, non-profit organisation, our vision for Northern Ireland is a community of innovators so powerful its people can change the world. Over 3,000 engineers, researchers, entrepreneurs and executives work on our campuses enabling us to invest the surplus generated from our property operations to provide the underwriting necessary for Connect, the community-led support ecosystem that supports over 600 entrepreneurs per year in Northern Ireland.

#### **2. Summary and Background**

Connect is a not-for-profit network of experienced entrepreneurs, business professionals and top research talent. We're dedicated to the creation and scaling of innovation companies in Northern Ireland by enabling our most experienced people to help our most promising.

We have made great progress since first launching a pilot of Connect in April 2008, but if we are to achieve our vision we have a couple of massive challenges ahead:

- we need to *stimulate* many, many more new ideas to come into the top of the funnel, for those ideas to become incredible products and for those products to be commercialised by incredible teams
- we need to help incredible teams who have developed brilliant products to *scale* into businesses supplying markets all over the world

#### **3. Our need**

We are design thinking converts. While we have successfully used design thinking to analyse the needs of entrepreneurs in Northern Ireland to design the services (programmes) that we provide, we recognise that we must also catalyse the practice of design thinking by entrepreneurs into product development in Northern Ireland to enable the creation of more products that people want. (Products include software as a service & other business models to monetise a product. Professional services excluded.)

We are seeking up to four design thinking consultants to work with entrepreneur teams in our new Cofounders programme, due to launch in Autumn 2017. The main elements of Cofounders is as follows:

- A cohort of approximately 20 potential cofounders will be recruited twice per annum
- Following an intense team formation process called 'The Hothouse', teams will form from this cohort to develop existing or new product ideas throughout the 10 weeks duration of the programme
- Design Thinking consultants will be required to coach the teams through this time using design thinking methodology. The consultant will support the teams as they define and empathize a deep understanding of the user's problem and iterate and test prototypes
- The programme will conclude with a demo night.
- In addition to developing a prototype, the teams will be provided with input and insights on what it means to be a co-founder.

- For further information on the programme, please contact Sonya Kerr, Programme Manager – [Sonya.Kerr@catalyst-inc.org](mailto:Sonya.Kerr@catalyst-inc.org)

#### **4. Deliverables**

The teams will meet every Monday evening from Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October to Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017. Design thinking consultants will be introduced to the teams on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October. It is essential that all Design thinking consultants are available on this date.

It is anticipated that each Design Consultant will coach 2 to 3 teams and that each team will avail of at least 6 coaching sessions throughout the programme. These coaching sessions can be scheduled at a time suitable to the consultant and the teams but bear in mind that this may need to be in the evenings or weekends to facilitate the candidates.

There is a set budget of **up to a Maximum of £2,000** for design thinking coaching per team.

#### **5. Essential Criteria**

- At least 4 years relevant experience in user experience and product development
- Referencable projects using design thinking
- Evidence of working with commercial enterprises or companies, ideally SMEs or start-ups
- Experience with both qualitative and quantitative research. e.g. questionnaire design, behavioral analysis, statistical/analytical concepts
- Working knowledge of prototyping tools (e.g. 3D printing, sketching, MVP creation, prototype websites)
- Exceptional analytical, creative and problem solving skills
- Experience of creating personas, requirements specifications, customer journey maps, storyboards, process flows and design specifications

#### **6. Judging Criteria**

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Evidence of how you meet the essential criteria
- Proposed structure of coaching to ensure maximum impact with teams
- Cost (daily rate/how you meet the requirements of the programme over 10 weeks)

#### **7. Project Timeline**

Please submit your proposal to [trudy.parry@catalyst-inc.org](mailto:trudy.parry@catalyst-inc.org) by **9am on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> August 2017**.

**August 2017** – cofounder recruitment to begin

**October 2017** – Project to start