

# CONNECT

The fast track for technology business

## CONNECT North East – an opportunity for partnership working

Bridge Club Ltd is delighted to be working with North East Finance on the pilot of CONNECT North East. Following Bridge Club Ltd's previous involvement with CONNECT North East through the delivery of a stakeholder engagement project and the North East's first Investment Conference, we are excited about the challenge ahead and feel confident that with careful management, open communications and a genuine partnership approach, CONNECT North East has the potential to be a 'force for good' for the region.

The CONNECT North East pilot programme proposed by Bridge Club Ltd is modeled on San Diego's successful open network approach. It will stimulate the *demand* for investment among high growth, young technology companies by brigading existing regional and national expertise and delivery. Through collaborative working it avoids duplication of services and will present a calendar of activities that will prepare young technology businesses for investment and will bring the two communities of young technology and investment, closer together.

Fundamental to the pilot's success is its positioning as a 'network of networks' or a saucer supporting partners' commercialisation, business management, access to finance and business growth activities. CONNECT North East will harness the expertise of its Partners throughout the region to create an appropriate, effective and demand-led programme, which adds value to other regional initiatives. CONNECT North East will not duplicate existing provision, but add value to it.

The key purpose and objectives of CONNECT North East can be defined as:

**Secretariat** CONNECT North East will operate as a secretariat. Its function will be to co-ordinate regional activities that focus on business growth, access to finance and investor readiness. The aim of CONNECT North East as a secretariat is to help end users map the investment landscape, understand who and what fits where, and work out which provision can help them achieve their goals. Through its Partners, CONNECT North East is seeking to compose a calendar of relevant activities and events.

**Signpost** Events and services provided by Partners will be marketed by CONNECT North East in order to signpost CONNECT North East users to regional delivery.

**Attract regional, national and international investors** CONNECT North East will seek to develop a status, track record and reputation that acts as a magnet for investors from within and outside of the region. We will showcase the young technology business talent within the North East and encourage non-North East investors to source deal flow from within the region.

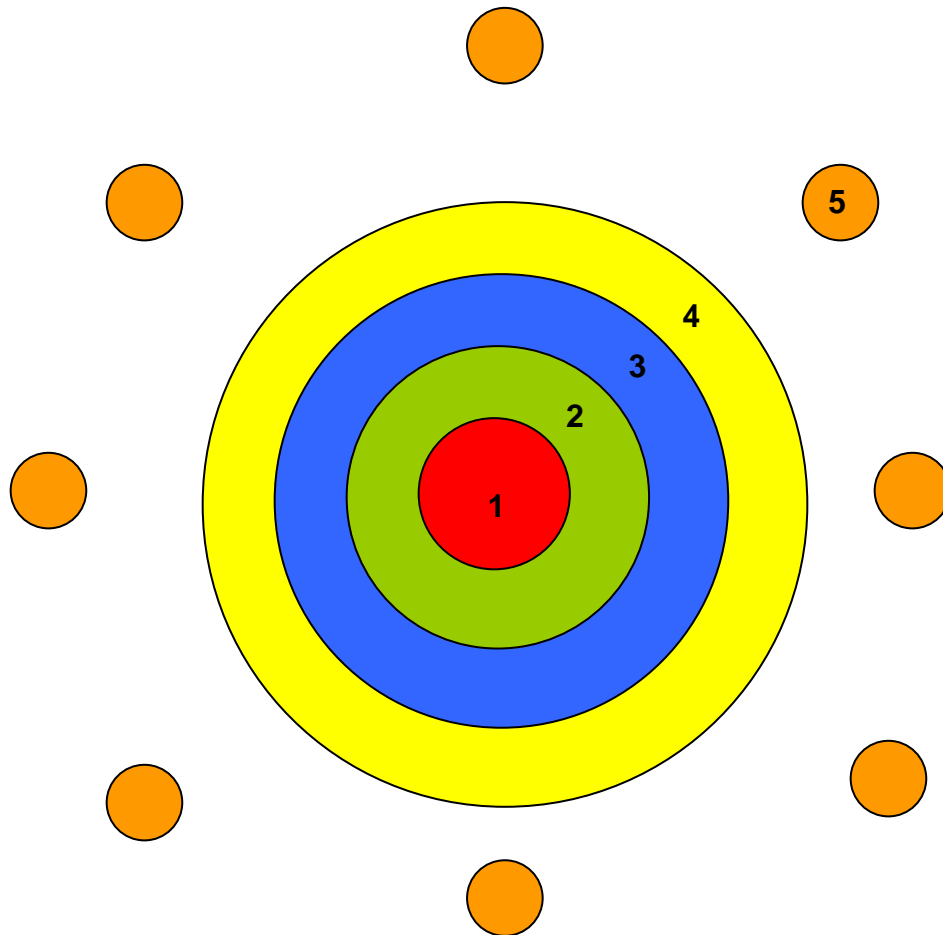


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Bridge Club Ltd is keen to initiate a genuine partnership approach to the development of CONNECT North East. Bridge Club Ltd has defined a number of different ways through which regional stakeholders can engage with CONNECT North East and its users. The choice of engagement is down to the individual Partner company and will be determined by the level of access Partners would like to the CONNECT North East young technology companies and entrepreneurs, and the financial commitment they are prepared to make.

The following diagram illustrates the CONNECT North East engagement model:



**Key:**

1 = Bridge Club Ltd as CONNECT North East secretariat.

2 = Founding Partners: an individual public or private sector organisation with a regionally-strategic role to help deliver on innovation, technology and regeneration targets.

3 = Strategic Partners: a public sector organisation representing the interests of a group of organisations with common features or operations.

4 = Professional Partners: professional service providers and investors who can expect to gain by meeting the end users of CONNECT North East.

5 = Young technology companies: the end users of CONNECT North East's services.



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The following information illustrates the benefits to Strategic Partners of being involved in CONNECT North East and the investment required to be engaged. Bridge Club Ltd is keen to address the needs of all its partners and work together to ensure that CONNECT North East is a mutually beneficial opportunity for all involved. As a result, the suggested list of benefits below is flexible. Please feel free to suggest alternative/additional benefits that may be of interest to you and your organisation.

**Strategic Partner:** a public sector organisation representing the interests of a group of organisations with common features or operations, who will all benefit from the community built by, and the communications managed by CONNECT North East.

## Key benefits:

- Access to the CONNECT North East user group via CONNECT North East events and other delivery activities.
- Company profile, logo, weblink and contact details on the CONNECT North East website.
- Pro-active referral of CONNECT North East users to your organisation's services by CONNECT North East account managers.
- First refusal for any sponsorship opportunities that may arise.
- Coverage in CONNECT North East PR activity.
- Data relating to website traffic to your site as a result of CONNECT North East activity and/or website.

## In-kind investment required:

- Active support of CONNECT North East activity through your website, mailing lists and newsletters (where available and appropriate).
- Weblink to CONNECT North East website from your company's website.
- Letter of support to endorse the principles and objectives of CONNECT North East.

## Financial Investment required:

- £nil



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