



Building Change Trust Tender Civic Activism: International Best Practice Research

1. Introduction

The Building Change Trust was established in 2008 by the Big Lottery Fund with a National Lottery grant of £10million as an investment for community capacity building and promotion of the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector in Northern Ireland. The Trust supports the VCSE sector in Northern Ireland through the development, delivery of, and learning from a range of programmes including commissioned work, awards programmes and other interventions. Between now and 2018, our resources will be used to support the VCSE sector to achieve more and better collaboration, increased sustainability and to be a learning sector which identifies, shares and acts on lessons of others' actions. This work will be carried out across 6 overarching thematic areas: Collaboration, Social Finance, Social Innovation, Inspiring Impact, Leadership and Creative Space for Civic Thinking.

This tender is part of the Trust's 'Creative Space for Civic Thinking' theme. A strategy and action plan for this thematic area of work was developed during late 2013 and early 2014. One possible action identified for the coming period was the establishment of a 'Civic Activism Fund' (CAF) through which the Trust would resource the NI VCSE sector to pilot a series of innovative and creative approaches to civic activism i.e. the involvement of citizens in decision-making processes. The CAF, if progressed, would adopt an 'open ideas' process which will seek to blend the best local ideas with examples of best practice from elsewhere (i.e. globally).

The Trust is looking for a suitable consultant, based in the UK or Ireland, to research, identify and write-up a series of the most creative and innovative tools and approaches to civic activism internationally. A maximum of 20 tools and approaches should be shortlisted and prepared according to a standard format. These will then be published primarily for an NI VCSE sector audience and used to stimulate the local idea generation process. They will also go forward directly for consideration as possible initiatives that the Trust could resource in Northern Ireland.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the exercise is:

"To identify 20 of the most creative and innovative tools and approaches to civic engagement work that have been used by civil society organisations internationally (i.e. outside NI but including the rest of the UK and Ireland), focusing on those that could potentially be used in the NI context, and prepare a briefing on each for publication primarily for an NI VCSE sector audience."

3. Proposed Selection Criteria

In selecting which tools and approaches to shortlist, the following criteria should be used:

- The involvement of ordinary people in decision-making processes (mainly statutory) should be central
- The tool or approach has been used by civil society organisations in order to achieve the above
- The tool or approach is suitable for use in a 'western' cultural and institutional context (though need not necessarily have been used in such a context before)
- The tool or approach is suitable for use in a post-conflict or highly divided society context – at least some examples from other such contexts should be included in the shortlist
- The focus would be on practical tools and approaches, rather than whole projects - albeit examples of projects within which the tools and approaches have been applied would be very useful
- Tools and approaches that would be amenable to adoption as standard practice by a public authority e.g. as part of NI's upcoming Community Planning process. At least some, but not all, tools and approaches should meet this criterion.

In considering the whole suite of tools and approaches to be shortlisted, the consultant should ensure where possible that there is at least one example from each of the following categories which are drawn from www.pgexchange.org:

- **Public information** – Helping citizens to have access to relevant information about government policies, decisions and actions
- **Education and deliberation** – Making citizens aware of their rights and responsibilities (civic education) and helping citizens collectively learn about and deliberate on issues of priority public concern.
- **Advocacy and citizen voice** – Helping citizens to publicly express their opinions and concerns.
- **Public dialogue** – Enhanced dialogue between citizens and the state; promoting more productive interactions between multiple state and non-state actors.
- **Elections** – Ensuring that elections are free and fair and help citizens make informed choices and hold politicians accountable for their electoral promises.
- **Policy and planning** – The design and implementation of public policies and plans at local or national level that respond effectively to citizens' priorities and needs.
- **Public budgets and expenditures** – Helping citizens understand and influence decisions about the allocation of public resources, monitor public spending and hold government actors accountable for their management of public financial resources.
- **Monitoring and evaluating public services** – Innovative ways for citizens to monitor and evaluate the accessibility, quality and efficiency of public services – leading to improved services and better quality of life for all citizens.
- **Public oversight** – Methods that citizens and civil society organisations can use to monitor transparency, corruption and accountability, oversee public action and seek redress for injustices or misdeeds.

In addition, the suite of initiatives should include a number of tools and approaches that wholly or partly use digital technology.

4. Methodology

To a large extent the researcher will need to rely on their existing knowledge and contacts within civil society and academia in order to identify specific tools and approaches. This will be a purely desk-based piece of research utilising web resources as well as phone and e-mail contact. An initial trawl should identify a large number of tools and approaches that can then be further reduced through application of the criteria above and in conversation with Building Change Trust personnel.

The consultant will be expected to maintain regular communication (at least weekly) with Building Change Trust personnel throughout the process, including joint selection of the final shortlist of tools and approaches.

5. Expected Outcomes

The main outcome of the research will be the production of 20 one-page summaries, each profiling a specific tool or approach by giving the following information:

1. Name of tool / approach
2. Purpose of the tool / approach and category(ies) to which it belongs
3. Description of how it is used in practical terms
4. Examples of where it has been used (name of organisation, project and location, with reference for further reading)
5. Links to further reading

The Trust will then have the summaries designed and published (with a foreword) on the Trust's website.

6. Timeframe

The initial 'long-list' of tools and approaches should be submitted to Building Change Trust no later than two weeks after the date of signing of the contract.

The final short-list with agreed text and format should be submitted to Building Change Trust no later than four weeks after the date of signing of the contract.

7. Budget

A maximum of GBP5000 is available for this work, exclusive of VAT and expenses.

Reasonable expenses for calls made by phone and skype will be covered, upon submission of documentary evidence, up to a maximum of GBP100.

Some limited costs for travel (including accommodation and food as necessary) within the UK or Ireland may be permitted, with prior approval from the Trust and on a case-by-case basis, for the sole purpose of exploring particular tools or approaches in situ. The Trust will only approve such requests where a clear rationale can be presented demonstrating real added-value to the research.

8. Tender Requirements

a. Proposal Document

Proposals should be no longer than 8 pages and contain the following:

- i. Basic information about the bidder: contact information; overall areas of expertise; relevant past experience
- ii. A proposed research methodology including some indication of key informants and online sources
- iii. Some initial examples of possible tools and approaches by way of illustration
- iv. Budget and day by day workplan

b. Scoring Criteria

The criteria by which proposals will be scored are as follows:

- i. Level and relevance of past experience
- ii. Overall quality and coherence of proposal
- iii. Cost effectiveness

c. Consultant specification

The consultant(s) must be based in the UK or Ireland and be able to demonstrate knowledge and experience of each of the following:

- i. Civic engagement / participation work at both UK/Ireland and international level from an academic or practitioners perspective
- ii. Knowledge of international civil society and academic networks with expertise in the civic engagement field

In addition, experience of civic engagement / participation work in post-conflict contexts would be an advantage

d. Deadline and Submission Information

Proposals should be submitted electronically to info@buildingchangetrust.org no later than **4pm on Friday 16th May 2014**.

Please note that The Trust is not obliged to accept the lowest or any tender.