



## LOTTERY FUNDED

### **A tender for the three year evaluation of the BESPOKE project being managed by the South London CVS Partnership (SLCVSP) with funding from Big Lottery Fund's BASIS 2 programme**

#### **Introduction**

SLCVSP is fronting a partnership of local infrastructure organisations in south London to deliver the BESPOKE project. Apart from SLCVSP, the other main partners are:

- The six Councils of Voluntary Service in south London (covering Bromley, Croydon, Merton, Sutton, Richmond and Kingston)
- The South London BME Partnership – SLBMEP
- The South London Volunteer Centres Network - SLVCN

The manner of co-operation is envisioned by the Collaboration Agreement which all partners have signed.

The BESPOKE project aims to explore and implement sustainable and cost effective common back office services around HR, finance and management information IT for voluntary and community organisations. This project began on 31 July and is funded through a three year grant given by the Big Lottery Fund from its BASIS 2 programme. The project is managed by a Business Development Manager (BDM) employed by SLCVSP. The BDM will report to the Partnership Manager of the SLCVSP and regularly report back to

- SLCVSP's Board of Trustees
- The Chief Executives' group which includes the Partnership Manager of SLCVSP, the six CVS CEOs and the London Learning Consortium
- The Staying Connected sub-regional Change Up consortium which also includes representatives from SLBMEP and SLVCN

#### **Aim of this tender**

SLCVSP wants to engage an independent consultant or agency to evaluate the success of the BESPOKE project over its three years' of BIG funding. In particular, the evaluation will target how the project is progressing against original expectations especially as contained in the application form and the business plan both approved by BIG and enabling release of the grant funding. The business plan contains a detailed work plan and budget that acts as a road map as to how the project should progress.

#### **Background and context**

The six CVS in south London have a history of working together. There are five sub-regions within London and in each with a grant from London Councils, networks have been formulated to enable the CVS to co-operate. In south London, this joint working has been taken further by setting up the network as SLCVSP – an independent charitable company with separate trustees and a Partnership Manager. SLCVSP has drawn in funding for local infrastructure organisations in south London including the CVS, and the BESPOKE project is the next step in this initiative in joint working. SLCVSP also convenes the Staying Connected sub-regional consortium that brings together other local infrastructure organisations in the

sub-region including the volunteer centres, learning and training organisations, an IT support organisation, and agencies supporting BME communities.

The BESPOKE project intends to create more efficient infrastructure support for voluntary and community organisations particularly those in south London. The intention is to create support services around HR, finance and management information IT that voluntary and community organisations can buy into. Such services would be cheaper than each organisation providing its own service. This will show that the third sector can deliver value for money services of its own accord and so enable greater resources to be directed to delivering frontline services.

The final shape which the delivery of these common back office services will take has not been pre-decided. The BESPOKE project in its first eighteen month phase aims to explore options, map current provision and identify best practice. The second half will see the implementation of the new service structure. It is possible that different delivery methods will be identified for each of the three different services.

### **Outputs and outcomes**

Key outputs will be:

- To produce an evaluation report at the end of year one (July / August 2010) identifying progress and making recommendations for the operation of year two
- To produce an evaluation report at the end of year two (July / August 2011) identifying progress and making recommendations for the operation of the final year
- To produce a final evaluation report on the overall success of and learning from the BESPOKE project (by March 2012)
- Assisting the BDM in designing and implementing the Learning Dispersal Strategy at the end of year three (up to July / August 2012)

The methodology for collecting the information necessary to produce these reports will be agreed between the evaluator, the BDM, the SLCVSP Partnership Manager, the CEOs' group and Staying Connected.

Key outcomes will be:

- Building a good working relationship with all the key individuals, organisations and groupings that are relevant to the BESPOKE project
- Helping to create a working environment in which all feel they can discuss honestly the successes and failures of this initiative
- Identifying learning points and good practice that can be used by local infrastructure organisations, local voluntary and community sectors, and funders elsewhere in England
- Being part of a project that delivers efficient and cost effective back office support services to local voluntary and community organisations thereby enabling greater resources to be used for frontline service delivery

### **Stakeholders & audience**

The evaluator will deal with the following key stakeholders:

- The Business Development Manager and Partnership Manager at SLCVSP will be the main point of contact. They will assist in directing the work of the evaluator and receiving their reports particularly in the context of ensuring that the project overall stays on track in terms of completing milestones, outcome, outputs and budget.
- SLCVSP's trustees will provide information to and receive feedback from the evaluator particularly in their role as the trustees of the accountable body to Big Lottery Fund for the BESPOKE project.

- The Chief Executives' group (consisting of the six CVS CEOs and the Partnership Manager of SLCVSP and CEO of London Learning Consortium) will provide information to and receive and consider reports from the evaluator particularly in a context of being key partners in implementing this project and what learning can be taken from trying to implement the BESPOKE project particularly for the future reference of SLCVSP and all the BESPOKE partners plus for others trying to develop similar common back office services elsewhere.
- The Staying Connected sub-regional consortium which includes the other partners in BESPOKE will also provide information to and receive reports from the evaluator as per the Chief Execs' group.
- Big Lottery Fund (as represented by a named grants officer) will want to consider the reports of the evaluator to ensure that the project is progressing as planned and its milestones / outcomes / outputs will be achieved.
- The wider VCS will want to learn from this project particularly the easiest and best ways of implementing common back office services that will create more efficient and cost effective service provision so that savings can be made and greater resources diverted to frontline service delivery.

The evaluator may be involved in publicising the project via articles and presentations.

### **Requirements & methodology**

The evaluator will achieve the measurable outputs detailed above. The appropriate methodology for achieving this will be determined by the evaluator primarily in discussion with the BDM and Partnership Manager at SLCVSP but possibly also including SLCVSP's trustees, the Chief Executives' group and Staying Connected. Such methodology may include one to one interviews by phone or face to face, questionnaires / surveys either paper or web-based, and focus groups. It is also possible that the evaluator may want to provide benchmarking against similar initiatives elsewhere. Case studies may also form part of the research reports.

The reports will be written in an accessible style and be robust enough to stand up to analysis and questioning. The reports will also include recommendations for action. There are resources within the wider BESPOKE budget for the presentation style of these reports to be changed and improved without changing the text itself. The intention is that the reports will be made publicly available by being placed as PDF documents on relevant web sites. The key partners in the BESPOKE project will want to consider draft reports before they are put into the public arena.

### **Project management**

The evaluator will report to the BDM. In his / her absence, they will report to the SLCVSP Partnership Manager. The evaluator will provide regular updates and also first drafts of reports for comment before the final versions are agreed.

### **Copyright & publicity**

The evaluator will be clearly credited on all documents but copyright will remain with SLCVSP. Notice will be taken by all parties regarding copyright and marketing as detailed by the Big Lottery Fund. It is important that the funding from Big Lottery Fund is appropriately presented and highlighted.

### **The tender**

Bidders should submit a written tender to Flavia Gapper at SLCVSP by 5pm on Wednesday 10 February 2010. Each tender should contain:

- A final cost (with a detailed breakdown over the three years) for the work being proposed with VAT and all expenses included

- A work plan for the three years
- Information on the personnel who will be undertaking the evaluation work
- Experience and any added value that the proposed evaluator can bring to this evaluation
- A suggested draft contract

Tenders should be succinct. All prices quoted must be held firm for at least 45 days after the closing date for tenders. SLCVSP will not meet any costs incurred in preparing or submitting a tender.

### **Cost**

The guideline for tenders is up to £16,000 over three years (inclusive of VAT and expenses). The tender should indicate the rationale, split of work and costing over the three years. All proposals should be inclusive of providing the tangible outputs as detailed in this tender up to August 2012.

### **Timetable**

Wed 10 February 2010	Deadline to submit tenders to Flavia Gapper at SLCVSP by 5pm
Fri 12 February 2010	Shortlisting
Friday 19 February 2010	Interviews for shortlisted applicants
Friday 26 February 2010	Applicants informed of tender outcome
March 2010	Contract agreed with successful bidder

Reports and other outputs of evaluation to be produced to deadlines as set out earlier.

### **Decision on awarding**

This contract will not be awarded solely on the basis of cost. This will be a factor but the following criteria will also be considered:

- Previous experience of doing similar evaluation work
- Knowledge of working with the VCS (ideally in London)
- Track record of producing work on time and to budget
- Clear commitment to see this evaluation through to the end of the three year period
- Any extra value that the supplier can bring to the project
- Ability to convey information in writing both clearly and succinctly
- Commitment to the values and aspirations of VCS organisations including partnership working, innovation, and cost savings on back office services without decreased quality so allowing resources to be diverted to frontline provision

### **Submission**

All written tenders should be submitted along with two referees who can be approached if necessary. To be received by **5pm on Wednesday 10 February 2010** to

Flavia Gapper, Business Development Manager  
 SLCVSP  
 55 Heath Road  
 Twickenham  
 TW1 4AW

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