



Invitation to Tender

Interim Evaluation of The Lloyds Bank and Bank of Scotland Social Entrepreneurs Programme (Phase 2)

Deadline for receipt of tender proposals: 6pm, 14 September 2020

Anticipated contract start date: September/October 2020

Work anticipated to have concluded: 18 December 2020

Introduction

The School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) are looking to appoint an external consultant(s) to undertake an interim evaluation of its flagship national programme, [The Lloyds Bank and Bank of Scotland Social Entrepreneurs Programme \(LBSEP\)](#).

The Lloyds Bank and Bank of Scotland Social Entrepreneurs Programme is run in partnership with the School for Social Entrepreneurs, and jointly funded by The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF). Launched in 2012, the programme will run for 10 years and is the largest of its kind in the UK. By 2020 the programme will have supported around 2,350 social entrepreneurs to start and grow innovative social organisations across the UK through traditional and [Match Trading grants](#), mentoring and a 12-month action learning programme delivered through nine SSE network schools.

As a learning organisation we want to build on our learning from the final evaluation of Phase 1 (launched in May 2019) to inform SSE programming and future practice.

The School for Social Entrepreneurs

We can't fix issues like poverty, climate change and ill-health alone. That's why the School for Social Entrepreneurs exists. We help 1,000 people a year develop the skills, strengths and networks they need to tackle society's biggest problems. We run courses that equip people to start, scale and strengthen organisations that make a positive difference. But we're not a traditional school. Learning with SSE is inspiring, action-based and accessible. We support people in other ways too, such as funding and mentoring.

SSE invest in individuals from all backgrounds who have practical ideas for change. There is no typical student at the School for Social Entrepreneurs; the people who attend programmes range in age from 17 to 74.

Lord Michael Young founded SSE in 1997, and we've grown to a [network of schools](#) across the UK, Canada and India. Together, we're changing lives and transforming communities. <https://www.the-sse.org/>

Background and context

The Lloyds Bank and Bank of Scotland Social Entrepreneurs Programme

The Lloyds Bank and Bank of Scotland Social Entrepreneurs Programme (LBSEP) is a partnership with the School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) and funded by Lloyds Banking Group, Bank of Scotland, Scottish Government and The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF). Initially planned over five years (2012-2017), the programme is now in its second phase, following a renewal until 2022.

The programme runs an open recruitment process in England and Scotland for a total of 260 places each year and brings together 13 cohorts of approximately 20 students per cohort. Each student receives a grant as part of the 12-month action learning programme delivered across nine SSE network schools.

The programme supports social entrepreneurs at different stages of their social enterprise journey to develop the skills, strengths and networks they need to make a positive difference and tackle society's biggest problems. Each social entrepreneur engages in a comprehensive 12 month learning programme that is inspiring, action based and accessible.

There are three entry levels: Start Up, Trade Up and Scale Up. The learning consists of expert led sessions on topics ranging from business model canvas to measuring social impact, witness sessions (which draw on the practical experiences of entrepreneurs), Action Learning Sets and project visits. The programme also includes a grant and a mentor from the Lloyds Banking Group.

The programme is delivered in England and Scotland and has supported over 1,800 social entrepreneurs in the UK since 2012.

The total grant awards for phase two (2017-2022) are as follows:

- 860 Start Up Awards of traditional grant of £1,000
- 300 Trade Up Awards of a Match Trading grant of up to £4,000 in England and up to £7,000 in Scotland
- 100 Scale Up Awards of a Match Trading grant of up to £7,000.

Match Trading Grants

SSE in collaboration with the Lloyds Banking Group and TNLCF piloted the first ever Match Trading cohort during Phase 1 of the programme in 2015-16. This was rolled out, at scale, to all Trade Up and Scale Up level grantees in Phase 2 of the programme. [Match Trading](#) is an innovative grant funding initiative that aims to empower social entrepreneurs to develop their trading base by rewarding sales growth through pound-for-pound matches in an increase in income from trading. Instead of giving a fixed amount of grant, a Match Trading grant has capacity to transform the grant funding so that for the first time, grants can directly incentivize trading by 'matching' an increase in the organisation's traded income.

Evaluation purpose and objectives

An independent evaluation of Phase 1 suggested that SSE, Lloyds Banking Group and TNLCF delivered a quality programme which developed personal and business skills and economically sustainable and impactful business models. The purpose of the interim evaluation is to build on the findings of the Phase 1 evaluation and measure progress against Phase 2 programme outcomes (see Appendix B), with a particular focus on the impacts of using Match Trading grants within a learning programme. The evaluation will identify key lessons to inform future practice for SSE and the wider sector. It will enable SSE to share learnings and continue to advocate for the application of action learning methodologies and Match Trading grants to achieve social change.

SSE has already gathered some data on the financial performance of grantees receiving Match Trading grants. Our experience and evidence base to date suggests Match Trading grants delivered alongside the action learning do help to reduce grant dependency and increases the trading ratio of social enterprises on the programme thereby building a more solid foundation for a sustainable business model. However, Match Trading is a relatively new programme element and the interim evaluation therefore presents a timely opportunity to further examine this funding mechanism and its impact on organisational resilience and sustainability.

Given the current Covid-19 crisis and its effect on many of the organisations that SSE supports, we intend that this evaluation will also help us to adjust the Match Trading approach where necessary to suit the ongoing situation.

Scope

The interim evaluation will cover the Phase 2 period which runs from October 2017 to the 8th cohort of students on this programme who are due to complete their programme in September 2020 and graduate in October 2020. There are 13 learning cohorts across Start Up, Trade Up and Scale Up per programme year. The interim evaluation will capture progress and impact of the Social Entrepreneurs Programme over three main levels, as per the contracted programme outcomes and SSE's theory of change:

- For the social entrepreneurs who have participated in the programme
- For their social enterprise, organisation or project
- For the beneficiaries and communities they support

General evaluation objectives:

1. Analyse the extent to which programme outcomes have been achieved to date and identify key success factors
2. Identify any unintended consequences or outcomes, positive or negative, to have resulted from Phase 2 of the programme to date
3. On the basis of the analysis undertaken for 1 and 2 above, make recommendations to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme.

Match Trading evaluation objectives:

1. Analyse longitudinal Match Trading data relating to students who completed relevant programmes (from Phase 1, and early Phase 2 cohorts).

2. Assess the impact of the Match Trading grants as a delivery model in contributing to the growth and resilience of both of the students and the organisations they lead. This should include identification and analysis of regional differences in the impact of Match Trading, including possible explanatory factors.
3. Review and inform the programme's approach to using a Match Trading mechanism during the recovery phase of the Covid-19 crisis

Use of the interim evaluation findings:

We will use the information generated through this evaluation to:

- Support our continuous learning and strengthen our knowledge base on the longer-term impact and outcomes of the programme.
- Inform our approach, particularly with regard to using Match Trading to incentivise growth and sustainability (including our approach to its use during Covid-19 recovery phase)
- Share key outcomes and learnings with funders, stakeholders, staff, students, Fellows

Methodology

We are looking for an evaluation partner who can work collaboratively with SSE and key stakeholders in a rigorous yet engaging way.

We have already gathered quantitative data to monitor progress towards specified outputs and outcomes and this will be provided to the evaluator(s). This internal data will need to be verified and triangulated (particularly with qualitative data) to understand not only what progress is being made, but also why progress is/is not being made and what lessons we might derive.

Applicants are asked to outline their proposed methodology for meeting the requirements of the evaluation. We are interested in applicants' ideas and are open to proposals using innovative methodologies, appreciating that the final evaluation design will need to be confirmed following agreement of the key evaluation questions.

We currently envisage the following, or equivalent, activities being undertaken:

- Desk based analysis including review of existing datasets and phase 1 evaluation (see Appendix 1)
- Gather new qualitative feedback using survey or interview questions to supplement our existing data. This could include:
 - Interviews and/or focus groups with representatives of:
 - students, students who are Match Trading recipients, and Fellows (i.e. social entrepreneurs who have completed the programme)
 - corporate mentors
 - senior management team
 - Grant Management Team
 - programme delivery teams (SSE Schools x9)
 - Selection of case studies illustrating the social entrepreneurs' journey, capturing specific examples of programme impact, and reflecting the

diversity of people / issues supported through the programme. Subject to COVID-related restrictions, we anticipate at least some of these case studies being undertaken through project visits, with an opportunity to consult with the relevant SSE School, the social entrepreneur, and some of their beneficiaries.

Outputs and dissemination

Outputs

We welcome your suggestions on the outputs to be produced. Our current thinking is outlined below.

- (1) [Evaluation plan](#) - confirming key evaluation questions, methodology and timeframes
- (2) [Draft and Final Interim evaluation report](#) - outlining the purpose, methodology, findings, learning and lessons from the evaluation. We anticipate this will be produced in PDF format (with some basic design work) and no longer than 25 pages maximum including appendices.
- (3) [Learning review paper](#) - this will be a concise, internally focused paper which pulls out the main reflections and learning from the evaluation in a format which facilitates follow-up action and implementation. The primary audience will be SSE staff. We anticipate this will be produced in PDF format and be c3-4 pages in length.
- (4) [Evaluation briefings](#) - we would like a number of evaluation briefings to be produced which are engagingly written and visually exciting, summarising the main findings from the evaluation. The primary audience for this output will be existing programme partners, prospective partners and funders, and the wider social enterprise sector. We envisage the briefings will be externally focused publications, produced in both print and PDF formats, and include design work such as infographics.

We are interested to hear alternative / additional format suggestions for these 'briefings' as you feel appropriate.

Dissemination

We envisage working collaboratively to communicate the headline findings and learnings from the evaluation. We welcome your suggestions on methods for this and as a minimum would like to include programme partners, staff across the network, and trustees in the dissemination phase. We would also like to ideally include prospective partners, the wider social enterprise sector, and students and Fellows. This could be through meetings, events, social media, or other activities and we welcome your suggestions within the proposal.

Timetable, budget and project management

Our timetable for this work is full project completion by **18th December 2020**. We envisage the following outline timetable which will be finalised upon commissioning:

- Consultant(s) appointed - Mid September 2020
- First draft, full evaluation report - Mid-late November 2020
- Final draft, full evaluation report - Early-mid December 2020
- Learning review paper - Mid December 2020
- Evaluation briefings - Mid December 2020

The budget you submit should include all expenses, such as design/print costs. Please indicate in your proposal if you have in-house design capabilities (and cost this into your proposal) or whether we will need to work with a separate design agency (at extra cost).

Within SSE, day to day communications and management of the evaluation project will be led by Kate Lee-Gleisner, an associate director at SSE. SSE has also established a steering group for this evaluation, comprising staff from across the organisation, and across the UK.

Your submission

SSE invites organisations interested in tendering for the Interim Evaluation to submit a proposal by 6pm on Friday, 11 September 2020. Proposals should be sent to Kate Lee-Gleisner at kate.lee-gleisner@sse.org.uk. If shortlisted, you may be invited to a virtual meeting.

Your proposal should outline:

- Why you are interested in working with SSE on this project.
- Your proposed methodology and outputs.
- A suggested engagement strategy for the project, focusing in particular on how you plan to involve the networks schools, students and fellows throughout the UK.
- The team who will deliver the work, including brief CVs and examples of relevant previous contracts team members have undertaken (e.g. evaluation studies, work on social entrepreneurship).
- A breakdown of costs by activity, showing the day rate for each team member. Please indicate if your costs are exclusive/inclusive of VAT (if applicable).
- Any added value you can bring in relation to dissemination of the evaluation outputs.
- The date your team would be able to start work on the project, and an indicative timetable for delivering the key elements of the evaluation (to be finalised through the evaluation plan).
- Details of two referees for work in a similar field you would be happy for us to approach.

SSE is committed to undertaking a rigorous independent evaluation of one of its main programmes. However, we are also mindful that our work at SSE and through the social entrepreneurs we support should be creative, inspiring and exciting. Priority will be given to bidders who can effectively combine the dual qualities of rigour and creativity in how this project is delivered and the outputs produced.

If you have any questions whilst preparing your response, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Kate Lee-Gleisner on kate.lee-gleisner@sse.org.uk

Appendix A: Existing data sources

The following data sources and information can be made available to the successful provider.

Programme information

- Contractual outputs and outcomes agreed with Lloyds Bank, Bank of Scotland, Scottish Government and NLCF
- Programme structure/content for Start Up, Trade Up and Scale Up courses
- SSE's [Theory of Change](#)

Datasets

- Quantitative data against Programme Outcomes 1-3 (via PowerBI)
- Quantitative data on the financial performance of students on Trade Up and Scale Up programmes including number and value of grants distributed and financial quarterly Match Trading grant reports (via PowerBI)
- Case studies (captured internally and at phase 1 final evaluation stage)
- Internal evaluation of the Trade Up pilot

Independent evaluation/review

- Phase 1 final evaluation report ([summary](#), [full report](#) and learning report)

Appendix B: Phase 2 programme outcome summary

- **Outcome 1:** more skilled and confident community leaders
 - Number of social entrepreneurs that demonstrate increased skills and confidence in relation to four key learning outcomes: i) business and entrepreneurial skills, ii) emotional resourcefulness, iii) networks and iv) social impact.
- **Outcome 2:** more sustainable social enterprises
 - 810 new social entrepreneurs will complete the Start Up course (720 in England) and 70% will still be trading two years later; 360 social entrepreneurs (347 in England) will complete the Trade Up and Scale Up programme and generate at least £2m in new trading income (£1.92m in England) linked to Match Trading.
- **Outcome 3:** enhanced social impact in communities
 - Each year 234 social entrepreneurs (213 in England) will report on their approach to social impact on completion of the learning programme; participants will increase beneficiaries by an average of 100 people each year; participants will increase volunteers by an average of 6 each year.