

# Invitation to Tender

## Evaluation Support to the South West Social Entrepreneurs Partnership

Deadline for receipt of tender proposals: Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March at 5pm

Anticipated contract start date: Mid-March 2022

Work anticipated to have concluded: July 2022

Budget: £11,050 (inclusive of VAT)

## Introduction

The School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) is looking to appoint an external consultant(s) to provide evaluation support to the South West Social Entrepreneurs Partnership (SWSEP). For more information, visit: <https://www.the-sse.org/courses/south-west-social-entrepreneurs-partnership/>

Three programmes that are part of the partnership include: Devon Social Entrepreneurs Programme, Somerset Social Entrepreneurs Programme and BaNES Social Entrepreneurs Programme. The programmes are funded by the UK Government through the UK Community Renewal Fund.

SWSEP places social enterprises and community businesses (SEs) at the heart of economic recovery and regeneration across Devon, Somerset, and Bath and North East Somerset to increase social capital, social innovation, and community wellbeing. We aim to tackle exclusion by engaging isolated and underrepresented groups and communities and will provide accessible pathways into SE for individuals, community groups and voluntary organisations to become more resilient and enterprising

We are looking to appoint an external consultant(s) with experience of working in the social enterprise sector or with employment/business start-up programmes/services, and with experience of working with multiple partners to measure and evidence the impact of an intervention.

## 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/>



## Firstly, our commitment to inclusion

Diversity is a fact of life. Inclusion is a choice and a practice, for organisations and individuals. At SSE, our aim is to drive inclusion into every area and activity of what we do: from access to programmes, to grant investment, to board, staff, and partnerships.

However you identify, we would like to hear from you in response to this invitation to tender. In our commitment to continue to diversify those we work with, and for this evaluation opportunity in particular, we are especially keen to hear from those who identify as being from Black and minoritised ethnic backgrounds, LGBTQ+ and those with disabilities.

## Background and context

The School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) is the lead partner in the South West Social Entrepreneurs Partnership (SWSEP). Three programmes that are part of the partnership include: Devon Social Entrepreneurs Programme, Somerset Social Entrepreneurs Programme and BaNES Social Entrepreneurs Programme.

- Devon Social Entrepreneurs Programme is led by the School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) in partnership with Devon Communities Together, Stir to Action and New Prosperity Devon. It is funded by the UK Government through the UK Community Renewal Fund, which is managed by Devon County Council within the Devon area. <https://www.the-sse.org/courses/devon-social-entrepreneurs-programme/>
- Somerset Social Entrepreneurs Programme is led by the School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) in partnership with Somerset Community Foundation, Somerset Social Enterprise Network and Spark Somerset. It is funded by the UK Government through the UK Community Renewal Fund which is managed by Somerset County Council within the Somerset region. <https://www.the-sse.org/courses/somerset-social-entrepreneurs-programme/>
- Bath and North East Somerset Social Entrepreneurs Programme is led by the School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) in partnership with 3SG. It is funded by the UK Government through the UK Community Renewal Fund which is managed by the West of England Combined Authority within the Bath and North East Somerset region. <https://www.the-sse.org/courses/bath-northeast-somerset-social-entrepreneurs-programme/>

The programmes are funded by the UK Community Renewal Fund which is a UK Government programme for 2021/22. This aims to support people and communities most in need across the UK to pilot programmes and new approaches to build community resilience and prepare for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. It invests in skills, community and place, local business, and supporting people into employment. For more information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus>

SWSEP places social enterprises and community businesses (SEs) at the heart of economic recovery and regeneration across Devon, Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset to increase social capital, social innovation, and community wellbeing.

SEs are well placed to drive and support a more cooperative, more localised and community led, equitable and sustainable economy across these areas. SWSEP aims to



enable business that reflects local heritage and meets community needs through enabling and supporting a vibrant and resilient SE sector.

The SSE approach to learning is highly innovative and centred on action-led cohort-based learning. Two core principles of ‘Learning by Doing’ and ‘Learning Together’ will run throughout the design and delivery of this programme:

- We believe that people learn best when they can apply learning directly to their organisations. Witness experts contributing to the programme will be entrepreneurs and skilled practitioners.
- Learning together - We see great value in bringing together cohorts of leaders who can share challenges and successes, build networks, and learn from each other over the course of a programme.
- Participants will also benefit from one-to-one support to reflect on their learning and receive support to apply it to their organisations.
- 1:2:1 specialist support will also be available to participating organisations throughout the whole of the programme, addressing specific SE needs, including managing a diverse workforce, governance, income diversification, personal resilience and wellbeing, environmental impact and decarbonisation strategies, innovation, and product development.

Each SSE and Stir to Action programme participant receives a Match Trading Grant. These are designed to incentivise trading and reduce grant dependence and they can only draw down the full grant if they can at least match the amount of grant £ for £ with actual growth in trading income.

- Young adults: £1k available - £500 at the start of the programme, and up to £500 at the end, matching an uplift in traded income. (Grants from SSE direct)
- Start-up organisations: £5k available - £2.5k at the start of the programme, and up to £2.5k at the end, matching an uplift in traded income.
- Established organisations: £15k available - £7.5k at the start of the programme, and up to £7.5k at the end, matching an uplift in traded income.

Overall, across the three contract areas our aim is to engage with 900 SE’s and voluntary sector organisations. We will run intensive cohort-based learning programmes with over 100 people, including four Start Up programmes and three Accelerator Programmes. One Start Up programme, Founders for the Future delivered by our partner Stir to Action in Devon will have a focus on young adults aged 18-30. In addition, we will hold over 60 events and workshops addressing the specific needs of SE’s and we will provide specialist 1:2:1 support to over 100 SE’s supporting them to develop and enhance their SE.

Some of the aims of the project include:

- Developing business and entrepreneurial skills and stronger capability for trading and pivoting business models, as the economy recovers post-Covid,
- Developing emotional resourcefulness and legitimacy.
- Developing mutually supportive networks of fellow social entrepreneurs.
- Recovering and building a customer base of traded income.
- Reducing grant dependence
- Building environmentally sustainable organisations
- Developing new products to take to market
- Articulating clear social and environmental outcomes to be measured on an ongoing basis
- Increasing the number of beneficiaries and volunteers that they work with

## Evaluation purpose and objectives

### Scope

SSE are looking to appoint an external evaluator to work alongside the Entrepreneurship Impact Lead and project delivery team to support the evaluation of SWSEP. Our internal approach to evaluation aims to capture the impact of our projects over three main levels, as per the contracted programme outcomes and SSE's theory of change:

- For the individuals who have participated in the programme
- For their organisation
- For the wider sector

This information is collected at the beginning of the programme, at the end and again 6 to 12 months after the person has left the programme.

The main role of the evaluator will include:

- Engaging with participants to evidence the impact of the project and highlight the individual journeys of some of the participants.
- Engaging with programme partners to support data collection and processing of output and outcome data
- Supporting the collation and analysis of data across the partnership
- Supporting the completion of contractual performance monitoring returns to the funder
- Communicating any observations and putting forward proposals for any service improvements throughout the project delivery period
- Working alongside the Entrepreneurship Impact Lead and Head of Entrepreneurship Support to produce evaluation reports

### Purpose

We want to evidence and promote the impact of the SWSEP over and above the quantitative data we will be collecting. We want to tell the stories of the people engaging with the programme and understand the impact that the programme has for them. As a project with seven partners, we also need to ensure that the flow of data is carried out effectively and in a timely manner to ensure the effective delivery of services, as well as providing robust performance and impact data to the project funders.

This a relatively short programme and feel that the greatest impact will be evidenced through qualitative evaluation to support the quantitative data. Key evaluation questions will need to be agreed through the development of the evaluation plan, but some ideas of areas that we are interested to explore through the evaluation are outlined below:

- The extent to which the project partners have been able to deliver to the specific needs of participants. Is there anything special or innovative that partners have brought to the programme, or could/should bring to this or other programmes in future?
- The extent to which aspects of programme design, including targeting, have been associated with particular positive or negative impacts on individuals, organisations, and communities.
- The extent to which our outcomes model (business skills, emotional resilience, leadership) is appropriate and reflective of the particular needs of these learners and their organisations.

- The extent to which Match Trading Grants have impacted the SE's trading income and outcomes
- The effectiveness of the partnership arrangements in meeting the objectives of the project
- The effectiveness of the partnership arrangements in meeting the needs of the beneficiaries/participants

### **Evaluation objectives:**

1. To establish how successful we have been in meeting the aims of the project
2. To establish the extent to which project outputs and outcomes have been achieved, identifying critical success factors
3. Identify any unintended consequences or outcomes, positive or negative, to have resulted from the project
4. To clearly articulate the difference the project has made to individuals and/or the organisations in which they are working
5. To establish whether the project has built successful partnerships and to what extent
6. The challenges faced by the project and the partnerships

### **Use of the evaluation findings:**

The evaluation is about continual learning. We are keen for the evaluator(s) to act as a critical friend, with an ongoing dialogue throughout. It is important that we share and embed the learning throughout the evaluation and include interactive ways of collecting learnings and applying them.

We will use the information generated through this evaluation to:

- Feed into and inform the project level learning and delivery.
- Support our continuous learning and strengthen our knowledge base on the longer-term impact and outcomes of the programme.
- Share key outcomes and learnings with funders, stakeholders, staff, students, mentors and Fellows.
- Contribute to the shaping of the Government Levelling Up agenda and the development of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

## **Methodology**

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

Applicants are asked to outline their proposed methodology for meeting the requirements of the evaluation support required. All quantitative data to monitor progress towards specified outputs and outcomes 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.

Where possible, we are also keen for the evaluation methodology to be designed such that the evaluation itself adds value for participants on the programme. We are looking for creative, participatory evaluator(s) who can build rapport.

We invite you to come up with creative and innovative ways to deliver case studies to illustrate the participant's journey, capturing specific examples of programme impact.

## Outputs and dissemination

### Outputs

Required deliverables are as follows:

- Evaluation plan, due end March 2022, confirming key evaluation questions, methodology and timeframes
- Working with the communications leads, develop several case studies (final number to be agreed) throughout the contract period to be used externally by SSE
- A professionally designed, well written, and engaging report in plain language that includes an executive summary for each local authority contract area detailing the findings identified throughout the evaluation, due early July
- A summary report/presentation of the findings identified throughout the evaluation, due mid July 2022.

## Timetable, budget, and project management

Our timetable for this work is full project completion by the end of November 2022.

The overall budget available for this evaluation is £11,050. The budget you submit should include all expenses, such as travel and 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) - please also indicate if your costs are exclusive/inclusive of VAT (if applicable).

Attendance at some internal programme meetings may be required. Within SSE, day to day communications and management of the evaluation project will be led by Sean Gladwin, Entrepreneurship Impact Lead, and Michelle Virgo, Head of Entrepreneurship Support.

## Your submission

SSE invites organisations interested in tendering for this work to submit a proposal by **Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March at 5pm**. Proposals should be sent to Sean Gladwin, Entrepreneurship Impact Lead at SSE who is managing the selection process, at [sean.gladwin.sw@sse.org.uk](mailto:sean.gladwin.sw@sse.org.uk). If shortlisted, you may be invited to a virtual meeting. Please ensure you include the following wording in the subject heading of your email: "Tender for Evaluation Support of SSE's South West Social Entrepreneurs Partnership"

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.
- A brief biography of 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, experience of working with multiple partners).
- 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.

Your response should be no more than 6 sides of A4, excluding any appendices, and no less than 11pt font.

SSE is committed to undertaking a rigorous independent evaluation of this programme. 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 demonstrate the qualities of rigour, creativity and inclusion 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 Sean Gladwin on [sean.gladwin.sw@sse.org.uk](mailto:sean.gladwin.sw@sse.org.uk)