

## Contractor brief – External evaluation consultant

### Carry out an independent evaluation of the Bee Inspired Project

We are seeking an experienced evaluation consultant to produce an independent evaluation report for the Bee Inspired project in Walsall and the West Midlands.

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| <b>Budget:</b>       | £3,500 plus VAT   |
| <b>Reporting to:</b> | Volunteering and Outreach Manager   |
| <b>Timescales:</b>   | The project began in September 2022, with the evaluation report due in November 2024. |

### Background

Bumblebees are familiar and much-loved insects that pollinate our crops and wildflowers, but in the last 80 years our bumblebee populations have crashed: two species have become nationally extinct, while several others have declined dramatically.

The Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BBCT) is a UK-based national charity (No. 1115634) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (No. 05618710). The Bumblebee Conservation Trust (the Trust) was established in 2006 to address the decline in the UK's bumblebee populations. Our focus is to stop the extinction of our very rarest bumblebees and to create a long-term sustainable future for all bumblebee species. We are the only organisation in the UK solely dedicated to reversing the decline of native bumblebees. Our vision is a world where bumblebees are thriving and valued. Our mission is to increase the number and distribution of bumblebees. The aims of the Trust:

1. Enhance the understanding of bumblebee ecology and conservation.
2. Increase the quality and quantity of bumblebee habitat.
3. Inspire and enable to diverse range of people to take action for bumblebees.
4. Be an effective and sustainable organisation.

We are a membership-based organisation with 10,000 members and provide opportunities for individuals to volunteer and support the cause, we currently have nearly 1,000 registered volunteers. We are involved in twelve regionally focused projects, from Caithness in Scotland to the Fowey Valley in Cornwall, that inspire and educate local people to understand about the importance of bumblebees and

give them the knowledge, skills and confidence to make a difference in their local community for pollinators.

### Overview of Bee Inspired Project

BBCT is developing a project in West Midlands – Bee Inspired. Bee Inspired has been designed to revolutionise volunteering for the Bumblebee Conservation Trust. We want to connect with a diverse range of audiences and deliver lasting change to the communities that need it most. This will be the pilot of our nation-wide Bumblebee Volunteer Hub model, and will work with local charities and organisations to ensure we understand and meet the needs of the local community.

It will also create new urban habitats for bumblebees, not only by encouraging the public to take their own positive micro-actions for bumblebees, but also by installing window boxes and increasing the number of flowering plants.

We will focus on the West Midlands, with specific activities and training happening in Walsall. In order to ensure a diverse volunteer team, other training will also happen in the wider Black Country and Greater Birmingham.

Bee Inspired is about:

- Empowering diverse audiences to care about and take action to protect bumblebees.
- Creating new urban habitat for bumblebees.
- Connecting more people with each other and to bumblebees.
- Improving the wellbeing of our volunteers and the communities we work with.

We will:

1. Recruit volunteers from underrepresented backgrounds.
2. Engage with 500+ people in the local community through our volunteer and staff-led events like bumblebee ‘safaris’ and talks.
3. Distribute free activity packs to families in a variety of locations, including food banks.
4. Run activity days like community planting, with organisations, such as community allotments and gardens, the Healthy Spaces team from Walsall Council, and One Walsall
5. Run bumblebee identification sessions in Walsall and the wider West Midlands area.
6. Trial the use of Bumblebee Community Champions and provide extensive training.
7. Run a bumblebee identification workshop in a local prison.
8. Run community art workshops with Walsall Creative Factory that will inform a bumblebee legacy artwork.
9. Work with a Housing Association to trial a window box scheme that will make taking action for bumblebees in urban areas easy.
10. Make the Trust more sustainable to support volunteers locally and nationally.
11. Transform volunteering for the Trust, trailing a volunteer hub method.

More details on the project deliverables can be found in the Project Plan (provided).

### The Contractor

We are looking for an evaluation consultant to help us effectively evaluate the impacts of this important project and to feed into its legacy.

### The Evaluation Process

Monitoring and evaluation are particularly important for a project such as Bee Inspired as we will be carrying out innovative work that, if successful, could make a real difference in getting people from underrepresented communities to volunteer for the Trust and understand the importance of bumblebees. It is therefore important to properly understand what works and what doesn't about this approach and the extent of the impacts across the outcome areas. This will enable evidence-based decision making about similar projects in the future.

### Key considerations for the evaluation

- **Monitoring and evaluating a portfolio of activity and outcome areas –** The project includes a broad range of activities; the impact of which needs to be captured through evaluation.
- **Understanding impact for a wide range of audiences –** The project aims to target a number of diverse audiences ranging from local authorities and parish councils to families, volunteers and local community groups. Effective evaluation needs to be planned with each of these in mind, to understand which approaches employed by the project are most effective.
- **Developing capacity and skills -** A good evaluation aims to leave the project team upskilled and with a greater capacity to monitor and evaluate to a higher level in the future. The need to develop internal skills can be balanced against the need for external input by professional evaluators in the design of the approach to the evaluation process. This should be one of the legacies of a good evaluation framework.

### What we're looking for

We are looking for a consultant to collaborate with our internal teams and across all stakeholders to ensure a robust and effective evaluation of the project with skills and experience in the areas of:

- Quantitative and particularly qualitative social research methods.
- Measurement of programme outcomes, including people and community engagement and advocacy outcomes, using a range of evaluation techniques.

- Working across numerous and varied stakeholders and other consultants and clearly communicating with them.
- Synthesis of data from a wide range of data sources.
- Report writing to a high standard and for a range of audiences.
- Experience in evaluating for National Lottery funded projects would be an advantage.

Outlined below are the main areas of work expected from the Evaluation Consultant/s for each phase of the project:

### **1. Capacity building phase:**

- Understand the project vision and how monitoring and evaluation forms a key foundation for the legacy.
- Understand the monitoring systems already put in place.
- Liaise with the Project Manager throughout the life of the project.

### **2. High level Interim evaluation:**

- Lead a process<sup>1</sup> and progress<sup>2</sup> evaluation of the project to assess whether the work strands are appropriate, effective and efficient.
- Produce a written report interpreting monitoring and evaluation data from project outcomes.
- Facilitate a group critical reflection session - this workshop will explore the findings of the review with key stakeholders e.g. core project team and discuss recommendations and how they can be taken forward.
- Give a face to face presentation of results.

### **3. Summative evaluation:**

- Lead a meta analysis<sup>3</sup> and impact evaluation of the programme. This will assess whether the project is appropriate, effective and efficient but will go beyond this to influence legacy and look at the project in a much wider context.
- Produce a written report interpreting monitoring and evaluation data from across all project outcome areas including all of the essentials required by NLHF.
- Give a face to face presentation of results.

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<sup>1</sup> A process evaluation examines how the project structures and systems are working and in this case the level of partnership working and where there is room for improvement.

<sup>2</sup> A progress evaluation examines how the project is achieving its objectives through outputs and emerging outcomes.

<sup>3</sup> A meta analysis takes the results from a number of evaluations and synthesizes the results to provide an overview.

**Submitted tenders should include:**

- A detailed project proposal outlining how the consultant(s) would approach the project, engagement with the internal project team and key milestones.
- A full budget breakdown (including expenses)
- Confirmation of ability to work within the project timescale.
- Detailed outlines of at least 3 comparable projects completed by the tendering consultants/associates.
- CVs for all consultants and associates who would be involved in the project.
- Details of how risks to the project caused by inability to work of the lead consultants could be managed.