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**Digital Participation Charter Fund Review Brief**

**1. Background**

Right now in Scotland, one in five adults lack [Essential Digital Skills](https://digitalparticipation.scot/skills/essential). These are the skills of transacting, communicating, problem solving, handling information and content, and staying safe, legal and confident online. The people are more likely not to have these skills are older, poorer and facing other forms of disadvantage. In order to tackle exclusion and inequalities, our work focuses on equipping everyone with these skills.

Our learning tells us that:

* 90% of jobs in all industries require people to have good levels of Essential Digital Skills
* Those without Essential Digital Skills are more likely to be older, poorer and facing other forms of inequality
* To get people benefiting from the opportunities provided by the internet, motivation and skills are often bigger issues than access
* 50% of people that don’t have the skills want to acquire them…
* … most of the rest can be convinced, but the key is finding a ‘hook’. This needs to be about individuals.
* Smartphones are not a silver bullet to increase digital participation
* People in work achieve a rise in earnings of between 3% and 10% if they have Essential Digital Skills

At the same time 50% of third sector organisations in Scotland are not making the most of using digital technologies. We’re aiming to support organisations to evolve; changing the way they work to become more efficient, effective and responsive by taking advantage of the internet and new technologies.

Our learning tells us that:

* The potential of digital for the third sector goes beyond marketing and fundraising
* There is a significant demand for increased support for third sector organisations to make more use of digital and there are significant knowledge and skills gaps within the sector
* Many Chief Executives and Trustees need to better understand the opportunities provided by digital
* Leadership from trustees and senior managers is crucial to enable digital transformation, as success is built on people rather than technology
* There is a need to move people’s understanding of technology from IT as a barrier to digital as an enabler
* Organisations often lack funding, time and space for innovation. Adequately resourced, digital could improve their efficiency and effectiveness as well as their income

As part of its commitment to improving the Essential Digital Skills of both third sector organisations and Scotland’s citizens Scottish Government supported SCVO to deliver a small grants scheme – [Digital Participation Charter Fund](https://scvo.org.uk/digital/participation/charter-fund), formerly the Challenge Fund. Six rounds of funding have been delivered which have supported 169 organisations. Many people who are not online express that this is due to there being ‘nothing there for them’. To help overcome this, organisations funded spanned a variety of activities with individual ‘hooks’ to engage people.

**2. The Brief**

We would like to contract with an evaluator to produce a learning and evaluation report, based on our work. Specifically, we would like an evaluator to:

***Review the impact and contribution of the Charter Fund***

Each individual organisation was asked to monitor and evaluate its own project and to report on that on a regular basis, with a final report at the end of the grant.

We would now like an independent organisation to evaluate this portfolio from Charter Fund rounds 4, 5 and 6 (85 projects in total), assessing its contribution to tackling digital exclusion and lessons learned. Our interest is to understand the following:

* How many people has the programme supported to develop the full set of Essential Digital Skills, and a breakdown of each of the 5 skills separately
* Identify any trends in relation to how each skill set is most effectively developed
* What have the challenges and difficulties been for funded organisations, and how have they been overcome
* What appear to be the most effective methods of embedding the promotion of Essential Digital Skills into everyday work
* What are the key lessons for other funders and future rounds of similar funding?
* How funded organisations used and adapted the Essential Digital Skills toolkit for their own purposes
* In addition, we would like the work to produce up to six case studies to demonstrate the impact that having Essential Digital Skills can have on day-to-day lives (e.g. employability, financial inclusion, reduced social isolation)

We anticipate that the majority of the work can be done through desktop review with a small number of instances of contact with funded organisations.

**3. Output**

We would like the output materials to be easy to read and digest with key messages clearly highlighted and simply extrapolated from more in-depth analysis for a wide range of stakeholders. This should include a summary report, the use of infographics and case studies. In particular, the report should highlight:

* The role the Charter Fund has played in tackling digital exclusion
* The lessons learned
* Any recommendations for future work on tackling digital exclusion in Scotaland

**3. Timeline and budget**

We are looking to appoint a partner to deliver against the key requirements outlined above. We require the final report by 14 February 2020.

More information about the project outcomes and current evaluation approach is available to interested parties on request.

The budget for this work is between £5,000 and £7,000 inc VAT.

**4. Schedule**

* **Evaluation brief issued by SCVO:** 2 September 2019
* **Deadline for responses:** Midday on 23 September 2019
* **Interviews (if required\*):** w/c 30 September 2019
* **Successful provider notified:** 4 October 2019
* **Inception meeting:** w/c 7 October 2019
* **Final report due:** 14 February 2020

\*we intend to make our decision based on the strength of proposals submitted, however, we reserve the right to hold interviews to gather any additional information required

**5. Responses**

Interested parties should return a proposal outlining how they would approach this piece of work in their own format. This should include:

* An overview of recent evaluation projects completed
* Links to examples of previous work
* Legal status and any insurance policies in place
* Details of two referees who have previously commissioned work from you
* Any testimonials from previous clients
* Price quote

Responses and any queries should be submitted via email to [aaron.slater@scvo.org.uk](mailto:aaron.slater@scvo.org.uk)