

VCG Panel Meeting

Between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector

DATE: 1 September 2015 **TIME:** 14.00-15.30

VENUE: NICVA, Belfast

Chair - Anne O'Reilly	(Joint Chair) NI Rural Women's Network (NIRWN)
Present - Voluntary and Community Group (VCG)	
Anne O'Reilly	(Joint Chair) NI Rural Women's Network (NIRWN)
Eddie McDowell	Churches Community Work Alliance (CCWA)
Anne McVicker	Women's Resource and Development Agency (WRDA)
Marie Cavanagh	Gingerbread NI
Chris Quinn	Northern Ireland Youth Forum (NIYF)
Seamus McAleavey	Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)
Secretariat	
Lisa McElherron	Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)
Jenny McEneaney	Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)
Apologies	
Duane Farrell	Age NI
Geoff Nuttall	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
Kate Clifford	Rural Community Network
Kevin Murphy	Voluntary Arts Ireland
John McCormick	Carers NI
Geraldine Hanna	Victim Support
Colin Devine	North West Community Network
Jonny Currie	East Belfast Partnership

AGENDA ITEM

Review of regional support to voluntary and community organisations

Context

1. Chair Anne O'Reilly provided the context for the review of RISP and provided details as to how and why she was approached by Michael Donnelly, VCU. RISP organisations have been provided with their feedback and going forward, the Joint Forum had been asked to be part of the process and it was up to the panel to decide whether they were in agreement.
2. Crucially important to note that NICVA's role is as Secretariat of the Joint Forum and NICVA and the Joint Forum are distinct in this process.
3. Advice services have not been included in the RISP review as it is considered service delivery and not infrastructure. A separate review has been organised. Members expressed the view that advice services should be contacted to ensure they were content.
4. DSD have asked the Joint Forum to publicise the co design process and the two phases of the workshops; nominate four representatives from the Voluntary and Community Sector to take part in the Innovation Lab. Nominees are required for 2 days at the lab (12th and 13th November), 2 days prior to the lab for planning and 1 day after the lab to contribute to formulating the final output. Nominations must be provided by the 11th September.
5. The Joint Forum Panel had to decide whether we are going to participate in this process as outlined by DSD; and if yes, how to select the four people. If it is outside of the Joint Forum panel, a fair and accountable selection process must be carried out albeit within a very tight timescale.
6. It was agreed that a separate mailing list would be established for lead funding partners in the other strands of RISP to ensure they are kept informed.
7. The Innovation Lab should remain focused on innovation therefore those who have been selected should be trusted to represent the sector's interests and report back via the Joint Forum hub on the NICVA website to ensure the sector is kept informed.
8. The Public Sector Group of the Joint Forum will also be selecting public sector representatives to participate in the innovation lab.
9. The Chair too attendees through the written comments from members who could not attend.

Discussion

Should the JF panel take on this role?

1. There was concern expressed at the use of the Joint Forum in this instance. There was consensus that the Joint Forum should not be used as a consultation body representing the sector.
2. There was a recognition that if the Joint Forum panel refused to participate in this process out of principle, it would send a negative message about our willingness to participate in 'co-design' and could slow down the review of RISP.
3. Important to note that this process is a pre-consultation measure. The programme will be going out for public consultation following the co-design workshops and innovation lab.
4. It was agreed that the JFP would participate in the co-design process.

Carrying out the communications element of the role.

1. Crucial that VCG panel members regularly check in with each other to ensure information being received about the RISP review is being shared to tackle misinformation.
2. Communication is key. It is imperative the Joint Forum Panel members circulate the information to their mailing lists to ensure the sector is mobilised and engaged with this process. The innovation lab is one aspect and sector organisations are encouraged to attend the co-design workshops.
3. One of the Joint Forum VCG Secretariat (Anne O'Reilly, Lisa McElherron and Jenny McEneaney) will attend each of the co-design workshops and report on what was discussed to the sector through the Joint Forum hub on NICVA website.
4. The secretariat will communicate with the wider sector via usual sector wide channels and JF panel members are encouraged to community with their own networks
5. A separate mailing list of organisations currently funded under RISP will be created and will receive all information directly to ensure they are kept up to date with developments.

Scope of the review.

1. There was concern expressed by panel members that advice had been excluded from this process. It would helpful to know who will be attending from the Public Sector Group to ensure there were no gaps in information and representation.

Selection of representatives for Innovation Lab.

The group was asked to decide if attendees for the Innovation Lab should come from JF members or the wider sector.

1. If a selection process was to be designed and undertaken with the sector, it would take up to 2-3 months.
2. Members wished for details as to who the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) officials were facilitating the workshop and what were the essential criteria required to assume role.
3. Members wished to find out details as to what information will be available to attendees in particular confidentiality concerns raised about content of delivery evaluations carried out recently.
4. The four representatives selected were to be trusted to represent the interests of the sector and not their organisations.
5. Crucial that there was a balance between representatives who were recipients of RISP funding and those who were not but understood the needs of the sector.
6. Crucial that in communicating with the wider sector on who was chosen, there are clear reminders as to how the Joint Forum Panel had already gone through an open selection process based on their suitability to represent the sector as a whole.
7. It was decided that the people selected to attend the Innovation Lab should be drawn from the JF panel.

Four representatives

1. Seamus McAleavey, NICVA – his experience of advocating for the sector and as a recipient of RISP funding
2. Anne McVicker, WRDA- as a RISP recipient, the RISP focus area of gender and the community development work that WRDA carries out

Seamus and Anne were both in attendance and accepted the invite to participate.

For the final two places a pool of four people were nominated and would be asked to participate in the order listed below.

Glenda Davies, Sandy Row Community Forum - not in receipt of RISP funding but adopts a strategic view of the entire sector, understands what the sector needs to survive over the next 5 years and are also heavily involved in community development

Colin Devine, North West Community Network – not in receipt of RISP funding but adopts a strategic view of the entire sector, understands what the sector needs to survive over the next 5 years and are also heavily involved in community development and network support to organisations.

Jonny Currie, EBCDA - not in receipt of RISP funding but adopts a strategic view of the entire sector, understands what the sector needs to survive over the next 5 years and are also heavily involved in community development and network support to organisations

Chris Quinn, NI Youth Forum – a regional organisations not in receipt of RISP funding but adopts a strategic view of the sector needs to survive over the next 5 years

Glenda Davies accepted the invitation to participate.
As Colin Devine was unable to participate Jonny Currie accepted the invitation.

Action Points:

1. To get more information on attendees at the Innovation Lab
2. To approach the Advice Consortium to note they are content with their exclusion from the review
3. To confirm the dates that representatives are required beyond the two days of the innovation lab
4. To update Forum Hub with information on who was selected, why and the selection process for the Joint Forum Panel
5. A separate mailing list is established for organisations in receipt of funding that are not on the Joint Forum mailing list

