

# **Consultancy Brief:**

## **Partnership development and funding application**

### ***A bid to the National Lottery's Climate Action Fund – Food Systems (Buckinghamshire)***

#### **1. Background**

Heart of Bucks is seeking to appoint a consultant to support the development of a collaborative, community-led funding bid to the [National Lottery Community Fund's 'Climate Action Fund – Food Systems'](#) programme.

This programme intends to support large-scale, long-term systems change approaches to strengthening food systems, addressing food insecurity, climate change, and environmental sustainability together.

Successful bids to the Climate Action Fund (Food Systems) are expected to:

- Work in formal partnerships
- Deliver transformational change, not short-term fixes
- Be community-centred and equitable
- Address root causes of food system challenges

*Heart of Bucks Community Foundation will act as the host organisation and contracting body, but the project itself will be community-led, partnership-based, and co-designed.*

*This process is being funded by the Rothschild Foundation. The RF and local stakeholders will participate in the selection process.*

#### **2. Purpose of the consultancy**

The consultant will play a key facilitation and coordination role to:

- Build a strong, inclusive, and equitable partnership
- Support the co-creation of a shared vision and programme
- Lead the development of a Stage 1 application, and (if successful)
- Develop a Stage 2 full proposal

The work must be grounded in values-led practice, including:

- Community ownership and voice
- Equity and inclusion
- Transparency and trust-building
- Consensus-based decision-making

### 3. Scope of Work

#### **Phase 1a: Partnership building and co-design**

**Objective: Establish a robust, values-led partnership capable of delivering a large-scale systems change programme.**

Key tasks:

- Engage and document relevant stakeholders across sectors (community organisations, food partnerships, farmers, local authorities, etc.)
- Build on existing relationships and insights (e.g. strengths in local networks, assets, and community knowledge)
- Facilitate as many workshops and engagement sessions as needed to:
  - Develop a shared vision and outcomes
  - Identify systemic challenges and opportunities
  - Agree principles of partnership working
- Ensure meaningful community involvement in shaping priorities and approach
- Support the development of:
  - Partnership structure and governance options
  - Roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes
  - Principles for equitable resource sharing
- Identify gaps in expertise required (e.g. evaluation, communications, agroecology, systems change)

**Outputs:**

- **Stakeholder mapping and engagement plan**
- **Record of engagement and partnership development**
- **Agreed vision, outcomes and theory of change (outline level)**
- **Draft partnership structure and governance principles**
- **Identify and agree the core partnership for the Stage 1 application**

### **Phase 1b: Stage 1 application (outline proposal)**

**Objective: Co-produce a compelling Stage 1 submission aligned with Climate Action Fund criteria and local delivery opportunities.**

Key tasks:

- Translate partnership vision into a clear systems change proposal
- Develop:
  - Project concept and rationale
  - Alignment with CAF priorities (food production, distribution, access)
  - High-level delivery model
  - Partnership roles and contributions
  - Budget overview
- Ensure the application demonstrates:
  - Climate and environmental impact
  - Equitable access to food
  - Community leadership and involvement
  - Scale and ambition
- Facilitate partner input and consensus on the submission
- Draft and finalise the Stage 1 application

**Outputs:**

- **Completed Stage 1 application (ready for submission)**
- **Agreed narrative and project framing**
- **Supporting partnership information**

## **Phase 2: Stage 2 application (full proposal)**

*(Please note: this phase is subject to success at Stage 1. If our bid in phase 1 is not successful, the contract will be terminated early. Your pricing and proposal should reflect the nature of the delivery required for this consultancy project, specifically that it is priced in two phases)*

**Objective: Develop a detailed, high-quality full application and submission to the Climate Action Fund, and handover all contacts and materials developed in the course of the consultancy.**

Key tasks:

- Facilitate deeper co-design with partners and communities
- Develop:
  - Full project plan (for first 18-24 months) and delivery model
  - Framework of governance and partnership agreements
  - Monitoring, evaluation and learning framework
  - Communications and storytelling approach
  - Risk assessment and mitigation plan
  - Detailed, equitable budget
- Ensure strong alignment with fund expectations around:
  - Impact measurement and learning
  - Knowledge sharing and sector influence
  - Long-term sustainability
- Coordinate contributions from multiple partners
- Lead drafting and submission of Stage 2 application

**Outputs:**

- **Completed Stage 2 full application**
- **Supporting documentation (governance, evaluation framework, budget etc.)**

#### **4. Approach and ways of working**

The consultant will be expected to:

- Act as an independent facilitator and broker, not a top-down designer
- Work in a collaborative, transparent, and inclusive way
- Enable shared ownership of the proposal across partners
- Use facilitation approaches that support:
  - Consensus building
  - Power-sharing
  - Inclusion of under-represented voices
- Be sensitive to capacity constraints within community organisations
- Support equitable participation, including smaller partners

#### **5. Governance and reporting**

- The consultant will be contracted by and report to Heart of Bucks
- A steering group / working group (including community representation) will guide the work
- Regular progress updates will be required
- Key decisions will be made collectively with the partnership, not unilaterally

#### **6. Timeline**

*(Indicative; work to be carried out throughout the period May 2026-March 2027, applicants should be available throughout this timeline)*

- Phase 1a (Partnership building): 3 months, commencing ASAP.
- Phase 1b (Stage 1 submission): 1 month
  - *Stage 1 decision expected within ~4 months*
- Phase 2 (if invited by TNLCF): [approx. 6–12 weeks submission development period]

#### **7. Budget**

- Maximum budget: £16,500 (*cost will be a factor in selection*)
- Please provide:
  - Day rate(s)
  - Estimated number of days per phase
  - Breakdown of costs

## 8. Person specification

We are seeking a consultant with:

Essential:

- Knowledge of the local community in Buckinghamshire, including existing networks and connections
- Understanding of agroecology and sustainable food systems
- The working style, communication skills, and interpersonal skills required to facilitate a project of this nature
- Proven experience developing large-scale funding bids (ideally £2m+)
- Technology skills required to work independently
- Experience with partnership development across sectors
- Strong understanding of systems-change approaches
- Demonstrable experience of community-led or co-produced projects
- Excellent facilitation and stakeholder engagement skills
- Experience of working in food systems, climate, or environmental sectors

Desirable:

- Strong knowledge and skills of tools that facilitate multi-organisation working, for example Trello, SharePoint, Teams, etc.
- Experience with National Lottery funding programmes
- Experience developing evaluation and learning frameworks

## 9. Application process

Interested consultants should submit:

- A brief proposal (2-sides maximum) outlining:
  - Understanding of the brief
  - Proposed approach and methodology
  - Relevant experience
  - Timeline and availability
- Examples of relevant previous work
- Fee proposal (*including a breakdown of phases 1a, 1b, and 2. Each of these phases will be subject to separate contracts*)

## **10. Additional context**

This work intends to build on strong local foundations, including:

- Existing partnerships and networks
- Community knowledge and assets
- Identified opportunities for stronger collaboration and systems change

However, challenges include:

- Capacity constraints
- Fragmentation across the system
- Unequal access to food and resources

The successful consultant will need to navigate and strengthen this landscape, helping to move from “some connectivity” in local food networks to a more cohesive, joined-up system (as identified in early stakeholder engagement work).

## **11. Values statement**

This project will:

- Be community-owned in spirit and practice
- Prioritise equity, inclusion, and lived experience
- Seek to redistribute power and resources
- Build a partnership that is greater than the sum of its parts

## **12. Contact information:**

Heart of Bucks

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