

Tender Application Pack

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**For the provision of Stakeholder Engagement and Strategic
Planning Support to Volunteer Now**

December 2023

1. Background

Volunteer Now, the regional volunteering organisation, is seeking strategic expertise, to help us achieve our ambition for volunteering, with a vibrant vision, comprehensive review of past achievements and enterprising innovation underpinning our strategy and delivery plan from 2025 onwards.

Volunteer Now invites the submission of tenders for the completion of a comprehensive strategic review, stakeholder engagement, research and consultation leading to the development of a new and ambitious five-year Strategic Plan for the period April 2025- March 2030.

There are 3 pillars on which this work is commissioned and for the successful contractor to apply, namely the strategy and associated plan needs to be:

- Co-produced with members and stakeholders
- Practical and creative with an outcomes focus
- Underwritten by the principles of volunteering

Successful bidders would lead the activity, working closely with Volunteer Now Board, staff, members and volunteers.

2. Context

Volunteer Now is the lead organisation for promoting and supporting volunteering across Northern Ireland. We build recognition for volunteering and celebrate the contribution volunteers make. We provide access to opportunities and encourage people to volunteer. We are a resource for volunteer involving organisations providing support on involving volunteers, governance and safeguarding.

The work of Volunteer Now is diverse and responds to the wide-ranging nature of volunteering in Northern Ireland. With a legacy stretching back 50 years, we work in partnership with an ever-growing number of organisations across the voluntary and community, public and private sectors. Volunteer Now is a values' driven organisation and this will underpin our new strategic plan.

The latest strategy finishing in March 2025 is on track to deliver its associated action plan. The recent societal events e.g. Covid, cost of living etc. have impacted volunteering, globally and locally. The Board share an ambition for volunteering to be celebrated in all walks of life and embrace new volunteering methods that continue to attract new volunteers, and seeks for this next strategy to lead the way. Volunteer Now is a membership organisation so our new strategy should be co-produced with members to ensure that we continue to meet their needs currently while looking to the future.

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Political instability locally and nationally, has meant the funding picture is challenging for Volunteer Now and its membership, awareness of these types of challenge is vital in shaping a sustainable volunteer strategy and seeking new ways to support and grow the volunteering experience.

This work is required to ensure that Volunteer Now continues to provide effective leadership for volunteering across Northern Ireland into the future.

Aims:

1. Development of a new and ambitious five-year Strategic Plan April 2025-March 2030.

Objectives:

1. To complete a review of the external environment and establish a clear evidence base.
2. To build on the Snapshot Strategic Review undertaken in June 2023 to review delivery of existing strategic plan.
3. Engage with stakeholders to co-produce a new Strategic plan.
4. Develop theory of change and outcomes and make recommendations for monitoring and evaluation.
5. Develop a financial resourcing/sustainable growth plan associated with new strategic plan.

3. Methodology

We anticipate that the successful bidder will develop a methodology to deliver this work which will include but not be limited to the following:

Stage 1 – Establish an Evidence Base

- Identify the research base and empirical evidence underpinning the need for continued investment in a strategic plan;
- Horizon scanning to include a review of external environment, research data, existing strategies, action plans, budgets and programme documentation to inform evidence base
- Incorporating the Snapshot Strategic Review from July 2023, establish performance against budget, action plan targets and track record of delivery against objectives over past 3 years;
- Assess the resourcing mix of income generation and external capital and revenue funding;
- Review partnership arrangements and associated programme KPIs;
- Consider existing governance arrangements, staff structure, job responsibilities and consider if there are any emerging issues;

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- Draw conclusions on overall success of the previous plan in terms of effectiveness and efficiency.

Stage 2 – Co-Design of Strategy with Key Stakeholders

The starting point for this phase will be a detailed consultation with the Volunteer Now Board to understand the environment and challenges and consider the theory of change. The high-level methodology and approach for consultation will include:

- Engagement and co-design plan to include Board members and key staff; representative sample of Volunteer Now members; funders and other stakeholders including: public, private and community sector operating across all levels within volunteering;
- Consider the public policy framework for volunteering including the data collected as part of the Department for Communities Infrastructure Support Programme review;
- Consideration of equality and diversity issues;
- Detailed statistical analysis of volunteering needs in Northern Ireland;
- Benchmark with other similar organisations in the UK and Ireland to ensure that excellent volunteer infrastructure services are considered; and
- Conclude on needs, demands and potential unrealised ambitions for volunteering in Northern Ireland .

Stage 3 – Completion of Strategy and associated plans

Having completed an extensive stakeholder engagement project and identified the preferred delivery model a new and ambitious 5-year strategic plan will be developed to include:

- A revised purpose, vision, values, theory of change and outcomes that have meaningful and sustainable 'buy-in' across the membership of Volunteer Now.
- Preferred operating structures and systems to deliver the Plan.
- Associated staffing levels, roles and areas of responsibility.
- Realistic resourcing plan based on the cost of the preferred service delivery model with inflationary factors considered.
- Recommendations on monitoring and evaluation to support the Plan.

3. Timeline

Should a successful bidder be determined, it is intended that the project will commence no later than February 2024 and be complete no later than September 2024 with strategy to be launched by November 2024. These dates may be extended at the discretion of Volunteer Now, if required. The Tenderer is required to submit a detailed timeline of the intended activities to meet the requirements of the request for tender.

4. Liaison Person and Reporting

4.1 Liaison Person

Chairperson Marc Scott and CEO Denise Hayward.

4.2 Reporting Arrangements

The successful Tenderer will work closely with and report periodically to the liaison person as and when necessary, at a minimum quarterly.

5. Provision of Information

Information provided to Tenderers by Volunteer Now is for general guidance in the preparation of the Request for Tender (RFT) only. Tenderers must satisfy themselves as to the accuracy of any such information and no responsibility is accepted by Volunteer Now for any loss or damage of whatever kind and howsoever caused arising from the use by Tenderers of such information. Volunteer Now reserves the right to update or amend any information provided to Tenderers at any time before the tender deadline.

6. No Obligation

This RFT does not constitute an offer and Volunteer Now does not undertake to accept any tender or offer. Volunteer Now reserves the right to accept any part of any tender or offer.

7. Timetable

The timetable is for guidance only and Volunteer Now reserve the right to amend this timetable at any time at their sole discretion

Activity	Date
Request for Tender Issued	5 th December 2023
Deadline for Return of Tender	15 th January 2023
Evaluation Completed	23 rd January 2024
Contract Awarded	26 th January 2024
Contract Commences	2 nd February 2024

8. Instructions to Tenderers

8.1 Confidentiality

All information supplied in connection with this RFT shall be regarded as confidential and by submitting an offer, the Tenderer agrees to be bound by the obligation to preserve the confidentiality of all such information.

8.2 Queries and Clarifications

All queries or clarification requests relating to this RFT must be submitted to Denise Hayward. Email: denise.hayward@volunteernow.co.uk

If relevant a response may be issued to all Tenderers. Where appropriate, Volunteer Now may choose to amalgamate queries. Queries and/or clarifications may be requested up to 20th December 2023.

8.3 References

Tenderers are requested to nominate two clients as referees. These should be appropriate, relative to the size and scope of the goods, services or works detailed within this RFT.

8.4 Proposal

Tenders must be unconditional offers. Qualified tenders may be rejected at the sole discretion of Volunteer Now and the decision will be final. The proposal must remain open for acceptance for 90 days from the submission date.

Credentials Document

Organisations who wish to be considered for this review should submit a credentials document that covers the following key areas:

- **The Organisation/Consortium**
- **The Team:** Experience/ability of the proposed team/individual who will be working on the project and their relevant experience.
- **Case Studies:** Provide 2 short case studies that demonstrate a proven track record in similar work.
- **References**
- **Fee Structure:** Outline costings for the delivery of the project linked to the timeline including effort (Days) and day rates (this also includes anticipated expenses)
- **Consideration of potential conflicts of interest if any.**

Proposal Document

Organisations are asked to also submit a detailed proposal (no more than 8, A4 pages) clearly outlining:

- **Proposed project methodology and approach.**
- **Project implementation plan to include timings and reporting for development and delivery of the work**

9. Budget

The budget range is between £15-20,000 inclusive of VAT and expenses.

10. Payment Schedule

To be agreed between the parties before the final agreement is reached

11. Evaluation

The Contract will be awarded based on the most economically advantageous tender. In assessing tenders, the evaluation may be based on a single criterion. Evaluation may also be completed based on a price fixed by Volunteer Now. Criteria and evaluation methodology used will be at the absolute discretion and judgement of Volunteer Now.

11.1 Preliminary Evaluation

A preliminary assessment will be done to assess the proposal's compliance with returnable documents and instructions to Tenderers. Proposals that fail to meet these requirements will be disqualified.

11.2 Evaluation Criteria

	Criteria	Weighting
1	Cost	30%
2	Quality	50%
	Methodology - Demonstrating understanding of project scope including context of organisation and sector	(35%)
	Project Implementation Plan including timelines for completing the project with clearly defined outputs at each stage	(15%)
3	Experience	20%
	Specific and relevant experience of the personnel that will be involved in the project	(10%)
	Specific and relevant experience in this type of project	(5%)
	References	(5%)
	Total	100%

11. Submissions

- Tenderers are to ensure that all necessary documents and information are submitted. Any incomplete tenders may be rejected at the sole discretion of Volunteer Now, and the decision will be final.
- Costs must be quoted in pounds.

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- Late submissions will not be considered.

Submit response by no later than **11.00am 15th January 2024** to denise.hayward@volunteernow.co.uk or by delivery to Volunteer Now, Skainos Centre, 239 Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 1AF.

12. Award of Contract

- The successful tenderer will be notified in writing that their proposal has been accepted. The successful tenderer will be expected to respond with an acceptance letter and sign a contract within five (5) days of notification of acceptance.
- Unsuccessful tenderers will be notified in writing that their proposal has not been accepted.

Registered Office: Volunteer Now, 239 Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 1AF.
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Volunteer Now Values

