

**SMALLWOODTRUST**

Enabling women to be financially resilient

# Learning Partner Evaluation Tender Brief

Supporting our place-based,  
systems change fund for  
women's networks



## About the Smallwood Trust

The Smallwood Trust has been helping women across the UK out of poverty for 135 years. Our programmes provide grant funding and support to enable women to become financially resilient and to ensure economic systems work for them rather than against them. Half of the UK population are female – therefore our approach not only matters for individual women, enabling them to thrive economically and overcome financially stressful events, it is also critical for the UK economy. While we will continue to meet the immediate needs of women facing financial insecurity, we will also increasingly focus on tackling the systems that cause gendered poverty.

We have recently launched an ambitious new **Strategic Plan 2022-24** to reflect our three current priorities. These are:

- Target our funding to women who are most at risk of poverty, enabling them to have more power, opportunity and skills to thrive and become financially resilient.
- Fund and help develop workable place-based models that tackle the root causes of gendered poverty and have the potential to scale or be adopted elsewhere.
- Support accessible and sustainable networks for women enabling them to be empowered and have agency within their local communities.



[Click here to view our Strategic Plan 2022-2024](#)



Smallwood Trust Board members and shadowing programme participants



# The Brief

Smallwood is seeking a Learning Partner to work alongside the organisational team, our Trustees and our funded organisations during the initial phase of our place-based programme, the Women's Sector Resilience Fund Phase 2 from May 2022 to May 2023.

The **programme** will support local networks of organisations working with and for women to make change to systems that cause women's poverty in their area. It is a place-based approach to systems change that is a key component of our strategic plan. Over three years we hope to achieve the programme goals of:

- Working with networks of organisations united by geography to reduce gendered poverty in their area
- Building capacity within local communities to help the local women's sector to create sustainable change

The Learning Partner will work with three networks of up to seven individual organisations and support them to learn from what they are doing and put in place monitoring and evaluation that will help track progress against the programme outcomes.

Overall, we want the learning from the networks to contribute to Smallwood's strategic goals that are detailed in our 2022-24 Strategic Plan and our **Theory of Change (see page 10/11)**.

The brief below sets out:

1. Details of the programme that the Learning Partner will be supporting
2. The Profile of the Learning Partner we are seeking
3. The proposed methodology we want the Learning Partner to work with
4. The application process and deadlines
5. Annex A details the suggested deliverables

We have allocated £60,000 including VAT for the learning partner to be spent over a 12 month period from May 2022 in this initial phase.

## 1. The Programme

The Women's Sector Resilience Fund Phase 2 is a 3-year, place-based pilot programme working with and for women that is designed to stimulate ideas and approaches that will tackle the root causes of, and help reduce, gendered poverty. Three networks of organisations working with and for women will have access to £500k to work together at a locality-based level.

A lead organisation is responsible for leading and coordinating the network and distributing the funds to the rest of the network that will pay for: core costs for each of the organisations involved; support to coordinate the network and capacity building funds to build the capability of the network.

A key aspect of the funding programme is to support and empower local networks to develop their vision and skills in delivering systemic change, and to share best practice between the networks.

The programme will also support Smallwood's own learning journey by increasing our understanding of how investment in localities can make for a longer lasting change to women's poverty. The outcomes of the fund will help us further shape Smallwood's future programmes and strategy.

## 2. The Learning Partner profile

We are looking for a Learning Partner that can work cooperatively and flexibly with Smallwood and the funded networks to develop a strong learning culture throughout the implementation of this programme. The Learning Partner will be key to ensuring the learning process is practical and helpful for all those involved.

We require a Learning Partner that can supportively and cooperatively inform and build the learning capacity of the networks and of Smallwood itself, where we want to change our practice based on what we are learning as the programme progresses. We are also seeking a Learning Partner that is experienced in issues around equity, diversity and inclusion and intersectional delivery at a grassroots level in locality-based systems change programmes and projects.

## 3. Methodology

Initially we would like the Learning Partner to work with Smallwood and the funded networks to co-produce the design and implementation methodology, including helping to refine each network's key research questions. Smallwood has drafted some areas we would like the learning partner to support, detailed below. However, we would also like the learning process to be iterative and flexible, according to the needs and pace of work in the networks we fund, as Smallwood implements its 2022-2024 Strategic Plan. We want to know what is promising in terms of funded activity, as well as what barriers are being encountered by the networks.

The research areas envisaged are to:

- Help Smallwood and the networks to learn more about what works in tackling the root causes of women's poverty; to help map what is going on in each area to support women; help understand how and where outcomes are being achieved and where the additional support for achievement of network goals is needed.
- Support Smallwood and the networks to think through, document and analyse how complex and intersecting forms of discrimination drive gendered poverty in each locality and where points of entry to change local systems are.
- Support Smallwood and the networks to develop meaningful outcome and impact measures including a roadmap for change in each locality.

- Help Smallwood deliver against its Theory of Change to feed into Board reports and Smallwood's annual reports and help us to shape our future strategy and priorities.

(Bidders should be aware that capacity and capability building support will be provided through Smallwood and other commissioned providers as part of the programme.)

## 4. How to apply

We support the application of organisations working in consortia or with specialists, as required, to meet the brief. We are open to both freelance consultants and companies who meet this brief to apply, especially where they can show diversity within the team they will deploy. We particularly welcome those with knowledge of place-based initiatives, and with experience of centring lived experience and empowering local communities through the research process—for example, through co-production, peer research or other work with people with lived experience of poverty.

Please submit a proposal of no more than 10 pages that includes:

**1. A description of your methodology, including how you will:**

- Address the evaluation and learning aims
- Demonstrate the appropriateness of the proposed methodology
- Ensure a gender-responsive evaluation, both in term of what the evaluation examines, and how it is undertaken
- Ensure effective project management, including planning, quality control and project monitoring

**2. A project timeline including any necessary mobilisation period**

**3. Information about the evaluation team – include short biographies/CVs of the leading members of the team. We welcome information on the diversity you will achieve within your consultancy team. This should include qualifications and experience demonstrating that the evaluation team has:**

- Credibility and depth of skills suitable for the assignment including enabling and facilitating skills
- Capacity to deliver to the timescales described
- Experience of/understanding of systems change at place-based level
- A relevant track record in similar work especially on gendered poverty and economic disadvantage
- A link to two previous clients for whom you have carried out similar work that Smallwood can take references from

- 4. Details of ethical considerations that may arise and approval procedures that will be followed**
- 5. Identification of anticipated risks and suggested mitigation strategies**
- 6. Any other added value your team can bring**
- 7. A budget summarising the costs of the proposed activities. Please provide key assumptions including any costs for overheads, VAT, and anticipated travel and other expenses. This must work within the budget limits included here, and demonstrate how it delivers value for money.**

See **Annex A** for our suggested work phases.

Please submit completed proposals to [emmacrump@smallwoodtrust.org.uk](mailto:emmacrump@smallwoodtrust.org.uk) no later than **5pm on 4th April 2022**.

Queries can be addressed to [emmacrump@smallwoodtrust.org.uk](mailto:emmacrump@smallwoodtrust.org.uk).  
All proposals received will be treated as confidential documents.

**Applications will be shortlisted at the end of April with final interviews in May.**  
**Interview panels will include representatives from the funded place-based networks.**

**Budget**

We have a budget for the work of **£60k including VAT**.

## 5. Annex A

We have detailed some suggested activities and examples of deliverables as below. We will have an open discussion to prioritise which ones to focus on with the budget available. We are mindful of the need to develop the learning activity at a pace that is right for the networks, and the importance of not overburdening them with too many additional tasks and priorities.

Phase/activity	Potential deliverable (to be confirmed)
<b>1. Planning and development</b>	
<p>We would like the Learning Partner to support the local funded networks with their individual learning and to feed in the learning from the three areas into Smallwood's future strategy/link to our Theory of Change.</p>	<p>An agreed set of evaluation questions, clear roles and timetable in an inception phase report for Smallwood and the funded networks to work from.</p>
<b>2. Building a picture</b>	
<p>To support Smallwood and the funded networks bring their existing knowledge base together to build a profile of the nature, scale and drivers of women's poverty in their communities using a range of stakeholder perspectives, data sets and intelligence.</p> <p>Community mapping, identifying local infrastructure, assets, gaps and opportunities in each funded area where interventions can be made to bring about longer-term change at locality level.</p>	<p>A co-produced report on each area's key issues, relevant data and stakeholder views on women's poverty; a comparison to wider data sets to review context.</p> <p>Support networks to produce community maps of relevant assets, stakeholders and changemakers in each network area, plus a SWOT analysis agreed and developed with the networks.</p>
<b>3. Developing a roadmap for systems change</b>	
<p>Helping networks to identify the potential roadmap for systems change in each area, and the routes that the network can take to influence systems change.</p> <p>Coproducing suitable outcome measures for each network.</p> <p>Support coordination of a dynamic platform for the networks to share ideas and support each other.</p>	<p>Roadmap for systems change agreed with networks.</p> <p>Accessible and useable KPIs to mark systems change within each area agreed with networks.</p> <p>Agreed method for communication between networks.</p>

#### 4. Monitoring/measuring progress and reporting

Producing light touch quarterly reports on progress and learning for Smallwood Trust.

Produce an end of year report on progress and learning, and the barriers encountered and ahead, to include a learning roadmap for years 2 and 3.

3 Quarterly reports

1 annual report

Roadmap for next phases of the fund's work with networks re learning, monitoring and evaluation.

#### 5. Supporting Smallwood learn and develop

A facilitated session for Smallwood in longer term planning of the programme after year 1

A facilitated session with the Smallwood team on the way forward in years 2 and 3 of the programme.

