

Proposal to D2N2: Enabling Effective Civil Society Engagement

The third (civil society) sector has a substantial offer to D2N2 LEP. However, the structure of the sector is currently a barrier to optimising this potential; being an agglomeration of many small organisations, most of which have limited current awareness of the work of LEPs or relationship with D2N2.

This proposal sets out how the skills, knowledge and reach of the sector can be harnessed for the benefit of D2N2. This proposal is submitted by One East Midlands in conjunction with Rob Crowder (Rural Community Action Notts), Sylvia Green (Rural Action Derbyshire) and Don Hayes (Enable).

The Civil Society offer to D2N2

Civil Society / third sector organisations play a substantial role in driving the D2N2 economy.

A considerable employer in the area (2.7% of the workforce), the third sector also spends £0.5bn in the D2N2 area. The sector is well regarded for its ability to build skills and employability through holistic support programmes, contracted services and volunteering opportunities.

The third sector is a route into local communities, in particular those facing particular economic disadvantage. This positioning is useful as a mechanism for identifying workable solutions to local problems, testing and feedback on the effectiveness of those solutions and developing niche responses for those which mainstream activities may not reach.

The sector also has enormous experience of managing and delivering successful skills, growth and inclusion programmes (including delivery of Community Led Local development approaches). As a result it has a working knowledge of EU and economic programme management, project development and delivery across a wide range of investment models including ESF, ERDF and RDPE (EAFRD) funds. This project adds value to the delivery of these programmes in the D2N2 area but takes a wider focus on economic growth, inclusion and the strategy as set out in the D2N2 SEP.

Enabling Engagement

As a result of restrictions on use of profits, the third sector has an inability to build significant reserves, therefore investment of time and resources are often limited or need to be planned for. This can lead to restrictions on the sector's ability to respond quickly, or in volume, to new priorities. In the case of the LEP, an injection of resource to enable effective engagement now will provide

long term rewards. This proposal sets out the tangible deliverables that can be achieved through such an investment.

Activities and outcomes

This proposal commits partners to the delivery of the following:

Output	Outcome
Creation and support of third sector engagement network. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly updates • Bi annual full network meetings with D2N2 • Coordination of up to 4 consultation activities pa 	Increased awareness and input by third sector into D2N2. Third sector input into all strategic work of D2N2 including SEP, SIF and skills strategy
Creation of web-resource to drive third sector engagement plus ongoing communications support (0.1FTE)	Improved communication between D2N2 and third sector
Support and backfill for VCS Board rep; creating capacity to lead work (0.1 FTE)	Engagement work closely embedded to governance of D2N2
Delivery and implementation of D2N2 Social Inclusion Strategy and framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 x sector consultation events • Production of strategy and guidance • Ongoing review and advice through technical sub-set of third sector engagement network (4 meeting pa) 	Embed social inclusion across all aspects of D2N2 activity. Coordinate access to expert advice on inclusion issues. Enable cross sector collaboration on SI issues.
Market and supply chain development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 x collaboration workshops • Ongoing support to identified delivery consortia • Maintenance of web resource to enable project consortia building <i>NB - Delivery based on existing One EM TA support for ERDF</i>	Improved third sector delivery capacity. Delivery consortia better formed and prepared for D2N2 engagement.
Development of equality technical support to D2N2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment of technical specialists in support of D2N2 • Creation of equality and impact advisory group • Technical appraisal of D2N2 strategy and processes to ensure positive impacts on equality measures across D2N2 activities • Backfill for equality participants 	Achievement of equality obligations within the SIF. Thorough analysis of the impact of D2N2 activities on protected groups and delivery of positive activity that improves benefit of D2N2 activities on those groups.