

Request for Proposals: Research into Social Sector Supply Side for Energy Efficiency Measures in Social Enterprises

Introduction

Access – the Foundation for Social Investment (Access) is seeking proposals to conduct research to allow us to better understand the opportunities to more effectively support charities and social enterprises providing energy retrofit services, with a specific focus on job creation, skills development and training for those further from the labour market.

The aim of the research is to identify charities and social enterprises involved in energy efficiency advice and retrofitting-related services, and strategies and approaches to effectively increase their capacities in this. We expect these organisations to be working on areas such as stimulating economic growth, building a skilled workforce, and promoting energy efficiency. We are committed to ensuring that this research actively addresses and mitigates any pre-existing inequalities and ensures a Just Transition.

I. Background

In light of the launch of new England-based energy efficiency funds this year, financed in part by capital from Access and Big Society Capital, supported by The Dormant Asset Scheme, there is a clear anticipation of increased demand for energy efficiency services. We would hope to ensure that a significant portion of this spending remains within the social sector. This strategic approach could not only lead to greater investment in disadvantaged communities but also generate employment opportunities in economically deprived areas. The aspiration is to utilise a portion (likely to be in the range £500k-£1m) of the £12 million of funding provided to Access from Dormant Assets for the [Energy Efficiency Social Investment Programme \(EESIP\)](#) to encourage the scaling of social sector organisations delivering energy efficiency services. The purpose of this particular request for proposals is to provide some insight into the ultimate design of that intervention.

The primary objectives associated with the proposed funding allocation for this research encompass:

- **Stimulating Growth and Capacity:** To foster the growth and capacity of social sector providers in the energy resilience market.
- **Supporting Green Employability and Skills:** To aid the development of employability and skills in the green sector especially for those further from the labour market.
- **Encouraging Investment and Employment:** To encourage investment in disadvantaged communities and create employment opportunities in economically deprived areas.

II. Outcomes

The outcomes of this work will be to enable Access and its partners to:

- Better understand the nature of the charity and social enterprise energy efficiency and retrofitting sub-sector – its size, scale, and potential for further growth to meet increased demand.
- Identify some possible strategic options and delivery approaches for encouraging growth, including the use of a portion of EESIP funding.

III. Deliverables

The selected organisation or individual will be responsible for delivering the following:

- a) **State of the sector report:** A report which provides an insight into how many charities and social enterprises based in England deliver energy efficiency-related services (including advisory and installation), where they are based, what the range of current business models are, what potential there is for further growth or for new entrants into the market to meet increased demand for services, and what barriers exist to this growth.
- b) **Intervention Options Assessment:** To identify possible options, delivery and EDI approaches, and likely partners for a programme to enhance the supply side of energy efficiency in the social sector.

IV. Approach

We are looking for a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis in the final report. We imagine that there will be a roughly equal split of activity between the two objectives, being the analysis of the sector currently (deliverable a) and options for a support and funding intervention (deliverable b).

In order to form a rounded view of potential opportunities we would expect the selected supplier to liaise closely with:

- social investors delivering energy efficiency investments, including those delivering funds for Access
- suppliers currently delivering other commissions in this area for Access, particularly the creation of a procurement framework (Energy Savings Trust)
- infrastructure organisations with an interest in this area, including Locality, Centre for Sustainable Energy and Community Energy England.

Tenders led by, or involving any of the organisations referenced above within a partnership bid, would be welcome.

V. Budget

Proposals will be assessed on a value for money basis, however we are not anticipating allocating more than £50k+VAT to this work. Proposals should include a detailed budget breakdown, clearly indicating how the funds will be allocated, and identifying personnel involved (specifying days involved and day rates).

VI. Timeline

The proposed research should be completed by 31 March 2024.

VII. Proposal Submission

Interested organisations or individuals are asked to submit a proposal to applications@access-si.org.uk, marked "EESIP – Social Sector Supply Side" by 9.00am on 11 December covering the below.

- a. Overview of the organisation or individual's expertise and experience in conducting research or similar initiatives, specifically within the social enterprise or energy efficiency sectors.

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- b. Detailed description of the proposed methodology for the research.
- c. Team composition, including the qualifications and experience of the individuals who will be involved in framework development and implementation.
- d. Budget breakdown
- e. Proposed timeline, including key milestones and deliverable due dates.
- f. Examples of previous work
- g. Provision of contact details for at least two organisations that could be approached to provide a reference regarding similar work.