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Evaluation Consultancy Brief

Introduction

The Food Museum is seeking to appoint an evaluation consultant or consultancy to work closely with the Project Team to develop and evaluation plan to support the delivery, monitoring and evaluation of *The Kitchen Project*. We want to work with the consultant as a critical friend both during the development and delivery stages of the project. The consultancy is thus developed in two stages with the second being dependent on the project receiving National Lottery Heritage Fund funding. Stage 1 will begin in November 2023 and Stage 2 in July 2025 completing in March 2030 but there may need to be some flexibility.

Our aim is to engage a consultant or consultancy team with strong facilitation skills, who will work collaboratively to enthuse, train, advise and support the Project Team and volunteers in embracing evaluation aims, ensuring that the objectives of the evaluation plan become embedded across our work. As a result of the appointed consultant's input staff and volunteers should better understand how to gather evaluation data and be empowered to contribute to and learn from the process.

The Food Museum

The Food Museum connects people with where food comes from and the impact of our food choices: past, present and future. We use our collections, buildings, landscape and programmes to explore our main themes: Grow, Make, Eat.

We work with a wide range of partners to produce inclusive and diverse programming which speaks to 21st-century audiences. We want everyone to see themselves reflected in the work we do. We aim to be relevant, challenging and sustainable.

We care for 17 historic buildings set in 84 acres of countryside, in the heart of Stowmarket, Suffolk. The museum is a charity supporting the community and we undertake a wide range of social projects and programmes. We seek to maintain high professional standards in the presentation and protection of our collection, buildings and site and continually improve our practice.

We are a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) supported by Arts Council England. We began life as a volunteer-run rural life museum in 1967 – the Museum of East Anglian Life. We became the Food Museum in 2022.

The Kitchen Project

We are in an exciting period where we are showing people what being the Food Museum means and *The Kitchen Project* is an important step on that journey. Through the project we will:

1. Deliver a 5-year programme of activities, exhibitions and partnerships to connect with new audiences. In 2022, we refurbished the William Bone Building to be our main gallery for changing exhibitions. We seek to deliver a series of yearlong programmes centred on this space which will also use and unite the surrounding cluster of buildings. Each programme focuses on building different audiences and responds to visitor research we did asking what people wanted to see. We have had exploratory conversations with some potential partners. Each programme will include tasting and multi-sensory experiences, using our Bone Building demonstration kitchen and participatory activities, and digital content, such as recorded talks.
2. Overhaul a Victorian factory (the 'Boby Building'), repair the damaged roof and install a lift to provide full disabled access. Create a display of kitchens (late Victorian, 1950s, 1970s, 1980s, 2020s) install machinery from the collection and build a volunteering and audio-visual programme around them to demonstrate home-cooking in different eras.
3. Re-erect the medieval timber-framed 'Edgar's Farmhouse'. When complete, it will become part of the sequence of historic kitchens, interpreting medieval cooking.
4. Re-site and repair two Second World War huts to enable a new approach to schools' provision and residential volunteering.
5. Repair our Grade II* Medieval Barn, improve its interpretation and the visitor welcome and orientation.
6. Connect the cluster of buildings more effectively and improve access between them.

Scope and methodology

The successful consultant will work closely with the Project Team to co-produce an evaluation plan that reflects intended project outcomes, meets HF standards as set out in the HF document: [Evaluation Guidance](#) (20 August 2017) and is complementary to our existing monitoring and evaluation practice as a National Portfolio Organisation with Arts Council England. We anticipate focussing on five areas: audiences, partners, heritage, environment and resilience and to judge our success by measuring numbers, brand awareness, the quality of interactions with participants and other audiences, and potential broader impact of the project.

While we are open to advice about target setting and data gathering tools we are keen to build on our practice rather than create new. Audience development is a key aim of the project, so growth in visitor numbers and demographics will be important metrics. To measure the project's impact on visitor numbers, we have baseline data gathered through Audience Finder and our CRM system. Improving brand awareness could be evidenced

through press and social media coverage, growth of online audiences and surveys with non-visitors. To evaluate the quality of programmes we are intending to use the Counting What Counts toolkit (recommended by ACE for NPOs). It would therefore be useful if successful consultants had familiarity with these approaches.

Once the plan is in place we envisage that the project team will have responsibility for data gathering, analysis and report writing, with the consultant providing external critical peer review at key points during project delivery to ensure the team benefits from formative input.

Consultancy is scoped into two distinct stages – the second being contingent on the project receiving funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund:

In Stage 1 the main focus for the consultancy is to work closely with the Project Team to co-produce an evaluation plan with clear targets, baseline data, relevant data gathering tools. The consultant should provide advice and training as necessary to build our capacity. We anticipate that the development of the evaluation plan will take place between April to October 2024 with potential input until January 2025.

In Stage 2 the successful consultant will work with the Project Team to refine data gathering, review outcomes of evaluation and identify any areas of improvements as the project unfolds. We envisage this to involve an annual workshop review with the team during each year of project delivery but we are open to advice from the successful consultant. We anticipate that the project team will draft interim and final project evaluation reports and the consultant will provide a critique of these.

Outputs/deliverables

Stage 1:

- A site based meeting with the project team
- A co-produced evaluation plan and associated training
- A review session with the team at the end of Stage 1

Stage 2:

- Review of the project team's annual evaluation data
- 4 x annual workshops with the project team to review progress. In person or on line
- Production of a summative evaluation report

Timescales

Tender Opportunity Published: 14 November 2023

Any queries or if you would like to visit the site, please contact Jenny Cousins, jenny@foodmuseum.org.uk / 01449 618222.

Deadline for Submission: midday on Friday 15 December 2023. The tender document must be submitted in pdf format by email, to the contact details above

Interviews (if selected): 8 January 2024; it is possible to interview via Zoom or in person.

Content of tender submission

The tender submission should include:

- Your proposed methodology and approach to the evaluation
- Your proposed timetable including milestones
- Details of previous experience of evaluation consultancy of this type including projects supported by the NLHF
- Familiarity with Arts Council England evaluation toolkits and approaches
- Details of all the members of staff who would work on the evaluation consultancy and the number of days each will contribute to the evaluation
- Two relevant professional referees we may contact

Selection criteria

The successful Evaluation Consultant will be selected according to the price, quality, experience and methodology. The Food Museum does not undertake to accept the lowest, or any tender.

Criterion	Percentage weightings
Price	20%
Implementation and / or method statement	40%
Prior experience and references	40%

Budget

A total budget of £28,700 (excluding VAT) is available for this evaluation consultancy. This sum includes travel, subsistence, disbursements and all other costs and is exclusive of VAT.

This sum is the total for Stage 1 (£8,700) and Stage 2 (£20,000) – payment details will be apportioned across Stage 1 and 2 in discussion with the successful consultant. We estimate that consultancy involvement is likely to be loaded into Stage 2.

Please note that the second stage is dependent on the success of our bid to the Heritage Fund. There will therefore be a break-clause in the contract.