

North East Social Tech Fund: Tech Supplier Open Call: Kielder Water & Forest Park Development Trust

Kielder Water & Forest Park Development Trust (KWFPDT) has identified a need to diversify the Trust's income base to increase its future resilience.

It is looking to drive greater revenue by offering new engaging paid for experiences. It is also looking to engage new visitors to build a more diverse audience.

A budget of £10,000 is made available for a prototype, through support from the North East Social Tech Pilot Fund.

Charity Information

Name of Charity: Kielder Water & Forest Park Development Trust (KWFPDT)

Registered Charity Number: 1139328

Pilot Fund Background Info

The purpose of the North East Social Tech Pilot Fund is to help charities and social enterprises in the North East and Tees Valley explore how challenges within their organisation can be addressed through digital technology and 'open innovation'. The pilot programme has provided Innovation Grants of up to £10,000 to each successful VCSE which will be used to commission a solution and digital prototype. In addition, all VCSEs receive dedicated hands on support from the Digital Catapult North East Tees Valley's expert Innovation Teams.

At the current stage, all VCSEs have identified and explored key challenges within their organisations which they wish to address through technology. These challenges have been outlined within the innovation calls. It is up to you; the creative, digital and tech SMEs, to come up with creative solutions to these problems and, if successful, develop a prototype or minimum viable product (MVP).

Charity Background

Kielder Water & Forest Park Development Trust (KWFPDT) is a charity working in the Kielder area in Northumberland. KWDFPDT aims to promote sustainable development, provide recreational facilities, improve knowledge of the natural environment and encourage public engagement with the arts.

KWFPDT has developed a long-term investment plan for Kielder Water & Forest Park (KWFP) - the Kielder Big Picture. The investment plan features many strands of activity, which are delivered in partnership with its seven member organisations and key stakeholders including the communities and businesses in and around KWFP.

KWFPDT facilitates the development of events and activities that encourage learning and celebrate the landscape, natural environment and leisure aspects of KWFP. All these events and activities are

focused on achieving a high-quality visitor experience and to attract visitors to the area and encourage them to stay longer. It works with Trust members and partners to develop attractions and facilities that engage with, inform and inspire people of ages, abilities and backgrounds. It also works with high profile artists, young people and local communities to deliver the Kielder Art & Architecture programme. Recently KWFPDT has focused increasingly on helping the public to experience, enjoy and learn about Kielder's wildlife and natural environment.

Summary of the Challenge

KWFPDT has identified that the financial resilience of the Trust and its partners is a key risk to achieving their vision. Reflecting on visitor data, KWFPDT has identified a need to widen Kielder Water & Forest Park's audience base.

KWFPDT depends heavily on financial contributions from members. It therefore needs to diversify the its income base to increase its future resilience.

Consequently, it is looking to:

- Drive greater revenue by offering new paid for experiences and increased dwell time in the park through providing additional content at existing experience
- Support new ways to engage with customers which enhance their experience
- Overcome the challenge of providing tourist/orientation information outside the main season (reducing the need for staffing resources)

KWFPDT knows from research that there is a need to attract a more diverse audience to KWFP. The research shows that fewer people aged 16-34 visit Kielder compared to other age groups and that the most popular segments at KWFP are affluent or well off. National research shows that BAME groups and residents from the most deprived areas in the UK visit the natural environment less frequently than average, and that young people particularly mentioned lack of interest as a reason for not visiting the countryside more often.

KWFPDT is looking for a digital solution that can assist in widening access and attracting more visitors.

Things to Consider

Most of KWFP has little/no connectivity, however there is broadband at Tower Knowe, Kielder Waterside and Kielder Castle alongside public Wi-Fi at these centres (although the speed is slow and sometimes struggles to cope with visitor demand).

Unless designed for use on a mobile device, it is likely the solution would be based at one of the visitor centres, potentially Kielder Castle or Tower Knowe.

The final solution will need to have low maintenance costs, so that there is no net cost to the Trust or its partners.

Impact of Solving The Challenge

The development of new chargeable experiences would provide additional income for KWFPDT and its partners, which would help them to become more resilient.

In addition, new ways to impart tourist information may reduce the requirement for paid staff (or

provide an enhanced experience at centres like Kielder Castle, where there are no staff), therefore reducing costs for KWFPDT partners while helping facilities to stay open longer and extend the season.

By ultimately increasing the resilience of the Trust and its partners, the technological solution will ensure that the resources are in place for KWFPDT to better manage, protect and enhance its diverse heritage asset.

The opportunity to develop and test new digital experiences will enable KWFPDT to better understand potential customers and any barriers they face. This pilot will help provide intelligence on the needs or interests of under-represented groups, and will enable KWFPDT to work with Digital Catapult, technology companies and stakeholders to develop solutions which are designed to engage with the widest possible audience including young people, lower income groups and the BAME community (either at Kielder or remotely).

Solving this challenge will increase engagement and make KWFP more attractive and accessible to all, in line with The Trust's charitable aims.

Project Roles

Lynn Turner, Director of KWFPDT will lead. Hilary Norton will support.

There will also be involvement from Trust Board members and from staff and volunteers from the Trust member organisations. The Trust has seven members: Northumbrian Water, Forestry England, Calvert Kielder, Kielder Observatory Astronomical Society, Northumberland County Council, Northumberland Wildlife Trust and Northumberland National Park Authority. All these organisations have committed to spend time on this pilot.

The Contract Specification

We expect the successful supplier to liaise with KWFPDT and Digital Catapult throughout the process which will include presenting ideas part way through before the development takes place to ensure all parties are happy with this. We may request that the supplier attends focus group sessions and present the pilot content in a way that engages with the participants. Subject to the results of the customer feedback, the company will be required to produce a costed proposal for a full version of the experience which can be used at the selected location.

The Budget

This charity was awarded £10,000 from the fund to be allocated to development of a prototype solution. All funds are classed as restricted and therefore 100% will be paid to the supplier upon completion of pre agreed milestones.

Timescales

Open Call Deadline	20/03/2020
Companies Shortlisted	25/03/2020
Pitch Day	01/04/2020
Company Selected	08/04/2020
Solution complete	31/07/2020
Evaluation Report	11/09/2020

Evaluation Criteria

Innovation	Likelihood of solving the challenge and receiving scaleup funds	25%
Team	Experience of the solution & the sector	25%
Timescales	Ability to meet timescales	25%
Scope	How much of the brief will be met in the budget	25%

Apply

To apply, please fill in the online application form before 23:59pm on 20 March 2020 (answer with "KWFPDT" in the 'name of the open call field'):

<https://airtable.com/shrZWbmjf2isVnac6>

FAQs

Intellectual Property

All Intellectual Property will reside with the charitable organisation unless otherwise agreed in writing between the charity and the supplier. Therefore we would advise if you wish to pitch a solution that is based on your current infrastructure and therefore your existing Intellectual Property please state this clearly in your application form so that your IP can be protected and the charity is aware.

Additional Information

Some ideas which have come from an ideation workshop held with the partners of KWFPDT include:

1. Virtual tour guide. To provide visitor information, orientation and interpretation in an imaginary way using different media (visual, sound etc) This could be based at a visitor centre or used on mobile devices. This needs to be a self-service option, with no staff resource needed.
2. Rally car experience. A virtual experience to recreate a car rally race through Kielder Forest, enabling visitors to experience risks and thrills of this exciting motor sport. This would need to be a paid for experience with minimal staff supervision needed.
3. Working forest experience/simulator. The chance for visitors to experience the work of a forester, controlling the virtual machinery which harvests half a million trees a year at Kielder! This would need to be a paid for experience with minimal staff supervision needed.
4. Virtual mountain biker. Dare to ride the Deadwater Fell black mountain bike trail. Virtual experience of this highly technical trail that includes epic climbing and thrilling descending! This would need to be a paid for experience with minimal staff supervision needed.

5. Life before Kielder Water. A virtual/augmented reality experience illustrating the landscape and settlements that existed before the creation of Kielder Water. This could be augmented with oral history stories. This needs to be a self-service option, with no staff resource needed.
6. Changing Landscapes. Similar to 5, but extend it to ensure it includes geological time – so Kielder when it was the location of the collision of 2 super-continent 380 million years ago! Then, when it was a Carboniferous sub-tropical coal swamp 330million years ago. A red desert (like Oman) 280million years ago. The ice age “only” 20,000 years ago and covered by 1000m ice. And near future – rising temperatures and higher groundwater and river/sea levels and resultant changed vegetation/ecology. The underlying point is that our climate has, and will change! This would need to be a paid for experience with minimal staff supervision needed.

These ideas could help shape your proposal; alternatively the Trust welcomes any additional innovative ideas to help to drive revenue and increase customer engagement, in line with the challenge described above.

