

Social Enterprise: Winning with 2012

www.sel.org.uk/2012

POLICY UPDATE #1 (APRIL 2008)

About this Policy Update

This Policy Update is produced as part of the project 'Social Enterprise: Winning with 2012', a national project started in 2007 with support from the Office of the Third Sector (OTS), bringing together a partnership between Social Enterprise London (SEL) and the Social Enterprise Coalition (SEC). For more information about the project, please visit www.sel.org.uk/2012

Winning with 2012 is built on consultations with social enterprises, to both gauge and promote interest in 2012 opportunities, and to provide a platform for them to express their needs and priorities. The consultation is conducted via a series of Enterprise Events that we hold in different regions across the country as well as via direct communication with the relevant organisations.

Who this Policy Update is for?

We want to provide social enterprises with a voice to influence the policy development process. The main ideas received from the ongoing consultations are channelled to policy-makers, who are the primary target audience of this Policy Update. We also make recommendations for social enterprises and their support networks.

In addition to this Policy Update, we meet with key stakeholders to constructively convey thoughts and ideas on behalf of social enterprises. **We would welcome the opportunity to discuss any aspect of social enterprise involvement in the delivery and legacy of the 2012 Games with interested stakeholders.**

Background

The potential for the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games to catalyse social, environmental and economic benefits for the city – and the country as a whole – has been widely recognised. A theme that distinguished the London bid from others in July 2005 was the commitment to ambitious environmental and social principles, ensuring that the Games leave a meaningful long-term legacy for communities in London and the UK.

What is social enterprise?

- Social enterprise is a **business model** that aims to deliver across a range of economic, social and environmental outputs – the 'multiple bottom line'. It can bring wealth and empowerment to communities which may be otherwise marginalised, including ethnic minorities (BAME), disabled people and women.
- Social enterprises take on a range of different company legal structures, including Community Interest Company, Industrial & Provident Society, Limited Company, Trust, and Co-operatives. They operate over many different industry sectors including arts and design, childcare, sport and leisure, finance, health and social care and transport.

Social enterprise's role in Olympic procurement

- The London 2012 website states:
 - LOCOG will manage its procurements separately from the ODA, but it will also adopt **fair and sustainable** procurement principles and processes.
- The ODA's Procurement Policy states:
 - SMEs, businesses owned by BAME people, women, and disabled people and **social enterprises** are particularly important in developing the Olympic Promise, locally, regionally and nationally...
 - As the major opportunities for smaller organisations are within the supply chains of its major contractors, **the ODA will encourage those contractors to open up their opportunities...**
- As businesses with social and environmental aims that are rooted in the local community, social enterprises can offer many of the **social and sustainability outcomes** hoped for by government and the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic organisations.

Key recommendations

Based on the findings of our consultations so far, we would like to put forward two main recommendations:

1. Closing the information gap

The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games present significant opportunities for social and economic regeneration. The Government, and London 2012, are both keen to ensure that the benefits reach every part of the country. The 'Social Enterprise: Winning with 2012' project serves as one of the means to reach out to the wider social enterprise community across the country. Indeed, participants in our Enterprise Events found the session very useful, and those who receive our regular e-newsletter also find it helpful. There is real demand for more 2012 related information among social enterprises. One indicator of the level of interest is the fact that our 2012 Information Hub (www.sel.org.uk/2012) received almost 45,000 hits over the last 3 months alone.

However, despite ongoing efforts by the Government and London 2012, there are still many social enterprises struggling to understand if and how they can contribute to the Games. Given that CompeteFor is currently one of the main routes into 2012 procurement, this information gap makes many social enterprises uncertain whether or not they should invest time and resources to register. From our consultations, this appears especially the case for those outside London, but even those in London share the feeling.

Our engagements with both LOCOG and the ODA show that London 2012 is very keen to ensure information is passed down to all interested organisations. Government, particularly the Office of the Third Sector, is also committed to help spread the relevant 2012 information to third sector organisations. Nevertheless, we feel that there are still information gaps, especially at the regional level, that need to be closed.

In particular, there have been many questions asked about the Cultural Olympiad. Since the Cultural Olympiad will start in August this year, it is understandable that there is real excitement, particularly among social enterprise in the cultural sector. These social enterprises would appreciate more information about how they can get involved.

While our Enterprise Events could initiate the discussion by bringing key officials from the London 2012 team, more benefits will come if this is continued with similar initiatives in each of the regions. Organisations like the Regional Development Agencies, regional social enterprise networks, and local business associations all need to work together to create more regional engagement. As lead partner in this 'Winning with 2012' national project, Social Enterprise London (SEL) can assist where necessary.

Specifically, we recommend that:

- Regional social enterprise bodies work closely with London 2012 to actively promote opportunities to their members, including as continuation to our Enterprise Events. This could be done by bringing the relevant individuals, such as those from the 2012 Business Network and the Creative Programmers, to meet with social enterprises in their region or a specific local area.
- Regional social enterprise networks link to our Information Hub (www.sel.org.uk/2012) and disseminate the e-newsletters and Briefing Notes that SEL produces - to ensure consistency of information and to reduce the burden of information gathering and dissemination by the regional bodies.
- Strategic structures within London 2012, particularly the Nations and Regions Group (NRG), at both the national and regional levels, consider inviting social enterprise bodies to become permanent members. This would have the benefit of ensuring a smooth flow of information to and from social enterprises across the country.
- Creative Programmers may find it beneficial to engage directly with the regional social enterprise networks to ensure that the latest information can be conveyed to social enterprises interested in the Cultural Olympiad.

2. Making the registration process on CompeteFor more friendly to small businesses

SEL assisted in the piloting of CompeteFor in London and we continue to promote CompeteFor as a 'must' for social enterprises across the country. The facilities provided by CompeteFor, and its overall concept of a business 'dating-agency', are very beneficial even if they do not have immediate plans to bid for 2012 contracts.

In order to make the most of the CompeteFor system, social enterprises have to register by completing a business profile. To qualify to tender for any contract, all organisations must fulfil three minimum criteria, namely, they must have:

- A Health and Safety Policy
- An Equal Opportunity Policy
- A Quality Management Statement

The most frequent issue that was raised by social enterprises who have tried to register onto this system was the Quality Management Statement. The registration process does not clearly define what is meant by a Quality Management Statement. Our consultations show that the confusion arises mainly because immediately after the question on whether or not organisations have a Quality Management ‘Statement’, the system asks if the organisation has a Quality Standards ‘certification’ (ISO, ACORN, EMAS, SA8000, etc). This results in some social enterprises thinking that they need a quality standards certification if they want to register.

As it stands, social enterprises who do not have a Quality Management Statement are referred to Business Link. Automatic referral to business support for organisations that are not yet fit to tender, in general, is particularly useful. Such referrals mean that any social enterprise who is not yet fit to tender can be signposted to suitable business support, enabling them to be fit to tender in the future. However, there have been instances where Business Link then refers the social enterprise to documents on how to obtain ISO14000. This is too complex for most small businesses, and may be unnecessary.

Specifically, we recommend that:

- To improve CompeteFor’s ability to cater to smaller businesses, which includes most social enterprises, it would be very useful if a clear definition of “Quality Management Statement” is provided.
- Social enterprises continue to register onto the CompeteFor system. We strongly urge that social enterprise take this opportunity and utilise the support provided to build their own capacity.

About ‘Social Enterprise: Winning with 2012’

Social Enterprise: Winning with 2012 is a national project funded by the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) and is comprised of a partnership between Social Enterprise London and Social Enterprise Coalition.

There are two sides of this project:

- representing the voice of social enterprise from across the country to policy-makers and procurers.
- providing up-to-date information, particularly about business opportunities, from policy-makers and procurers to social enterprises across the country.

To get in touch, please send email to Wan Saiful Wan Jan (wan@sel.org.uk) or call 020 7022 1920.

Please also visit the project microsite: www.sel.org.uk/2012

Funded by



CabinetOffice
Office of the Third Sector

Project partners

social enterprise london

