

# Forging Sustainable Partnerships between Businesses and Communities



## A Modernising Volunteering Workstream Report

 **improvingsupport.org.uk**  
A pilot initiative to strengthen support services for the third sector

**Modernising Volunteering** will give support providers the resources, evidence and good practice they need to deliver help to the frontline.



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**Investment in schemes to promote and encourage staff to volunteer has become a common feature of many corporate social responsibility strategies, so much so that in 2007 36% of employees reported working for an employer with an ESV scheme.**

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# Foreword



The last 10 years has seen a significant growth in private sector Employer-Supported Volunteering (ESV) as employers have come to recognise its multiple benefits – to the company, to the employee, and to the broader community. Investment in schemes to promote and encourage staff to volunteer has become a common feature of many corporate social responsibility strategies, so much so that in 2007 36% of employees reported working for an employer with an ESV scheme.

Despite this rosy picture there have been barriers to an even greater take-up. Most of the growth has been amongst larger companies with smaller and medium sized enterprises (which make up the vast majority of companies in the UK) proving a much harder nut to crack. There has also been a suggestion that some of the more traditional forms of ESV (which perhaps somewhat unfairly have been caricatured as ‘wall painting’) have proved more sustainable but of less value than the newer forms of professional skills transfer. And now with the current economic downturn question marks are being raised over the sustainability of these schemes, with some concerns being expressed that investment in volunteering (and other forms of community support) will be amongst the first things to go as companies begin to tighten their belts.

Whilst we need to take these concerns seriously the early evidence from the recession is that ESV programmes are holding up pretty well. *Indeed paradoxically, in a climate where cash support to the community is being inevitably squeezed, investment in employee volunteering may well become even more attractive as a way for companies to retain staff morale and maintain a foothold in the community.*

Volunteering England is determined to do its bit to keep ESV high on the agenda. We are delighted to be working with the Nationwide Foundation on a skills-based employer-supported volunteering project as part of our National Support Services Modernising Volunteering Programme, and this publication by Corporate Citizenship is the first output from this strand of work.

Our thanks go to Capacitybuilders and the Nationwide Foundation for providing funding for this project and to the National Support Services team and Corporate Citizenship for producing what I hope you will agree is a stimulating and engaging read.

Over the next two years of the Modernising Volunteering programme we will be using the findings from this research to inform the development of a series of pilot projects to showcase the value of skills-based ESV schemes which we hope will lead to the next stage of expansion of this movement.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Justin Davis Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Justin Davis Smith**  
Chief Executive  
Volunteering England  
April 2009



# Who commissioned the ESV report and who is it for?

## April 2009 Executive Summary

Volunteering England, with the support of Nationwide Foundation through its Modernising Volunteering work, which is part of Capacitybuilders' overall improving support programme - a joint initiative to give support providers the resources, evidence and good practice needed to deliver help to the front line (for more information visit [www.improvingsupport.org.uk](http://www.improvingsupport.org.uk)).

This report is for organisations, networks and individuals interested in skills-based employer supported volunteering (ESV). This includes volunteering infrastructure organisations, ESV brokers, businesses and networks, charities and community groups.

### Why was it commissioned?

Volunteering England is committed to helping keep ESV high on the agenda and believes there are significant future opportunities for companies, employees and volunteer involving organisations, as well as the wider community, in encouraging an uptake of skills based ESV.

### The report in a nutshell: a guided tour of its key sections

- **Introduction.**  
Following an executive summary that outlines the central argument of the report, this section provides a thorough background to the climate in which the report was commissioned touching upon previous studies, the economic crisis and the Government agenda.
- **Methodology.**  
A detailed explanation of the research activities undertaken by Corporate Citizenship – what research was undertaken, when and where.
- **Findings.**  
The business case for skills based ESV – for businesses, voluntary and community organisations and brokers. A useful section for those interested in increasing skills based ESV in their own organisations.
- **Recommendations.**  
Effective research leads to positive change. These recommendations provide a comprehensive overview of Volunteering England's planned work over the next two years through its Modernising Volunteering initiative – to stay in touch, sign up at [www.improvingsupport.org.uk](http://www.improvingsupport.org.uk)

Our research demonstrates the overwhelming benefits to both VCOs and companies of skills-based volunteering, and their appetite to engage in this.

**Skills-based volunteering could benefit a much wider range of companies and VCOs across the UK but currently lacks the local leadership and infrastructure to make it happen.**

In the current economic crisis, this type of volunteering offers a means to make a high-impact and sustainable contribution to the community, when cash contributions are being squeezed.

But effective partnerships have been sporadic, focused on larger VCOs and businesses that have predominantly operated out of London.

Skills-based volunteering could benefit a much wider range of companies and VCOs across the UK but currently lacks the local leadership and infrastructure to make it happen.

This report shows that local/regional brokers have the positioning in the community to foster sustainable skills-based partnerships. However, they are currently unable to fulfil this role due to a lack of resource and sustained financing.

With dedicated business partnership brokers recruiting companies and communicating the business case for skills-based volunteering to local companies and VCOs, these infrastructure organisations could play an important role in brokering successful skills-based volunteering projects.

The following report outlines the rationale for distributing the phase 2 budget to pilot projects run by local/regional infrastructure brokers to increase capacity for skills-based volunteering.

The funding will not only pay for a dedicated broker to establish a scheme for skills-based matching, but will also pay for the central support structure including a mentor to provide all the pilots with expert consultancy on how to develop the scheme.

To ensure the projects get off to the best possible start and develop according to the objectives of phase 2, a steering group will also guide the process.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

**Research from the Charities Aid Foundation (UK Giving, 2008) revealed that charities currently consider cash donations and skills-based volunteering of greater importance to their organisations than team challenge volunteering. The study also emphasised the importance of continued private sector support for the voluntary sector, particularly in the current recession, when ‘demand for charities’ services is increasing but resources are falling’ (CAF presentation from research launch, December 2008). The launch event also focused on the importance of greater impacts measurement to support the business case for skills-based volunteering and presented the following comments from VCOs that participated in the research, on their perceptions of the changing nature of interaction between the private and voluntary sector:**

*“The current recession has changed the potential for corporate support. This in turn changes how we need to view different sectors”*

This quote indicates recognition of the fact that companies are no longer giving the same level of traditional cash contributions, so VCOs must be receptive to other forms of support that the private sector can offer.

Linking to this, in 2006-7, Abbey and Nationwide noticed that they were receiving increasing numbers of requests for grants to pay for professional services that both companies believed they could provide voluntarily using the skills of their workforce.

In 2007, Corporate Citizenship was commissioned by The Nationwide Foundation, Abbey Charitable Trust and Volunteering England to research the perceptions and uptake of non-financial support (NFS), specifically skills-based volunteering.

This initial research (Developing Understanding around Non-Financial Support, 2007) revealed the following issues, which required further investigation – hence this second stage of work:

- Awareness of the benefits of skills-based volunteering is high although VCOs expressed a mixture of views and experiences when discussing its viability in practice
- Companies generally had more positive experiences and were perceived to be the drivers of the process. They were also perceived to gain more benefits from the partnerships than their VCO (voluntary/community organisation) partners
- Both VCOs and companies expressed interest in building skills-based partnerships in future, although they acknowledge that the related challenges are significant

It was as a result of this research that Volunteering England decided that they wanted to undertake a more detailed piece of research into skills-based volunteering to explore these issues further.

Their first action was to discuss these findings at four consultation meetings held during August 2008 in advance of the launch of this project. A range of companies, brokers and front-line VCOs attended, and agreed that the key areas for improvement in skills-based volunteering partnerships are:

- General awareness of employer supported skills-based volunteering
- Accessibility of information
- The engagement process
- Partnership working
- Sustainability of partnerships

Companies, VCOs and brokers all acknowledged the potential benefits of a successful partnership despite the associated challenges, and therefore recognised the need for this piece of research, to facilitate development in this area of practice.



**“The current recession has changed the potential for corporate support. This in turn changes how we need to view different sectors”**



## 1.2 Launching the current study

**In November 2008, Volunteering England and Capacitybuilders commissioned a project building on the previous study; *Developing Understanding around Non-Financial Support*, 2007. This programme of work examined the issues around uptake of skills-based volunteering, with the specific aim of identifying the role of brokers in fostering successful relationships.**

Local/regional infrastructure brokers have links to a wide range of small and medium enterprises, national businesses, public sector bodies and local charitable organisations, and are therefore well-placed to drive the development of successful skills-based projects. However, these organisations are largely under-funded and fragmented, and therefore the potential for supporting skills-based volunteering is rarely fully realised.

This study aims to identify ways in which local infrastructure brokers can viably take a lead in organising skills-based partnerships on a local and regional basis. Final recommendations will be made for pilot projects that will help promote the role of local/regional infrastructure brokers in skills-based volunteering during phase 2, which will run from summer 2009.

### 1.2.1 The economic crisis

The requirement for this strand has also been driven by the onset of the economic crisis which is currently affecting the UK. Tighter community investment budgets and redundancies have helped emphasise the importance of skills-based volunteering as a corporate contribution rather than traditional cash donations or team challenge volunteering. While ensuring the sustainability of the voluntary sector by building capacity and transferring expertise into voluntary organisations, skills-based volunteering also provides the environment for employee volunteers to develop their interpersonal and professional skills. Other professionals may be seconded to VCOs to work for a period instead of being made redundant, to help retain and develop their skills.

### 1.2.2 Existing research in the US and UK

Most current information on skills-based volunteering relates to practice in the US. A Points of Light review (2006) notes that even in the US, an acknowledged universal definition of skills-based volunteering still does not exist.

There is very little equivalent research in the UK, although one study which is gaining profile was conducted by ACEVO at the same time as phase 1 of this project. The research (*Investing in Leaders: a new aspect in corporate social responsibility*, 2008) looks into cross-sector

leadership development through mentoring, finding that: (a) both companies and VCOs value the opportunities presented by cross-sector leadership learning and development and (b) brokerage is important to building these relationships. This study, into all aspects of skills-based volunteering, together with the ACEVO research which is aimed specifically at voluntary and business leaders signify a considerable move in the UK towards developing a more in-depth approach to understanding skills-based volunteering.

### 1.2.3 The Government agenda

This project also links to the UK government's approach to skills development. The substantial amount of public funding being injected into skills training will affect the voluntary sector in two ways. First, it will affect the sector as an 'employer' - providing access to training funds for sector staff. Secondly, it will enable the sector to fulfil its role as a contributor to the skills development of the entire community workforce through employer supported volunteering.



**Local/regional infrastructure brokers have links to a wide range of small and medium enterprises, national businesses, public sector bodies and local charitable organisations, and are therefore well-placed to drive the development of successful skills-based projects.**

# 1. Introduction

## 1.3 Methodology

**Capacitybuilders is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) set up in 2006 to take over the management of the ChangeUp programme and to work with other funders to build the capacity of the voluntary and community sector. It is financing this initiative from October 2008 to 2011, through the Modernising Volunteering National Support Services funding stream. It is a project in three phases, and this report covers phase 1:**

Phase 1: Establish baselines; research opportunities and challenges; identify models of good practice that can be replicated in other regions; recommend new products and services for development in phase 2

Phase 2: Development activity to take forward to the recommendations from phase 1.

Phase 3: Collation of learning from the development activity; dissemination of information; awareness campaign; ensuring sustainability for the future.

The aim of the project is to create a step-change in the support available to frontline organisations working across England. The National Support Services investment will give support providers the resources, evidence and good practice they need to deliver help to the frontline.

Nine new national work-streams have been created to target the key areas of the sector that need improvement. Volunteering England is coordinating the 'Modernising Volunteering' stream. Within this, the skills-based volunteering initiative with additional support from the Nationwide Foundation represents one of four main projects aimed at enabling volunteering infrastructure bodies to become more skilled and effective in delivering support through volunteering, to the community.

The methodology was shaped according to the objectives of phase 1 as listed above. With these in mind, a two-stage approach was developed to complete this project:

- Issues Analysis
- Developing a Roadmap for Phase 2 (during which our pilot project recommendations will be put into practice)

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## 1.4 Summary

**The next chapter explains our methodology in depth, and how it was shaped to answer the following research questions:**

1. What are the challenges and barriers to the uptake of skills-based volunteering?
2. What is the role of brokers (both specialist and local/regional infrastructure)?
3. What would be viable to pilot in phase 2 to raise awareness and increase uptake of skills-based volunteering opportunities?

It will also detail the key findings of our research, an overview of Corporate Citizenship's recommendations for phase 2, and the rationale for these suggestions.





# 2. Methodology

## 2.1 Issues Analysis

**The research analyses a broad range of skills-based volunteering activity, including business mentoring and trusteeships. Lacking a currently accepted definition of skills-based employer supported volunteering, we identified it as:**

*The provision of skills that are inherent to an employee's day-job, which they can use to help the voluntary and community sector develop either a specific project, or at a wider level, develop the organisation as a whole, within working hours.*

We employed three techniques of data collection aimed at four target audiences; companies, VCOs, brokers and employees. These techniques were:

1. Desk based research
2. Stakeholder consultation through
  - Face-to-face interviews
  - Telephone interviews
  - Online surveys
  - Focus groups.
3. Input from the Advisory Group

### 2.1.1 Desk based research

Corporate Citizenship conducted desk-based research to gain an understanding of the scope of research available on the subject of skills-based volunteering and to find information on best practice. However, as outlined in 1.2.2, most of the published studies on skills-based volunteering came from the US, and these were relatively few in number.

### 2.1.2 Stakeholder consultation: Aim

To get in-depth views from the key stakeholders about driving uptake of employer supported skills-sharing volunteering – companies, VCOs and brokers.

#### Companies and VCOs

The discussion guides for interviews and the survey were designed to explore further the issues raised in the initial research and consultations. They were agreed with Volunteering England and the Advisory Group (please refer to **Appendix 1** for an example of a discussion guide).

In the company and VCO research we explored the views of companies that **do** and **do not** offer skills-based volunteering support, and community organisations that **do** and **do not** work with employer supported skills-based volunteers.

This was to enable us to examine the views of current practitioners, but also the perception and specifically perceived barriers of those not currently active in this area.

The aim of conducting in-depth interviews as well as surveys was to capture more specific and detailed case studies and experiences through the former, which could complement quantitative data from a much larger sample achieved through the latter.

The survey was distributed as widely as possible among local, regional and national VCOs and companies with the aim of getting 100-150 responses per sector. Corporate Citizenship's contact database (including London Benchmarking Group and Corporate Citizenship Briefing contacts) was used to access companies. The survey for voluntary and community organisations was distributed through:

- Corporate Citizenship voluntary and community organisation contact database
- The SMART Community Panel
- LBG Community Partners contacts
- CC Briefing distribution list
- Volunteering England newsletter
- NAVCA newsletter
- Corporate Responsibility Group newsletter
- CSR Chicks Yahoo! group
- CSR Blokes Yahoo! group
- BASSAC newsletter
- UKVPMs newsgroup
- VolResource newsletter
- AVM newsletter
- Media Trust newsletter
- IT4Communities membership
- White Box Digital VCO membership

The surveys covered aspects such as the organisation's profile, experiences and perceptions of the value of skills-based volunteering (including how the partnership came about and the areas in which support was received/donated). The surveys also sought to establish the nature of the support, benefits and challenges, potential involvement in future, and opinions on what make a skills-based partnership successful.

A call for interviewees was distributed with the survey, with the aim of securing telephone calls with eight companies and eight VCOs of varying size and scope. Of the responses, a sample as varied as possible was chosen and when gaps were identified, direct calls were made to organisations that fitted our requirements. The majority of the responses were on behalf of large international companies that had established skills-based volunteering programmes for their staff. While they were important to engage for information on what works well, a perspective from smaller regional and local companies was also required, so a selection of organisations fitting this profile was also contacted. Of these, one regional financial services company agreed to be interviewed. The small/medium-sized companies were harder to engage

## 2. Methodology

for a number of reasons. Either there was no appropriate person for us to speak to, or the company simply had no time or felt it was not relevant to them. Many of them ran fundraising or match-funding programmes, as well as team-challenge volunteering but did not have any experience of skills-based volunteering.

Only a few VCOs initially responded to the call for interview – many of which were corporate foundations, which did not fit our objective of speaking to service-delivery charitable organisations rather than grant-making organisations with charitable status. We therefore chose two corporate foundations to cover their perspective and tried to secure interviews with more appropriate organisations. However, smaller VCOs were again very hard to engage for interviews, reflecting the issue of a general lack of time and resource for business development in the sector. Smaller VCOs refused on the basis of time constraints or lack of experience, or again, because they felt that this is not a topic relevant to their organisation.

### Brokers

Brokers were targeted to explore their views on what works well for them, and what successful brokerage/matching models that could be piloted in other regions. Again, all discussion guides were agreed with Volunteering England and the Advisory Group. Specialist brokers appear to be more engaged in brokering skills-based relationships than local infrastructure brokers both in and outside London. A selection of local/regional infrastructure brokers were interviewed to find out the challenges they face with a view to building projects that can overcome these issues and use their capacity to foster more relationships through a long term, sustainable programme. The local/regional infrastructure brokers were identified through contacts from Volunteering England, but interviews were relatively difficult to secure as many organisations did not have much time, because those responsible for brokering partnerships between companies and VCOs were part-time.

One venture philanthropist was also interviewed, since the original research on non-financial support revealed that one VCO had interacted with the Impetus Trust as a major contributor of skills-based support through a sustained and structured partnership to rebrand and raise their profile. The Impetus Trust was interviewed as a leading UK venture philanthropist, to assess perceptions of their role in, and the value of, skills-based volunteering.

### Interviewees

#### Voluntary/community organisations:

1. Age Concern
2. Botanical Gardens Conservation International
3. Citizenship Foundation
4. Employment Opportunities
5. In Kind Direct
6. YouthNet
7. Carers Network Westminster
8. Zurich Community Trust
9. HBOS Foundation

#### Companies:

1. Barclays Bank
2. Coventry Building Society
3. DLA Piper
4. ExxonMobil
5. Herbert Smith
6. Pfizer
7. Pricewaterhouse Coopers
8. Standard Chartered Bank
9. Unum

#### Local infrastructure brokers:

1. Birmingham
2. Blackpool
3. East Devon
4. South Leicestershire
5. York
6. London Westminster
7. Swindon

#### Specialist brokers:

1. East London Business Alliance
2. CC Works
3. Meganexus
4. Timebank
5. Media Trust
6. Citizenship Foundation
7. Charities Aid Foundation
8. Prince's Charities
9. Community Services Volunteers
10. Cares/Prohelp
11. City Action

#### Venture Philanthropist:

1. Impetus Trust



## Our recommendations therefore aim to overcome these key barriers to enable an effective, sustainable system for fostering partnerships through local infrastructure organisations.

The feedback from interview and surveys, and the desk-based research that comprised the Issues Analysis process provided:

- An understanding of the current arena in terms of needs, challenges and opportunities regarding provision and uptake of employer-supported skills based volunteering from a corporate and VCO perspective
- An understanding of what local and regional infrastructure support services are currently provided, and their challenges and opportunities
- An understanding of the role of specialist brokers

The information gathered through the Issues Analysis was then used to develop stage two of our methodology – the ‘Roadmap for Phase 2’, comprising of issues mapping and recommendations.

### 2.1.3 Use of Advisory Group

At the start of the consultation process, Corporate Citizenship contacted a list of people who had attended Volunteering England’s August 2008 consultation sessions, to invite them to be on the Advisory Group. An initial group of 10 people accepted the invitation to help steer the project in terms of people to contact, issues to focus on and feedback on our methodology and findings. After the initial meeting, Corporate Citizenship was asked to contact a wider list of people associated with the 2008 consultations, which resulted in the group increasing to 23 members (please refer to the full list in Appendix 2).

## 2.2 Developing a Roadmap for Phase 2

The main challenges and barriers to uptake of skills-based volunteering were identified from the experiences shared by companies, VCOs and brokers through the interviews and surveys. Using this information, Corporate Citizenship developed a detailed work plan for a viable project to be implemented in phase 2. The work plan is costed according to the budget allocated by Capacitybuilders, and includes a list of key resources and critical success factors. The following chapters will provide the rationale for our recommendations through an analysis of the opportunities and business case for VCOs, companies and brokers to engage in skills-based volunteering.

### 2.2.1 Testing the findings with the advisory group

The input of the Advisory Group was useful for informing our recommendations. This group was formed from a list of opinion formers, practitioners and experts in the field of volunteering. The Group provided feedback on our findings and methodology and thoughts on how to move forward most effectively in Phase 2.

### 2.2.2 Compiling our recommendations

The Issues Analysis stage of our research confirmed the challenges and opportunities with regard to skills-based volunteering that had been identified in the previous research. VCOs, brokers and companies alike noted the key barriers to uptake as:

- Resources – money and time
- Lack of clear business case
- Understanding and willingness of employees
- Lack of guidance in terms of managing the process

Crucially, local and regional brokers reported that the key problems are engaging with business to build a pool of skills-sharing volunteers, and VCOs to source relevant opportunities. Our recommendations therefore aim to overcome these key barriers to enable an effective, sustainable system for fostering partnerships through local infrastructure organisations.

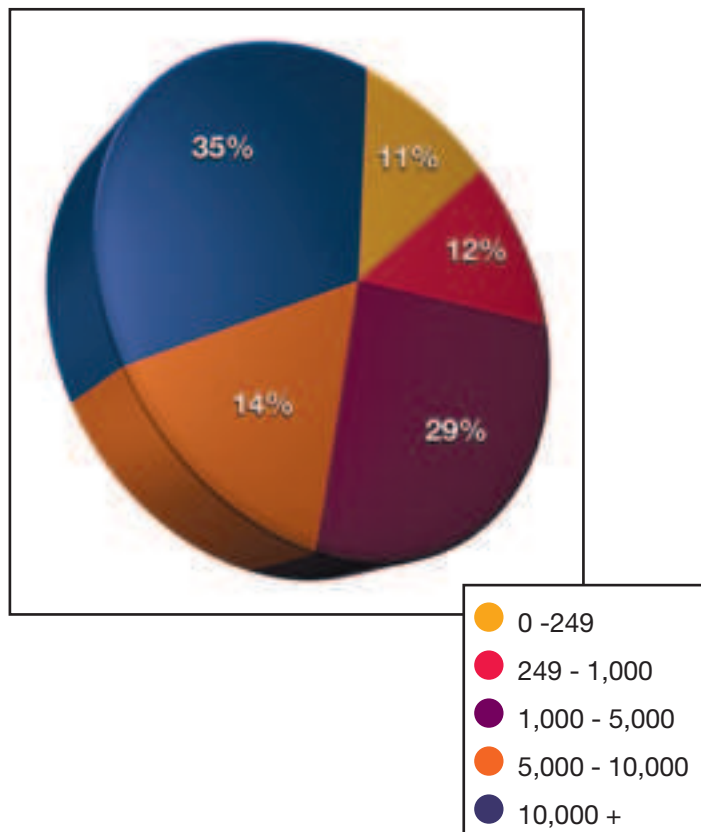


# 3. Findings

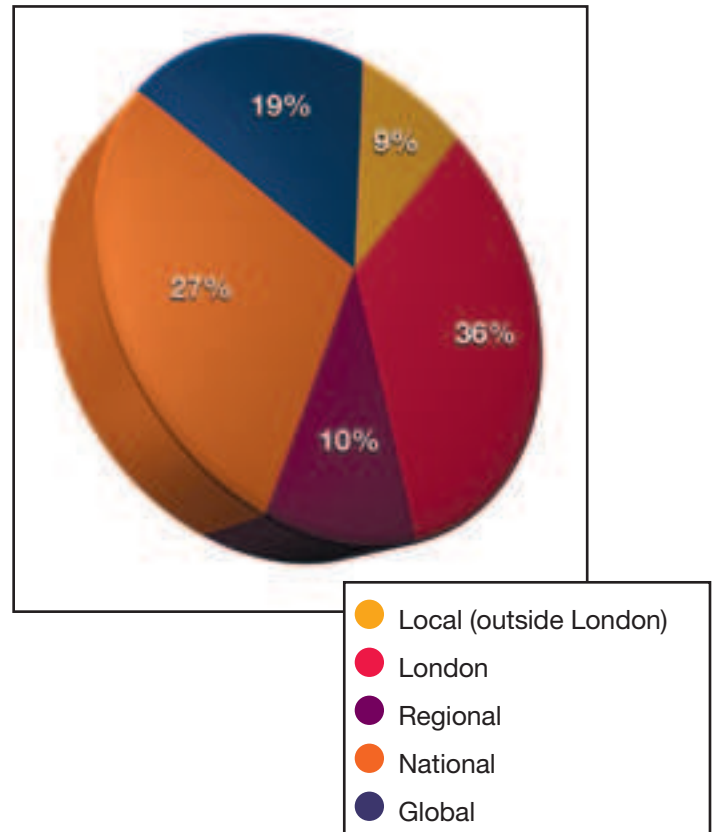
To establish the business case for VCOs and companies to be involved in skills-based volunteering across England, the surveys aimed to capture the views of a representative sample of organisations in terms of size as well as geographic location. The surveys also aimed to gather feedback from VCOs and companies that both do and do not have experience with regard to skills-based volunteering. To identify the existing and potential role of brokers across England, interviews were also aimed at independent specialist and sector-specific brokers operating nationally, locally and regionally, as well as local/regional infrastructure brokers that have a smaller, specific area within their remit.

## 3.1 The Business Case for Skills Based ESV for Employers

In addition to the nine in-depth company interviews that were carried out, 101 companies completed the online survey. Of these, 57 companies offer skills-based volunteering opportunities to their employees, whilst 44 do not. The distribution of companies according to their size (judged by number of employees) is as follows:



In terms of location, the profile of survey respondents breaks down as follows:



The distribution of respondents in terms of size and geography reflected our survey targets, with a combination of small, medium and large organisations operating locally, regionally and nationally/internationally.

The companies that responded for interviews were less diverse - very few local and regional companies based outside London would commit the time, or declined on the basis of the project not being relevant to their business. The in-depth interviews were consequently carried out with companies from a sample that is mainly internationally-operating, from around 1,300 to 155,000 staff, with just one company being a UK regional organisation, operating outside London through a base of 1,300 staff.

***There is clearly still a large body of businesses that remains unaware of how skills-based volunteering can benefit them within the context of the economic crisis, and within these organisations, a considerable pool of professional skills that could make a significant and sustainable difference to the voluntary sector.***



### 3.1.1 Why and how should businesses engage in skills based ESV?

Without businesses, the key resource – voluntarily donated professional skills, becomes yet another commodity that VCOs must pay for.

The inherent benefits of skills-based volunteering are also significant for companies, and provide a compelling business case for their engagement. **Participation in skills-based volunteering activities is especially relevant in the context of the current economic crisis, providing a greater return on investment than team challenges and arguably delivering greater and more sustainable impacts to the community.** These business benefits were identified through the stakeholder consultation process as:

- **Personal development** opportunities for employees. This leads to an up-skilled workforce, greater employee satisfaction, higher retention rates and increased morale in the longer term
- **Increased reputation and profile** in the community leading to longer term impacts like security in the local economy and building bridges between businesses and the community they operate in

Companies currently find partners for skills-based projects through three main channels:

- Work with existing VCO partners
- Use specialist brokers that may charge a significant fee to find VCO partners for skills-based volunteering.
- Direct approaches to VCOs whose cause aligns with the company's CR values

While the use of existing partners to source skills-based opportunities has benefits in terms of knowledge of the organisation and its cause, and perhaps also a good existing relationship with counterparts at the organisation, there are also significant opportunities to be exploited if the company widens its range of partners beyond existing relationships. A valuable opportunity is presented here to provide support direct to local VCOs at a level that will firmly establish the business as a cohesive force in the local community, tying together sectors to achieve sustainable change. These relationships can perhaps be better established by using brokers that have the knowledge and mechanisms to form these localised partnerships rather than national initiatives that may not have the same lasting effect on the sector.

**The use of brokers is encouraging as it signifies an acknowledgement of the value brokers can bring to a project with their expertise in finding a truly compatible match for skills-based volunteering.** At present, specialist brokers are preferred, with 46% of survey respondents indicating that if they were to engage

in skills-based volunteering in the future, a specialist broker (rather than a local/regional infrastructure broker) would help the process. Of the companies interviewed, 8 out of 10 used a specialist broker (although 2 of these applied to specialist law brokerages providing pro bono work for law firms). Companies that offer expertise like HR, IT or management skills have yet to exploit the opportunities offered by local/regional infrastructure brokers. Feedback from these brokers showed that they do not have ongoing relationships with companies to place volunteers, despite having unique knowledge of local issues and where skills-based volunteering can have the greatest effect, as well as long-standing links with local VCOs and public sector bodies that are getting increasingly involved in employer-supported skills-based volunteering.

It therefore appears that **addressing this 'gap' in interaction between companies and local/regional infrastructure brokers, could lead to significant progress in raising awareness of the value of skills-based volunteering and drive up capacity in the sector.**

### 3.1.2 What are the opportunities and challenges?: Summary

#### OPPORTUNITIES:

1. Personal/skills development for employees in the short term
2. Maximising value of volunteering – (e.g. increasing the experience and expertise of employees/project management time if a broker is engaged) in the context of the economic crisis
3. Employee retention and morale in the long term
4. Forging closer links with the community through employee volunteers
5. Enhanced reputation in the community

#### CHALLENGES:

1. Increasing employee engagement/motivation to participate
2. Lack of resource to maintain communication and manage the process with the VCO partner
3. Interpreting and meeting the needs of the VCO partner

**The opportunities clearly out-weigh the challenges when considering the business case for companies, for skills-based volunteering.** The challenges are predominantly process issues which we hope to address in phase 2. A majority of 84% of survey respondents reported that personal development was the key benefit for employee volunteers. If companies strategically use skills-based volunteering to drive their employee development

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programmes, they can exploit this opportunity for cost-cutting during the economic downturn, easing the pressure on the budget. In place of costly training schemes, volunteering can provide equally rich learning experiences and opportunities for employee volunteers to develop a number of skills relating to their area of expertise, along with broader assets like communication and interpersonal skills. This was echoed by the interviewees:

*‘Personal development is the key benefit. Training is important. We need to let the managers know the benefits to link it to the HR aspect. The flagship project sits centrally and this is about cash management which is appropriate for us as a financial institution. We have a responsibility to help people manage debt, for community as well as staff development’.* (Financial institution)

*‘Volunteering is a good way to develop experience since most people only get proper client interaction after about 2/3 years from qualifying. This is a way to get it earlier’.* (Law firm)

Linked to the opportunities for personal development and professional experience, skills-based volunteering also provides the chance for employees to act as ambassadors of the CR values of the company directly in the community. They are acting on behalf of the business to ensure the sustainability of the community through the support that the voluntary sector provides and are also given the unique opportunity to work directly with the VCO to tackle issues. This closer level of engagement also makes it easier to retain relationships in the longer term. The surveys supported the interview feedback in this respect, with 86.5% of companies that run skills-based programmes stating that their key motivation was the perceived benefits to their employees. **84% of companies stated that employee development was one of the main demonstrable outcomes of their skills-based programmes.**

Building positive perceptions of the company in the community factored as the next most significant opportunity through the company survey. 27% of companies reported that an enhanced reputation in the community is a key benefit of skills-based volunteering and 54% reported that it is a key way to communicate and actually ‘live’ the corporate responsibility values of the business in the community, which in the long term would improve the company’s reputation and standing among other local organisations.

*“Staff still picture spades and paintbrushes so more focus on team challenges – very different to day job and they can relax with their colleagues. This is good, but staff can often go to a charity and never actually come face to face with those who benefit. Businesses miss a trick in terms of introducing staff to local, relevant causes.”* National Bank

Having surveyed companies that engage in skills-based volunteering on the opportunities that it provides to businesses (in the context of the potential benefits to be gained), VCOs were also polled to gain an understanding of the perceived benefits from their perspective. **The perceived benefits to companies as suggested by VCOs were found to correlate with the key actual benefits reported by businesses**, which have been discussed above. 61% of VCOs rated employee development as a key benefit and 80% rated good reputation. This indicates that a good level of awareness already exists among VCOs, of what companies set out to gain from these initiatives, and this is therefore useful information for VCOs when approaching companies to secure support.

The survey results indicate a good overall success rate of partnerships, with 86.5% of companies considering their skills-based partnerships a success. This shows that for the vast majority of partners, the benefits and opportunities outweighed the challenges and significant value was gained from the resources invested. The lessons in good practice from these successful partnerships should now be used to identify how best to increase capacity in the sector to a much greater extent, at a local, regional and national level in England.

#### **Good practice includes:**

- Ensuring that needs and expectations are clearly articulated, agreed and managed by both partners
- Having regular and planned communication to steer the project according to objectives

Participants in the research also noted a number of key challenges that need to be overcome for best practice frameworks to be developed. The first and most significant challenge is willingness of employees to engage. 94% of companies reported that they offer time for their employees to volunteer; however, less than 10% of employees participate on average, in skills-based volunteering. Almost 20% of companies not active in skills-based volunteering feel that low uptake is a key barrier for them, and that they would not be able to engage their employees enough to make skills-based volunteering a worthwhile undertaking.

*“Given our approach on time to volunteer there is a tension sometimes between the ‘day job’ and volunteering; additionally employees themselves often want to do something different to their ‘day jobs’; they also sometimes need persuading that they have relevant, useful skills, and lastly, they often have a preconception of what volunteering is, already in their minds, which has to be challenged.”* (National company)

The majority of interview and survey respondents and many of the interviewed companies also cited resource as a key barrier. The main problem is the resource used when successful matches are not achieved first time round:

*(Skills-based volunteering is...) "time intensive to set up and can be difficult to sustain unless the two people involved hit it off. Sometimes the voluntary sector is not clear about what they want and then the volunteer feels they can't meet expectations. Sometimes the voluntary sector person realises the volunteer can't provide what they want but are embarrassed to bring the partnership to an end."* (London-based international company)

This is therefore a key part of the rationale for encouraging greater interaction between brokers and companies, since the brokers can save time, resource and ultimately money for the company by providing a tailored service to match with suitable VCO partners.

A third key challenge for companies is interpreting and meeting the needs of the VCO partner. Feedback from interviews included comments such as:

*"I think that voluntary organisations frequently need help and to think through clearly what they need, how best to access it and what they need to do to get the best result."* (London-based international company)

One company that participated in the interviews actually chose to use skills-based volunteering to address this problem, recognising the value of using project management expertise to help VCOs shape their own proposals to companies for professional volunteers, and to raise their profile in the media:

*"Our communications team had about 30 local charities come into the business and they just spent a day with them...so identifying who your stakeholders are, what are your key messages, what is it exactly you are trying to say, what's your story and how you would then sell that into local media."*

(International company based outside London)

In this respect, a local broker with knowledge of local issues would be able to help VCOs compile a comprehensive assessment of what they require from companies in terms of professional support to help their development. The brokers will also be well placed to determine which companies would be the best kind of match for these smaller organisations, giving the opportunity for smaller companies who may themselves, be at an earlier stage in terms of skills-based volunteering, the opportunities to make a significant impact with their offering, since the needs of the VCO in these cases may perhaps be less developed.

**"I think that voluntary organisations frequently need help and to think through clearly what they need, how best to access it and what they need to do to get the best result."**

### 3.1.3 What are the key issues for a successful skills-based partnership?

The challenges identified in the previous section inform the needs that a company would have in order to conduct a successful skills-based partnership. The results from the survey and interviews suggest that more skills-based volunteering would happen if companies were aware of the exact needs of the community organisations. 93% of companies who don't run skills-based volunteering programmes reported this to be the case, and much of the feedback from the interviews related to the problems around getting a clear brief from the VCO on what services it needs and for what purpose.

The key need is therefore for a brokerage service with local/regional knowledge of the infrastructure and how businesses can most effectively interact with VCOs and local government on community issues.

Brokers could also save companies the administration costs of finding appropriate partners, maintaining contact with their VCO partner and communicating with employees to inspire them to participate in skills-based volunteering. A broker that could help manage the partnership for its duration would be a fundamental success factor and could also reduce the need for a full-time dedicated person at each organisation to run the project. 27% of companies rated a dedicated representative as a key success factor through the survey, and did not recognise that a broker could reduce the need for such a significant resource so the project offers the opportunity to raise the profile of brokers and the value they can potentially have in raising capacity in the voluntary sector, around skills-based volunteering. Brokerage can also ensure best practice is shared in setting up and managing new partnerships.



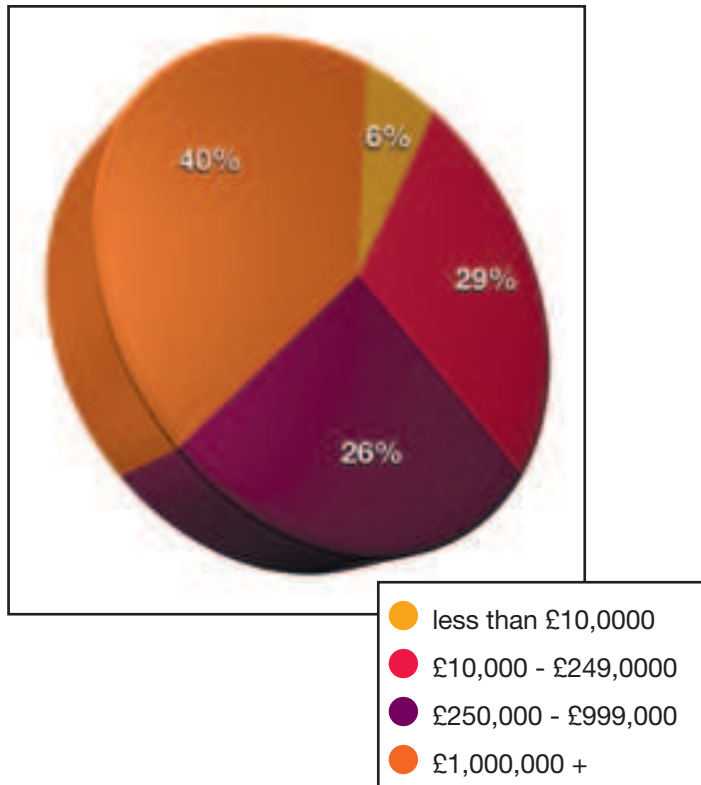
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## 3.2 The Business Case for Skills Based ESV for VCOs

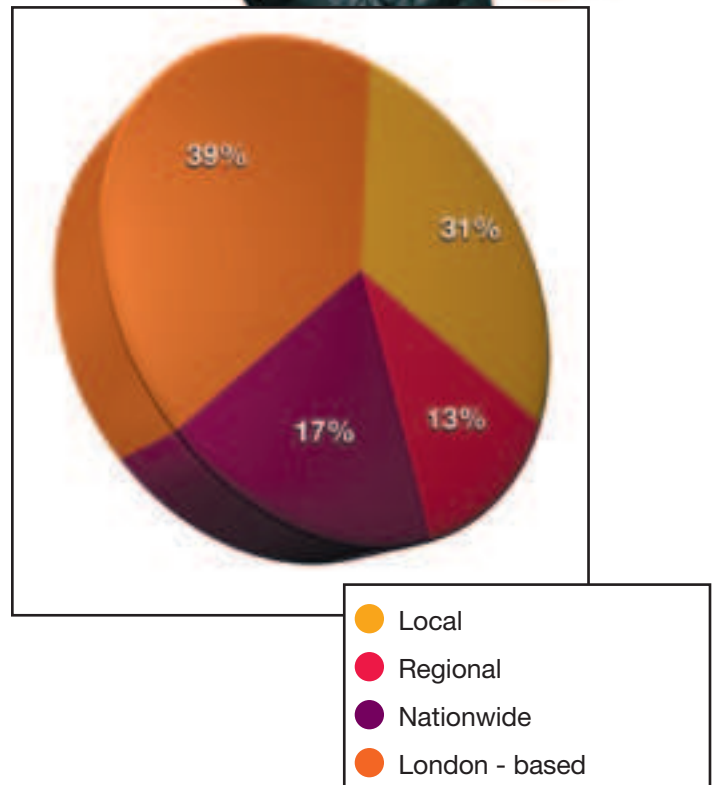
In addition to the feedback from the nine VCO interviews, 70 VCOs completed the online survey. Of these, 36 VCOs receive skills-based support and 34 do not. The size distribution of respondents was judged according to the Charity Commission classifications, which are based on income:

- Small income: less than £10,000
- Medium income: £10,000 -£249,999
- Large income: £250,000 - £999,999
- Very large income: £1,000,000+

Our survey sample is therefore represented as follows:



In terms of location, the survey respondent representation is as follows:



The sample of VCO respondents was therefore slightly less well-balanced than the sample of companies, with less representation from very small VCOs than aimed for. However, with hindsight this can be expected, since the interviews showed that time and resource are tight for the larger VCOs - so it is reasonable to conclude that the smaller ones would have even less to spend on any activities aside from service delivery.

VCOs were also hard to engage for the in-depth interviews, but a fairly representative sample was secured, with one UK/International organisation, 5 regional/local and 2 London-based organisations.





### 3.2.1 Why and how should VCOs engage in skills based ESV?

The sector is generally service-delivery focused and there is often little funding and resource for the plethora of charitable organisations of varying size and scope to develop and execute strategic plans for growth. VCOs can benefit greatly from working in partnership with business to utilise the professional skills that businesses have to offer. By receiving skills from business and using this resource to strategically develop the organisation and strengthen the sector, VCOs are further fulfilling a responsibility shared with business – to support the stability and sustainability of their community.

The key benefits to be gained from taking on company employees in a skills-based volunteering capacity were identified by the survey respondents (that both do and don't receive skills-based volunteers) as:

- **Access to professional services** which they would otherwise be unable to afford to develop the infrastructure of the VCO and improve capacity and delivery
- **Long term partnerships** with companies that could lead to further opportunities with the company or the company's associates in future
- **Raising awareness** of the VCO's cause among employees, who will potentially share this information with family and friends, and increase support for the organisation
- **Bringing in a new perspective on the issues they face**

These benefits corresponded with those perceived to be the main ones by the company survey respondents. As mentioned above, this apparent awareness of what the other partner seeks to gain from a skills-based volunteering project exists. VCOs can build on this knowledge to form an appropriate offering to companies when pitching for support. This level of understanding is also necessary to enable both the company and the VCO to run an effective project that fulfils both organisations' objectives to the greatest extent. The pilot projects for phase 2 aim to facilitate partnerships to ensure communication and help the company and VCO clarify their own needs, expectations and objectives, as well as understand those of the other partner.

The rationale for increasing the role of the broker is supported even further when considering how to run the pilots most effectively to tackle the issues faced by VCOs. The surveys and interviews show that VCOs overall have particularly low awareness of how brokers can help foster successful skills-based partnerships. None of those surveyed identified brokerage services as of potential value when fostering a skills-based volunteering partnership in

future, and only a few of the VCO interviewees commented on the role that team-challenge focused brokers such as Business in the Community or Timebank or CSV might play. This indicates that awareness of the types of brokers available and the roles that they can play is very limited in the charitable sector. None of the VCOs mentioned the role of local/regional infrastructure brokers, which shows that this resource is again, under-utilised by the groups that could potentially benefit most from consulting them.

A few VCOs were aware of the role that venture philanthropists could play, having made a strategic proposal for support to one. The greater awareness of the role of venture philanthropists could perhaps be due to the nature of the guaranteed support that is offered. Typically, venture philanthropists will donate a cash amount as well as professional assistance over a period of years, and for the purpose of achieving the strategic goals that have been worked out with the VCO. This provides financial security and prospects for sustainable growth and development to the VCO, as well as links with an established, professional body, usually with excellent private sector links. VCOs commented on the value of this kind of sustained support, but also noted the considerable extent of the due diligence process.

The interview with the Impetus Trust revealed that it has helped to make a considerable difference to the development of a number of voluntary sector organisations through a very strategic programme of funding and expertise. VCOs must already have achieved a certain level of development, and be showing potential for growth to be eligible for support from Impetus. There is a focus on combining skills-based volunteering as well as financial support to help the charity, and the Impetus Trust spends considerable time finding the right professional volunteers to match with opportunities. However, providing this level of support means that the Impetus Trust can only take on four new charities a year, so this kind of venture philanthropy offering is not yet widely available. This leaves an opportunity for companies to meet the needs of the voluntary sector through skills-based volunteering. If projects are approached in an appropriately strategic way, developed according to each partners' objectives, capacity and success in this area could be greatly increased.

Encouragingly, 76.2% of VCO respondents to the survey rated the partnerships a success, indicating that there are models for good practice once an appropriate match has been made. The challenge, however, lies in fostering these matches in the first place, which is where the role of a broker is fundamental.

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When considering how to engage in skills based volunteering, the surveys and interviews showed that many VCOs do not proactively seek skills-based volunteering in a strategic way, unless it is for highly specialised assistance (for example, legal). Most VCOs reported that they have been approached by companies that want to help them, and the support was provided following initial meetings between the VCO and the company to ascertain whether the match would be a viable one. Often, the VCOs felt that the help was welcome and useful, but did not make a particularly significant impact. In addition, many felt that there were other benefits to be gained from maintaining the partnership, although for one reason or another, the mechanisms and resources were not in place to do this. Therefore, when considering how VCOs might engage most effectively in skills-based volunteering, again the importance of the broker as an intermediary is highlighted. They can help manage partnerships to find good matches and overcome the challenges discussed above, as well as help the partners identify and clarify what they want, and what value they can offer to the initiative.

With respect to this point, **many businesses commented that it is difficult to manage the expectations of VCOs in these partnerships because sometimes they are unaware of their own needs.** This will inevitably be a greater challenge for many smaller local VCOs that do not have the capacity or resources for long-term business development as yet. This represents a significant opportunity for smaller local companies to contribute skills at a basic managerial level that both partners are able to accommodate. This level of help, perhaps focusing on setting up basic HR or IT systems at the VCO, can have as significant an impact as a broader, more specialist skills-based project, because it allows the VCO to make steps towards having an effective internal management system. In the long run this will increase the efficiency of the VCO and leave more resource available for business development and growth.

The survey results also indicated that VCOs are already looking to secure support in the long and short term. This is encouraging, since it indicates that there is an understanding of the value of both kinds of support depending on the needs of the VCO and the capacity it has to accommodate the skilled volunteers for a period of time. This is also important because different VCOs will have different priorities in terms of need as they continue to operate through the recession. The smaller VCOs might need help in the short term to help them shape an offering for companies, or recruit relevant people into business development roles. Larger VCOs may on the other hand, have the resource to take on longer term volunteers to

help shape a strategic marketing plan in the community or take on some of the legal or IT development requirements that larger initiatives might entail. The results of the survey showed that short-term help is more in demand, perhaps reflecting a relative lack of experience and desire to ‘test’ out the potential of skills-based volunteering through shorter-term initiatives before more significant commitments are made. For companies, a mixture of long and short term support is offered, with an overall preference for longer-term projects where possible since this aligns with CR values of sustainable support in the community.

Sourcing appropriate partners and ensuring that key objectives like raising awareness of a cause or maintaining relationships for future benefit were identified time and again through the interviews and surveys. Companies and VCOs both suggested that ideally, having a dedicated business development representative on both sides would be of great benefit. This was the most commonly cited (47%) factor for success.

*“There could have been a spinoff as well which wasn’t exploited at the time.”* (Small local charity)

Once again, the viability of a project to develop skills-based brokerage services is highlighted, since the brokers could fulfil the roles that the partners do not have the resource for, helping to manage the relationship, ensure objectives are met and that communication is maintained.

### 3.2.2 What are the opportunities and challenges?: Summary

#### OPPORTUNITIES:

- Accessing professional skills to help the growth of the organisation and strengthening of the sector
- Up-skilling the workforce of the VCO through skills transfer
- Access to the company’s associates
- Maintained relationship with private sector for future opportunities to work together
- Increasing awareness of the VCO’s cause(s)
- Access to private sector support when companies may have less budget to donate cash

#### CHALLENGES:

- Lack of time and resource
- Identifying and communicating needs
- Maintaining communication and understanding the expectation and needs of the company partner

## When considering how to engage in skills based volunteering, the surveys and interviews showed that many VCOs do not proactively seek skills-based volunteering in a strategic way,

For VCOs, there are significant challenges to be overcome when running a skills-based volunteering programme, although the benefits to be gained are great if a project can be implemented effectively. The surveys and interviews revealed an overall sense that the challenges are a bigger issue for VCOs, although the benefits are acknowledged. Perhaps this is because skills-based volunteering represents different things to each partner. For companies, it is a way to fulfil a responsibility, which fortunately also delivers a range of valuable benefits back to the business. On the other hand, for VCOs, skills-based volunteering represents a means to meet an area of need that the VCO can not otherwise afford to address, and as an outcome of the process, the donors can also receive benefits.

VCOs also recognised that there were ‘secondary’ benefits to be gained by their organisations from skills-based partnership, such as access to the company’s associates and raised awareness of their cause (as discussed previously in section 3.2.1) but the challenges were clearly felt to currently be significant enough for most VCOs to not consider skills-based volunteering a strategic priority as yet.

The surveys showed that a lack of resource in terms of time and people with the right expertise to manage the partnership was perceived to be the key challenge to overcome. 40% also reported that they have a limited understanding about the process as a whole, and would have no clear picture of what challenges they would have to prepare for. Linked to this, 16.7% of survey respondents stated that they would not know where to start in terms of engaging business, which again supports the proposition that brokers need to be a more central part of these partnerships on both a local and regional basis. Brokers can source appropriate support for the VCO’s capacity and needs. This avoids the risk of the company sending in volunteers that are not prepared or briefed on the level of help that the VCO needs, and the VCO being overwhelmed, trying to accommodate them. Brokers can help to avoid situations such as this:

*‘It is too difficult as we are a small charity and aside from only having a small need for professional services, I think that a volunteer would just take up too much staff time in terms of induction since they are effectively a new member of staff’* (Small local charity)

*‘It is a very big challenge for a charity to accommodate skills-based volunteering unless the volunteers are filling a post or is helping with a strategic initiative like an ad campaign. The smaller the charity the bigger the resource requirement to accommodate another volunteer for this kind of role is.’* (Small national charity)

Brokers can also help maintain communication between the partners for effective management of the project. This is a key factor, since over a quarter (28.6%) of VCOs that do engage in skills-based volunteering, reported that companies lack commitment to the partnership, which could stem from a mutual lack of understanding about each others’ needs and expectations – a challenge that is hard to address unless a third party can get involved to help steer the project. A local/regional infrastructure broker recognised this issue, commenting:

*“Sometimes volunteers don’t understand what the limits are. They take on a role and make it bigger”*

If these key challenges can be overcome, then there is scope to take advantage of the number of opportunities provided by skills-based volunteering. Primarily, this is access to professional skills which is fundamental during the economic crisis, when companies are providing fewer financial contributions and offering alternative means of support:

*“The benefits are exposure to a more commercially-oriented way of thinking, and mainly getting stuff done that you can’t afford to resource for.”* (UK/International charity)

This comment shows that there are also opportunities to be exploited in terms of assimilating the way the company operates, and taking on board the commercially-focused way of working that the skills-based volunteer might have. The importance of skills-transfer is therefore brought to light, since skills-based volunteering offers not only the opportunity for volunteers to provide their expertise, but also to transfer it into the organisation so that progress can be sustained even after the volunteer has completed the placement and left the charity. The potential for up-skilling VCO employees or simply exposing them to a different way of tackling a problem which they could potentially learn from is highly important. If the opportunities for skills-transfer are not fully recognised and exploited, the objective of achieving sustainability through the project is not fully realised. A few charities commented on how skills-based volunteers had provided help which in the short term fulfilled a need (like tackling a problem with an IT system), but in the long term only led to more expenditure when (for example, when the problem recurred). It was felt that this could have been avoided if a focus of the volunteering was skills-transfer, to enable the VCO employees to retain professional expertise for future use.



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### 3.2.3 What are the key issues for a successful skills-based partnership?

Having discussed the challenges and opportunities above, it is evident that the key 'need' for VCOs is in fact, the identification of their own needs and objectives for engaging skills-based volunteering. An awareness of the value that can be gained from receiving professional support from companies in this way – and crucially, maintaining the relationship for future benefit, is also fundamental. There is the opportunity here to embrace cross-sector partnerships for mutual benefit, and make the process more efficient through the use of a local/regional broker with local knowledge and affordable schemes. By using local/regional brokers to match and manage the process, there is also the potential to increase the impact of the volunteering, as the more important local needs will perhaps be better served, than if a national or sector-specific broker was used. However, companies and VCOs seem to be currently unaware of the value of including brokers, and perhaps do not want to make the process more complex by introducing another party. However, it would seem that given the scope of the challenges that exist in terms of managing the relationship effectively without a broker, once this has been overcome as part of a project, it will yield greater benefits later.

The main barrier appears to be a strategic approach to the process of skills-based volunteering, since VCOs often do not have the same pressure as companies to report on specific KPIs in this area. Brokers can therefore help VCOs to develop a more strategic approach for skills-based projects involving objectives and targets if they do not already have them in place. This will help them in the long term to maintain mutual control of the project along with the company partners.

**There is the opportunity here to embrace cross-sector partnerships for mutual benefit, and make the process more efficient through the use of a local/regional broker with local knowledge and affordable schemes.**

### 3.3 The Business Case for Brokering Skills Based ESV

As this discussion has shown so far, brokers are a fundamental, but as yet under-utilised part of the employer-supported skills-based volunteering process. The majority of brokers focus on team challenge employer-supported volunteering because this is where the demand from companies lies to meet community investment and volunteering targets. There are also many VCOs that require hands-on assistance through team challenges, so this area of volunteering is well-served. However, *there is an increasing recognition of the value of skills-based volunteering, particularly during the current economic crisis.* There are numerous challenges to be overcome in terms of managing and sustaining these partnerships to take full advantage of the opportunities. Brokers, with the exception of a few, are not currently running established affordable and therefore sustainable skills-based volunteering brokerage programmes, despite having the expertise to play a key role in increasing uptake of these opportunities and building capacity in the voluntary sector. Therefore, it is necessary to run pilot projects that can showcase good practice and encourage the development of more skills-based brokers. Interviews were conducted with brokers to assess their experiences, and their perceptions on the role that they could play in future.

The seven infrastructure and eleven specialist brokers interviewed were contacted through Volunteering England. They were a mixture of brokers that both do and do not broker skills-based volunteering partnerships. The specialist brokers focused on a particular area of volunteering, for example, Mediatrust, which focuses on media expertise and CC Works or CSV, which focus primarily on team challenges. The local/regional infrastructure brokers were picked to span as wide an area as possible outside London, and two local/regional infrastructure brokers from in and around London were contacted for their views. Overall, knowledge and practice of brokerage for skills-based partnerships was very low in comparison with brokerage of team challenge activities. There was also very little feedback about mentoring and senior executive volunteers in skills-based roles, indicating that there is a pool of expertise as yet untapped.



### 3.3.1 Why and how should brokers engage in skills based ESV?

The in-depth interviews revealed that the specialist brokers have a broad understanding of the challenges and success factors of skills-based volunteering relationships. They also represent an important intermediary link between the local private, public and voluntary sector and have knowledge of the issues critical to each party. A broker could therefore match companies most effectively with voluntary organisations that would best use the expertise on offer to tackle the more important issues affecting society, as well as providing a channel where appropriate, to access support from other organisations such as public sector bodies. Brokers are also in a unique position to help raise awareness of the value of skills-based volunteering to companies and VCOs on a local and regional basis, which will help to ensure the sustainability of the local economy in the context of the economic crisis. Local and regional brokers could also act in a signposting role to bring specialist expertise to VCO's if needed. However, having identified these key reasons for why local and regional brokers are a vital resource that could help increase uptake of opportunities and the success of partnerships, this research shows that local and regional brokers in particular, are not widely used by businesses extensively outside London to source local opportunities for skills-based volunteering.

**Brokers are also in a unique position to help raise awareness of the value of skills-based volunteering to companies and VCOs on a local and regional basis, which will help to ensure the sustainability of the local economy in the context of the economic crisis.**

### 3.3.2 What are the opportunities and challenges?: Summary

#### OPPORTUNITIES:

- Some local and regional brokers are already developing basic structures for promoting and measuring impacts of skills-based volunteering placements
- Local and regional brokers are already meeting with local authorities and businesses to develop practice and research the opportunities
- There is a broad range of skills-sets that brokers can source for VCOs to exploit if awareness is raised
- Local need can potentially be better served through local/regional infrastructure brokers

#### CHALLENGES:

- Employees are not offering the full range of skills they could be
- VCOs are only requesting limited skills and do not realise the full range of skills on offer
- The process of brokering skills-based volunteering placements is complex and requires significant resource in terms of time and close interaction with partners
- Lack of commitment and understanding between partners
- Targets have to be realistic in order to measure success objectively

#### Specialist/national brokers

The specialist brokers interviewed responded that they are asked by VCOs to source a relatively limited range of skills. Feedback from brokers indicated that only a minority of total volunteering requests are for skills-based volunteering. National brokers reported that requests are mainly for CV writing or employability workshops, and HR services. As yet, the opportunities for wider IT, financial management, mentoring and trustee support seem to be unexploited, indicating that there is a gap in the awareness of the full scope of value that skills-based volunteers have to offer.

Specialist brokers, like the other stakeholders interviewed, also reported that a key challenge lies in smaller VCOs not knowing what they want, making it difficult to broker a suitable partnership. In addition, companies often are not very forthcoming with volunteers for skills-based work because employees may not realise that their skills are valuable or know what skills-sets they have to offer. Therefore, not only is there a need for better awareness and engagement among smaller VCOs, but also between companies and their employee volunteers. The brokers also commented that awareness needs to be raised within companies more around the positive impacts of skills-based volunteering. Businesses currently favour

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team challenges because this helps them meet target volunteer numbers. However, if the focus was shifted onto the value of the impacts, rather than the numbers involved in volunteering, it would make the initiative more meaningful and sustainable. The key opportunity, as was also identified by many other stakeholders, was employee development and the chance for career progression:

*“The civil service is hierarchical so employees can get leadership opportunities at an early stage in their career through this programme”* (London-based broker operating placing long-term civil service placements)

However, there is a key challenge to overcome here, in balancing resources within the companies. Even if senior management is behind a volunteering initiative in principle, middle management can often be reluctant to authorise time for employee volunteering because of the effect on the achievement of business targets:

*“Any kind of volunteering is hard to implement – management buy-in is hard to get from all our separate companies and total Board buy-in is very hard. Everyone sees the benefit of volunteering, but you have to cram in extra hours to make up the time you are out of office volunteering, which isn’t ideal.”* (International company)

The value of skills-based volunteering needs to be effectively demonstrated so that companies that have the resource of expertise within their workforce can justify awarding the time away from their jobs, to employees who are willing to participate.

### Local/regional infrastructure brokers

The local and regional infrastructure brokers that were interviewed had considerably less experience in terms of skills-based volunteering. However, the discussions revealed that, on a number of levels, they would be well placed to run skills-based programmes. All had an awareness of the processes and value of skills-based volunteering, and expressed interest in participating in future initiatives (if they were not already engaging local authorities and businesses to do so).

A challenge identified by many local/regional infrastructure brokers, was that partnerships are often brokered according to the objectives of the volunteer, rather than according to the joint needs of the volunteer and the community. The brokers reported that this is because volunteering coordinators are mainly part-time, and no core funding is provided to pay for them to build a skills-based brokerage offering that addresses local need effectively. The only opportunities that they are offered to proactively

find out about what is actually needed by the voluntary sector (and promote this to businesses), is through collaboration with local authorities. It is therefore important that brokers take a more proactive stance in finding out what is needed in the community, and promoting the related volunteering opportunities – and the potential value the experience will yield for the employees and thus the employer - to local companies.

Therefore, many of these infrastructure brokers have made key steps in terms of promoting and monitoring the impacts of individual skill-based volunteering placements, which puts them in a good position to develop as a main channel for successful local and regional skills-based ESV brokerage. One local/regional infrastructure broker outside London has already developed a system to interview volunteers at specific stages during their volunteering placement to ensure progress alongside their objectives for the placement. This feedback is all reported back to the city council, as well as being used to monitor the success of the brokerage strategy and the areas for improvement. Another local/regional infrastructure broker has chosen to focus on strategies for succession planning having noticed that turnover in the voluntary sector is currently high as personal liability is becoming more of an issue during these tougher economic times. This same broker has used these findings to approach potential volunteers in a different way, noting that in order to keep executive posts like trusteeships and treasurers as manageable as possible for skilled professionals, the boundaries of the role need to be clearly set, and that work needs to be done to **“de-sensitize (volunteers) from the potential barriers”**. Yet another broker is focusing on how much time can realistically be donated by employee volunteers (bearing in mind the resource limitations that the VCO might have) in order to shape their programme more effectively. This shows that **infrastructure brokers are already to a great extent proactively addressing the challenges associated with skills-based volunteering** – which at its very core is about building capacity, both of opportunities, and willing volunteers.

The lack of skilled volunteers represents the main challenge expressed by the local infrastructure interviewees. Brokers noted that the range of skill-sets requested by VCOs can often differ to what volunteers offer. If local infrastructure brokers are currently running programmes according to the needs of volunteers, then there is an opportunity to diversify and encourage volunteers to provide the services that VCOs need and that will make the biggest impact. Marketing and administrative assistance was a main request cited by two of the local/regional infrastructure brokers, but some brokers also cited higher-level

**“Sometimes volunteers don’t understand what the limits are. They take on a role, make it bigger, burn out, leave, and then the next person can’t possibly maintain the requirements that the role now entails”**

professional help which is required over the long term, such as mentoring, trusteeships and treasurer positions. These positions are in high demand but often the long term nature and the level of personal responsibility attached to these roles puts off potential volunteers. Linked to this, a broker commented that many local VCOs have found these positions so hard to fill that they have stopped asking for board members and trustees because they just assume the position won’t be filled.

*“Sometimes volunteers don’t understand what the limits are. They take on a role, make it bigger, burn out, leave, and then the next person can’t possibly maintain the requirements that the role now entails”* (Local/regional infrastructure broker based outside London).

Further challenges identified by local infrastructure brokers included reservations about working with employers because commitment is lacking. They felt that a greater awareness of the value of skills-based volunteering needs to be cultivated among employees to encourage a greater recognition of the value that they have to offer, and benefits to gain through skills-based volunteering. The prevailing perception from local and regional brokers, was therefore that the key priority is building capacity in the sector to help show the range of skills on offer and encourage a general recognition of the value (and therefore increased uptake) of skills-based volunteering.

*“We would love to be involved in something like this but in reality it can be a case of employees not wanting to do their day-job in another context, even if it is good for the company and its impacts in the community”* (Local/regional infrastructure broker based outside London).



### 3.3.3 What are the key issues for a successful skills-based partnership?

The main ‘need’ in the sector is for increased capacity. The stakeholder analysis provides a compelling business case for skills-based volunteering based on the value it can deliver for both partners. However, it appears that team challenges remain the popular method of volunteering as it helps businesses meet volunteering number targets and provides an opportunity for employees to make a short-term positive impact through hands-on activities that get them away from their desk. ***However, the economic crisis has put pressure on the availability of cash donations, and skills-based volunteering is an effective way to fulfil some of the needs of the VCO on a pro bono basis, which they may otherwise have had to pay for.***

Brokerage services are a fundamental mechanism for matching partners successfully and can also play a vital role in promoting skills-based volunteering to businesses, employees and the charitable sector. There is a need to increase the number of brokers that focus on achieving this. Specialist brokers have the strategies in place to run volunteering matching programmes but have associated costs and more expertise in brokering team challenges for companies. This leaves open an ideal opportunity to develop the expertise of local/regional infrastructure brokers to focus on skills-based volunteering - keeping in mind the potential for linkage to local authority initiatives and funding, to help push forward the volunteering agenda.

However, if local infrastructure brokers are to take a lead in brokering skills-based partnerships, there are a range of key needs that have to be met. Most volunteering coordinator roles are part time, so a proper evaluation of the needs of the community and what can be done to develop sustainable practice in skills-based volunteering, seems to rarely happen strategically. With more people in place to tailor skills-based schemes, there is more chance of businesses realising the value that local/regional infrastructure brokers can bring to a cross-sector partnership. This in turn, will hopefully encourage more of them to build pools of skills-based volunteers internally and use local/regional infrastructure brokers to source appropriate opportunities for them. The individual taking on the role of developing links with businesses, local government and VCOs will have to be trained in measuring impacts and managing projects to meet the demands that will inevitably be put upon them by businesses in this respect. Local/regional brokers can therefore help to create the framework for measurement of skills-based volunteering in collaboration with the partners.

If local/regional infrastructure brokers are to be focused upon, the lack of core funding for the necessary positions also needs to be addressed as a key barrier. Local/regional

### 3. Findings

infrastructure brokers considered this one of the main barriers to be overcome, commenting that funding and capacity building – both in terms of specialist business development/volunteer coordinator roles at the broker itself, and in terms of actual skilled volunteers to carry out the service delivery side. Since strategic approaches to skills-based volunteering do not exist at many brokers, funding can be hard to secure, and so the importance of a funded, successful model that will encourage local authorities or business to support the broker and invest in this service is vital.

One issue that was raised in many of the interviews with local/regional brokers was the importance of location. Initiatives to drive capacity in terms of skills-based volunteering will simply not be viable in certain areas. Some brokers reported no experience of employer-supported skills-based volunteering because they operate in very rural areas, so local branches of businesses have very few staff:

*“What works in a larger town or city with large companies and good transport, won’t work in a rural setting such as ours. Our local RBS has only about 10-15 employees and NatWest has around 3 or 4 so we would struggle to get something meaningful and coherent.”* (Local infrastructure broker)

When the brokers were asked what they thought would work to increase uptake, responses showed a general recognition of the value of databases and jobs boards (for example, Do-It). However, it was felt that because of the perceived challenges that currently affect levels of uptake, the involvement of an interim organisation that could help manage the whole process would therefore be ideal. Public databases would therefore serve to promote the opportunities effectively, while brokers actually facilitated successful matches.

**Since strategic approaches to skills-based volunteering do not exist at many brokers, funding can be hard to secure, and so the importance of a funded, successful model that will encourage local authorities or business to support the broker and invest in this service is vital**

Specialist brokers also noted that building membership schemes where there is trust and support in an established network of peers is important. Members would also be able to get particularly good value for money from the membership fee to a broker, because it covers ongoing support rather than a one-off activity like a team challenge. This would be of great benefit in terms of demonstrating the impacts and value of the investment to the business during the recession.

*“Because membership is 12-15K depending on size - this buys 10 team challenges and as many skills sharing opportunities as they can take”* (London-based local/regional infrastructure broker)

Only one local/regional infrastructure broker (based in London) demonstrated a model developed specifically to take advantage of this, which currently works well for many businesses in Central London.

*“We don’t offer team challenges – membership buys five days of consultancy support. All placements are skills based and high impact”.* (London-based local/regional infrastructure broker)

Other key needs identified by brokers included focusing on particular issues local to the partners, which eases facilitation, and involving senior management. This was considered particularly important, since they can inspire and drive the rest of the workforce by example, as well as communicating the messages of the long-term value of participating in skills-based projects over team challenges.





# 4. Recommendations

## 4.1 Overview


The stakeholder feedback and background research in phase 1 demonstrated the urgent need for capacity building, particularly outside London. Corporate Citizenship proposes that while it is important to increase the number of employees engaging in skills-based volunteering, first the number of effective skills-based brokers with a sustainable system for creating matches should be addressed. If there are more brokers carrying out this service effectively in appropriate locations, they can serve the role of helping business communicate the value to employees, and can source inspiring and valuable placements that will drive up enthusiasm for participation.

Phase 1 was conducted to gather feedback on the process and practice of skills-based volunteering that could inform the pilot projects recommendations for phase 2. These pilot initiatives will increase awareness, uptake and sustainability of skills-based volunteering. Our research showed that local infrastructure brokers, despite having inherent benefits in terms of their position in the community, do not currently play a significant role in brokering skills-based employer-supported volunteering relationships.

Outside London, local/regional infrastructure brokers reported that they rarely have structured and ongoing relationships with the local businesses in their community. In contrast, businesses are using specialist brokers to source team challenges as well as skills-based opportunities, or running skills-based programmes through existing partners or in response to direct requests for help – even if these programmes may not necessarily be delivering the most effective results. Inside London, there are more successful skills-brokerage schemes run by local/regional infrastructure brokers, including the Time and Talents initiative or City Action, which work particularly well, delivering significant numbers of skills-based volunteers into the community each year.

When it comes to smaller and medium-sized organisations, it seems that the value of skills-based volunteering as yet needs to be recognised by senior executives. Businesses of this size tend to engage in fundraising and match-funding instead of skills-sharing activities, and similarly, smaller VCOs and community groups do not recognise the role that skills-based volunteering could play in their growth. They continue to focus on seeking funding over professional skills to try and develop their capacity to manage work.

The success of phase 2 will rest partly on the effective use of good practice models currently run by brokers located in and around London. In addition, existing resources like toolkits and training guidance will be reviewed and updated – for example, those already developed by Volunteering England. This is crucial for the sustainability of the projects beyond phase 2, as the toolkits will enable local/regional infrastructure brokers to run appropriately tailored projects that will yield the necessary success rates to attract more companies, VCOs and potentially local public bodies with available community budgets to fund and support the schemes moving forward. Partnerships will also need to be developed with local consortia and other community organisations where there is the potential to use their expertise and resources to drive and develop the projects to meet targets.



**The success of phase 2 will rest partly on the effective use of good practice models currently run by brokers located in and around London.**

# 4. Recommendations

## 4.2 Remit of pilot projects

The objective of Phase 2 is to test out practical models for facilitating uptake, and with the findings of this report in mind, Corporate Citizenship proposes that three pilot projects involving local/regional infrastructure brokers are run at three strategic locations nationwide.

As this report has shown, local and regional infrastructure brokers take up a unique position in the local community and have the potential to execute successful skills-based volunteering matching schemes because:

- They have links in the community with businesses, other brokerage services, local authorities and local VCOs
- Many of them have mechanisms in place for measuring and reporting impacts because of demands made by the local authorities
- They have the potential to run cheaper brokerage services for skills-based volunteering
- Some national brokers have less awareness of the value of skills-based volunteering since their offering is focused on team challenges

### Critical success factors include:

- The employment of an appropriate person with experience of building relationships with businesses and VCOs, and who has project management skills to work strategically towards the project targets
- The realistic design of project time frames, taking into account factors like time taken to employ and induct Business Partnership Coordinators as well as time required to promote initiatives before targets can be worked towards
- Realistic targets that take into account setting-up periods for the projects, during which time, progress against targets will be minimal
- The effective engagement of businesses who also recognise the need to increase employee uptake skills-based opportunities
- Effective project management to maintain communication between the parties
- Securing the support of the local offices of large organisations, already engaged in skills-sharing volunteering to help kick-start the projects effectively
- The appropriate and effective use of the mentors' expertise
- Effective use of existing toolkits and guidance to manage projects
- Development of appropriate partnerships with other local agencies/consortia for specialist expertise, contacts and resources
- Effective use of expertise and resources of local voluntary community consortia/agencies if appropriate
- Local business/community sector location

## 4.3 Structure of pilot projects

The pilot projects will involve the establishment of a specific skills-sharing volunteering service at three local/regional infrastructure brokers (to be agreed with Volunteering England).

The structure of the actual projects to be delivered by the brokers will essentially be proposed by the recruited organisations themselves, who will pitch their ideas as part of the selection process. The following section outlines the roles of each participating group in the Phase 2 pilots. Work against targets will be carried out in the community by a Local Business Partnership Coordinator based at a local/regional brokerage. A skills-based volunteering mentor will provide support for the brokers to develop their projects at ground level. The overall project will be managed by Volunteering England with the support of a specialist project management consultancy with expertise in employer-supported volunteering.

### 4.3.1 The Local Business Partnership Coordinator

A mandatory requirement of each project will be that a specialist Business Partnership Coordinator will be implemented at each broker to:

- develop a skills-based brokerage offering
- build company membership to this scheme
- liaise with local authorities to develop approaches to skills-based volunteering
- build relationships with local voluntary community consortia to use their contacts and expertise to help project progress

In addition, the Business Partnership Coordinator will also work with other Volunteer Centre staff to:

- source long and short term skills-based opportunities from VCOs
- act as main point of contact for businesses and VCOs that want to build skills-share partnerships
- communicate with businesses to help them promote skills-based volunteering among their workforce
- implement appropriate methodologies for project development from existing toolkits and guidance on skills-based volunteering

(In order to fulfil this role, the Local Business Partnership Coordinator must have the following professional attributes):

- Experience of securing corporate partnerships or support, ideally in a VCO or agency environment
- Proven negotiating ability
- Proven account management ability
- Strong organisational skills
- Ability to communicate at all levels and influence and engage external stakeholders
- Self-starter who is target-driven

### 4.3.2 The skills-based brokering mentor

A mentor from a specialist or local/regional infrastructure broker that currently engages in successful skills-based brokerage strategies will be employed within the pilot budget to provide consulting and basic assistance to the Business Partnership Coordinator to ensure that the project undertaken is effectively implemented and delivers against targets.

- The proposed programme of mentoring
- The vision for the development of the project as a consequence of the value added by the mentoring
- Understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing local/regional infrastructure

The mentor will be required to:

- Provide consultation services to the project team and Local Business Partnership Managers (terms to be confirmed with Volunteering England)
- Attend progress meetings
- Participate on the phase 2 steering group to guide the monitor the project and ensure progress against targets

### 4.3.3 Volunteering England

Will retain overall responsibility for management of the year 2 ESV work through the employment of a Senior Operations Officer who will manage this strand of work. Responsibilities will include:

- Developing the training programme for Local Business Partnership Coordinators with project management consultancy and selected brokers
- Managing the work of the selected mentor and project management consultancy
- Support the recruitment of the Local Business Partnership Coordinators with project management consultancy and selected brokers
- Help design the text for the promotional literature
- Track progress for each pilot monthly
- Work with the other project management partners to:
  - develop the broker membership system
  - identify KPIs
  - set targets

### 4.3.4 Project management consultancy

The objective of the support structure provided by the project management consultancy is to help the Steering Group design and implement an effective impact measurement mechanism, comprising key performance indicators and targets. It is important that an effective system for monitoring impacts is used to assess these projects, as building a clear picture of the short and long-term project impacts will help to demonstrate the business case for skills-based volunteering to existing, and potential participants. This in turn will help raise awareness and hopefully increase skills-based volunteering capacity in the voluntary sector.

The project management consultancy will work with the Steering Group to:

- Support Identification of KPIs
- Support the setting of targets, milestones and tracking systems
- Support the provision of the framework for analysing each project in terms of inputs, outputs and impacts
- Be a member of the steering group



# 4. Recommendations

## 4.4 Budget

The overall budget for phase 2 excluding administrative, operating and staff costs is approximately £145,000. Of this £105,000 will be used to fund the work of the three pilot projects (£35,500 per project) and the remaining budget will be allocated to the other key areas of mentoring, impact measurement and reporting.

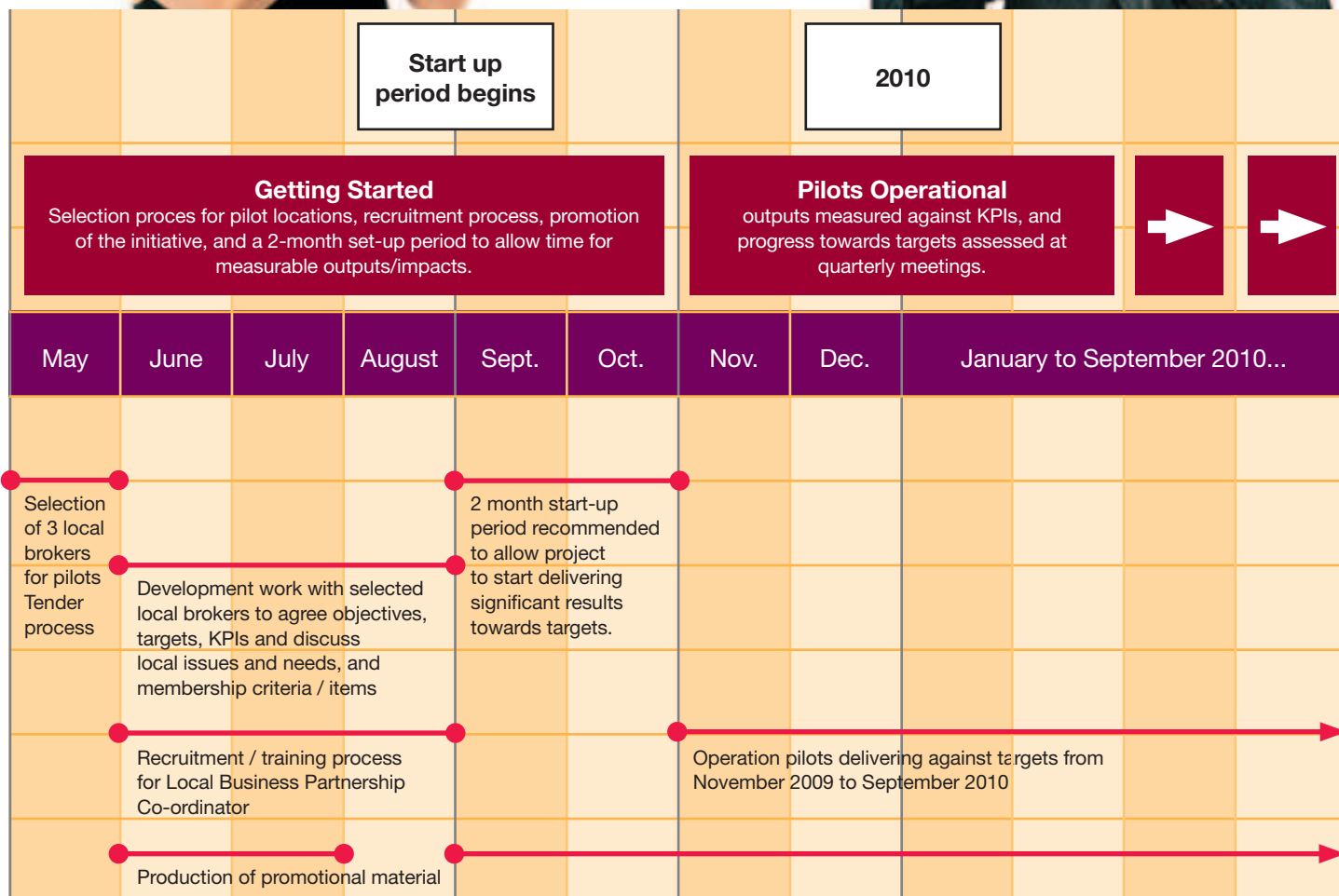
The project will be led by an appointed Operations Officer and also supported as appropriate by the wider National Support Services team.



## 4.5 Timescales

It is recommended that the project follows the timeframe set out in the diagram below.

It is anticipated that if recruitment of brokers and local business partnership coordinators begins immediately in May, these processes should take around four months to finalise, inclusive of completing the groundwork for the projects and training for each broker. It is also necessary to work in a 'start-up' period, during which it is unlikely that targets will be met because the projects will just be gaining prominence and support in the community. The final 6 months of phase 2 is when progress against targets will begin to show, and a comparative analysis of the development of each initiative can be monitored.



# Conclusion

**Our research has demonstrated that employer supported skills-based volunteering is an overwhelmingly positive force for good in the voluntary sector. It has particular potential to strengthen the voluntary sector and drive growth despite the effect of the recession, if partnerships are designed for sustainability and focus on skills-transfer. The feedback from companies, employees, VCOs and brokers who are currently successfully engaged in this activity provides us with evidence supporting the case to encourage its wider uptake.**

We have identified through the research that there is patchy uptake in London, with pockets of excellence in Westminster and the City. However, uptake remains poor generally across the UK. Given the current economic climate, this is an ideal means to contribute effectively to the voluntary sector, and in consequence, the local community.

The purpose of the pilot studies recommended in this report is to create a small number of ambassador projects across the regions, which will demonstrate the value of skills-sharing volunteering across the UK. The pilot phase will involve the implementation of innovative projects designed and carried out by the selected three local/regional brokers. The approaches to engaging local partners, addressing the challenges and increasing capacity will inevitably be varied, and this is an exciting opportunity for brokers to really play a leading role in identifying a successful model that others can replicate.

Essentially, this report has demonstrated that there is enthusiasm and support for the principle of skills-based volunteering, as well as an understanding of its value to both donors and beneficiaries. The perceived challenges now need to be addressed to encourage a shift in the way that companies contribute, so that this value can continue to be realised (and even increased) despite the effects of a difficult economic climate. Through increased cross-sector collaboration and teamwork for best practice in phase 2, this objective can be achieved.

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## Appendix 1.

The following is an example of one of the discussion guides that was used to broadly steer the interviews with companies, VCOs and brokers.

### For Brokers

#### Objectives:

1. To get a general overview of ESV skills-sharing volunteering in their broker
2. To establish the process they operate to broker skills-sharing volunteering
3. To find out how brokers communicate with VCOs and companies
4. To find out how brokers work with VCOs to establish their needs
5. To find out how brokers work with companies to secure volunteers
6. To establish what type of ESV is common (short-term skills-based assistance/mentoring for longer term impacts)
7. To gather impressions of the benefits to, and challenges faced through, skills-based partnerships
8. To gather suggestions for methodologies for successful partnership working
9. To gather impressions on the sustainability of such partnerships

(INTRODUCE PROJECT – focus is on employer supported skills-based volunteering):

Definition: The provision of skills that are inherent to an employee's day-job, which they can use to help the voluntary and community sector develop either a specific project, or at a wider level, develop the organisation as a whole, within company hours.

**This does include:** Volunteering opportunities from pro bono legal advice, to mentoring headteachers, one-off projects helping sort out a voluntary organisation's IT, HR or finance system and processes, and becoming a VCO trustee.

**This does not include:** Reading to children in schools, practical volunteering challenges such as decorating or gardening, mentoring school students, or helping to run a Christmas Party for old people.

#### Questions:

- 1) Describe your current activity – national or local, how many volunteers per year, type of volunteering by percentage split if available, sector specialist or general
- 2) What is the process for making this happened
- 3) How do you establish the need accurately
- 3) How do you communicate with the VCOs and the companies
- 4) Do you have a particular funding model eg membership
- 5) What specific skills are most commonly requested?
  - Finance
  - Legal
  - Marketing/fundraising/comms
  - IT
  - HR or other management function
  - Professional skills eg surveying
  - Other
- 6) Were you able to help? (Discuss)
- 7) If so – how
  - Put them in touch with a potential volunteer
  - Put them in touch with an employer
  - Put their request onto a database
  - Referred then to another broker
- 8) What kind of help is most commonly offered?
  - Not specific
  - Finance, marketing PR, IT, HR, qualified skills e.g. accountancy/legal/surveying, other
- 9) Were you able to help?
- 10) If so, how did you help?

#### General

- 11) Do you think there is a need for skill based volunteering in the voluntary sector?
- 12) What are the issues and challenges?
- 13) How are you funded (if not already covered with model question above)?
- 14) What outcomes are expected from that funding? (E.g. numbers, impact)

- 15) What is the greatest challenge, what is the greatest opportunity? When it works well, what happens?

#### If not currently brokering skills-based partnerships:

- 16) Why do you not work with employers?
  - Never been asked
  - Never thought about it
  - Believe it would be too difficult
- 17) Would you like to work with employers? (Discuss)

## Appendix 2.

Advisory Group membership - Individuals from other organisations did not join the Advisory Group, but requested to be kept informed of the project's development

Accenture	Camilla Drejer	UK Community Relations Lead
BASSAC	Kelly Essery	Head of Operations and Resource
Business in the Community	Rob Compton	Employee Volunteering Campaign Manager
Challenges Worldwide	Eoghan Mackie	Chief Executive
Cranfield Trust	Amanda Tincknell	Chief Executive
CSV	Lesley Nicholls	Director of Employee Volunteering
ELBA	Louise Muller	Hackney Programme Director
Getting On Board	Sarah Hodgkinson	Chief Executive
IBM	Mark Wakefield	Corporate Community Relations Manager
IT 4 Communities	Caroline Bucklow	Charity Operations Director
IT 4 Communities	Anne Stafford	Development Consultant
KPMG LLP	Emma van de Molen	Programme Coordinator
Law Works	Alison Ingram	Community Groups Project Manager
Media Trust	Felicity Lambert	Media Matching Manager
Nationwide Foundation	Jennifer Thompson	Grants Officer
NCVO	Emma Kirk	Consultancy Development Manager
Reach	Sarah King	Chief Executive
Red Foundation	Fabia Bates	Director
School Governor's One Stop Shop	Steve Acklam	Chief Executive
The Cranfield Trust	Erica De Ath	Trustee
Three Sector Match	Carole Garfield	Consultant
Volunteer Centre Swindon	Sue Dunmore	Youth Volunteering Development Manager
Volunteer Centre Westminster	Marie Broad	Employee Volunteer Manager
White Box Digital	David Barker	Co-founder
Volunteer Centre Southwark	Helen Ker	Employer Supported Volunteering Co-ordinator



# What is NSS?

**With funding from Capacitybuilders' National Support Services programme, nine national workstreams are addressing key areas of support for third sector support providers, to help them meet the needs of frontline organisations.**

Capacitybuilders is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office. It aims to have a significant impact on the support available for frontline organisations across the third sector by taking forward the ChangeUp framework and associated investment programme.

## The nine workstreams are:

The Campaigning and Advocacy workstream, led by NCVO

The Responding to Social Change workstream, led by Third Sector Foresight at NCVO

The Collaboration Benefits workstream, led by bassac

The Marketing and Communications workstream, led by the Media Trust

The Equalities and Diversity workstream, led by the Women's Resource Centre

The Leadership and Governance workstream, led by NCVO

The Income Generation workstream, led by ACEVO

The Performance Management workstream, led by Charities Evaluation Services

The Modernising Volunteering workstream, led by Volunteering England

More information at [www.improvingsupport.org.uk](http://www.improvingsupport.org.uk)

## Modernising Volunteering National Support Services - in a nutshell

**Aim:** Equipping the sector with the skills, knowledge and tools needed to increase the quality, quantity and accessibility of volunteering opportunities.

**Lead:** Volunteering England, the workstream will benefit the sector's support providers by:

increasing the number of volunteers; improving the volunteering infrastructure and capacity of volunteer managers; brokering ESV, and through the more effective use of information and communications technologies such as social networking sites.

**Partners:** v, the Network of National Volunteer Involving Agencies (NNVIA), the Red Foundation and the Nationwide Foundation

## Contact

If you would like to get more involved in the Modernising Volunteering Workstream please contact Patrick Scott (National Support Services Implementation Manager)

Email: [patrick.scott@volunteeringengland.org.uk](mailto:patrick.scott@volunteeringengland.org.uk)

Tel: 020 7520 8955

## Signup

To receive information about the modernising volunteering NSS, signup at [www.improvingsupport.org.uk/signup/](http://www.improvingsupport.org.uk/signup/)

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A platform to strengthen support services for the third sector

 **Volunteering England**  
Giving Voice to Volunteering

 **NNVIA**  
Network of National Volunteer Involving Agencies

 **red**  
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 **Nationwide Foundation**  
Supporting communities nationwide

 **Inspiring a million more young volunteers**





Giving Voice to Volunteering



## A Modernising Volunteering Workstream Report

# Forging Sustainable Partnerships between Businesses and Communities

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