

Designing a Senior Leadership Development programme for People of Colour in the Environment sector

Invitation to tender for a co-design project - September 2024

1. Summary

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation is looking to commission a co-design project to develop a Senior Leadership Development programme for People of Colour in the Environment sector. We estimate the cost of the project to be £21,000 (including VAT) based on 29 days (about 4 weeks) work from 21 October 2024 to 15 January 2025.

We are looking for people or organisations with experience and expertise in designing and delivering leadership programmes aimed at improving diversity in senior roles, who are comfortable using a co-design approach. Knowledge of the environment sector is desirable but not essential.

If you are available to do 29 days' work, beginning 21 October 2024, please send a tender document to communications@esmefairbairn.org.uk by 5pm on 23 September 2024.

2. Why a programme is needed

The [RACE Report 2023](#) shows the gap in racial diversity between staff in environment and conservation charities in the UK and the rest of the working population. Ethnic minority representation is 6% versus 15% across the UK. It also reveals that people of colour are more likely to be employed through fixed term contracts and less likely to occupy senior leadership roles or be on the Boards of conservation and environment charities. The accompanying [staff perception survey](#) reported that people of colour felt that they faced additional barriers to progression, had lower levels of trust in managerial support, and were more likely to feel that they had to change to fit in with organisational culture. It was also considered important for people of colour to see people that had similar backgrounds to them in senior leadership roles.

The barriers to progression are systemic, with inequality in opportunity from the first experience of nature, through entering the profession, to enabling progression and the attainment of senior leadership roles.

[A review of initiatives](#) underway, carried out by Hybrid Consulting for Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, confirmed the need for leadership support and that this was a gap in provision. That is not to say that there is no relevant work taking place within the sector but that there is no coherent programme designed to benefit future leaders of colour.

3. Co-design project – purpose

Despite poor representation of people from ethnic minority backgrounds, there are talented individuals with the aspiration and potential to be leaders in environment organisations. A targeted leadership programme could underpin a wave of aspiring people of colour to build a talent network of senior leaders in the environment sector.

Our aim is to work with an expert partner to design a leadership programme which could benefit two to three cohorts, each with up to 12 participants with aspirations to take up senior roles within the environment sector. The programme would provide participants with the experience and skills that future leaders will need to demonstrate. It should be co-designed with people of colour with experience of working in the environment sector, ensuring that they are supported through a trauma-informed approach to harness belief and confidence in their leadership abilities, as well as with current leaders and Human Resources professionals.

4. Co-design project – oversight and funding

The Co-design project will be overseen by a small steering group made up of representatives from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, organisations we work with and professional organisations.

The design phase is intended to be followed by a pilot and, depending on success, an embedded progression pathway until such a time that diversity in senior environmental leadership reflects that of wider society.

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation is committed to this work in the long term. We will fund this development phase and intend to work with the sector to ensure that the cost of participation is not a barrier to any organisation or individual's participation. However, if this is to become a sustainable programme in the longer term, costs will need to be shared with participating organisations, especially those most able to contribute. The successful contractor will work with us and with potential participating organisations to design a proposed cost structure, which will be refined during the pilot phase.

5. Consultant – deliverables

- **Review of leadership schemes:** gather key learning from other relevant leadership development schemes in the environment sector and from other sectors aimed at increasing ethnic diversity.
- **Environment sector focus groups:** consultation with senior leaders and HR professionals in environment organisations to understand what skills and experience the leaders of the future will need and to gauge enthusiasm for developing and participating in the programme.
- **Co-design with people of colour working in the sector:** through workshops, one-to-one conversations, other methods as appropriate, to understand how to make the programme as accessible as possible and what support needs to be built in to ensure safe and rewarding participation.
- **Refine eligibility criteria:** work with people of colour in the sector to recommend the criteria for level of professional experience, and protected characteristics for prospective participants
- **Refine the reach of the scheme:** we are currently assuming that the programme will target future leaders from the voluntary sector, including grassroots environment organisations. There is interest from public sector partners and the consultant will consider the pros and cons of making the programme available to participants from outside the voluntary sector.
- **Design a proposal:** use the information gathered through the above, from experience elsewhere and from wider understanding of what works, to design a proposal. This would include consideration of whether there are aspects that could be delivered through existing or planned provision by partners.
- **Future funding:** work with NGOs to agree what level of support they would offer to employees participating in the programme and to propose a future funding structure.

- Test and refine the proposal in consultation with sector organisations and potential participants. This will include large employers with dedicated HR teams as well as smaller NGOs and grassroots organisations that do not have this capacity so the model must work for both. This contract will not include the cost of running the pilots. Subject to further decisions by our trustees, that phase will follow on from this once the programme has been defined.
- Evaluation of the work as a basis for piloting in a second phase will be on the following: -
 - Evidence of support from potential participants
 - Evidence of effectiveness drawn from similar programmes run elsewhere
 - Evidence of support from employers

6. What we are looking for in a consultant

- Experience and expertise in designing and delivering leadership programmes aimed at addressing a lack of diversity in senior leadership.
- Experience of facilitating a co-design process that ensures people can work together in a creative and inclusive way.
- Knowledgeable about racial justice and understands the challenges for people of colour in the UK.
- A commitment to equity in their work – this might be through anti-oppressive practice, participatory methods, or working in a community-led way.
- Someone who can create a space of safety and hold space for diverse views – ensure that people of colour involved in the design process feel safe expressing their views, supported to participate, and able to contribute in the way that suits their needs.
- Experience of working with or in the environment sector would be useful to hear about but is not essential.

7. Management and key responsibilities

- The main point of contact for the Facilitator will be Esmée Fairbairn Foundation’s Lead Funding Manager, Simon Wightman.
- The Co-design project will be overseen by a steering group that is likely to be made up of representatives from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Wildlife & Countryside Link, Wales Environment Link, Scottish Environment Link, Northern Ireland Environment Link, Students Organising for Sustainability, Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA).
- The consultant will be responsible for booking venues and catering for any in-person events.

8. Timetable for the work

The contract will be for 29 days, beginning in October 2024.

<u>Date</u>	
23 September, 17.00	Deadline for tender documents
27 September	Shortlist for interviews agreed and contacted
w/c 7 October	Interviews

w/c 14 October	Consultant appointed
October, tbc with consultant	Contract begins

9. Budget

We estimate that the whole contract will cost no more than £21,000 – see deliverables at point 4. Proposals should be budgeted with this in mind, and costings should include VAT.

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation will also pay for the time of People of Colour participating in the co-design process.

10. Confidentiality, ethics, and conflicts of interest

If the Consultant has, or is planning to apply for, funding from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, or is involved in other work we fund, let us know so that we can manage any conflicts of interest with care.

11. How to apply

If you are interested in tendering for this project, please send the following information to Gina Crane on communications@esmeefairbairn.org.uk by 23 September 2024:

Your tender document should include:

- A response to this brief (maximum 4 pages of A4) saying why you or your organisation would like to deliver the work, and why you're well placed to do so.
- Links to two examples of recent relevant projects you've done (or a summary of them).
- A breakdown of costs for the work, including day rates and details of who would deliver the work.
- Your CV, or relevant CVs of key people who would deliver the work.
- Contact details for two relevant references of people you've worked for.

If you have questions about this brief, please email: communications@esmeefairbairn.org.uk

12. About Esmée

Founded in 1961, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation is one of the UK's largest independent funders. In 2023, we provided £58.4m in funding towards a wide range of work in support of our three main aims: to improve Our Natural World, secure A Fairer Future and nurture Creative, Confident Communities. We also provide social and impact investment for organisations with the aim of creating social and environmental impact. Our funds are generated by our investment portfolio.

[Our strategy is here.](#)