



## **Opportunity for freelance Organisational Development work**

### **Support a 'new paradigm' organisation to develop creative, collaborative and agile ways of working!**

We are calling for expressions of interest to work with Transition Network to help us run an organisational development process. In particular we want to draw on approaches such as sociocracy and/or holacracy, improve our proposal-forming and decision-making processes, and design and implement more agile, self-managed and collaborative structures and ways of working. We want to become more responsive and effective as an organisation, while being more sustainable in the demands placed on staff.

#### **1. About us**

Transition Network is a small UK-based charity which works to inspire, encourage, connect, support and train communities as they self-organise around the Transition model. We serve a spreading and evolving international social change movement in which people are working together to find ways to live with a lot less reliance on fossil fuels and reduce over-exploitation of other planetary resources, improve wellbeing for all and strengthen local economies.

Transition Network Ltd has a core staff team of 12 employees (all but one of them part-time) and a wider network of freelancers, some of whom are closely connected with the organisation's development while others are undertaking specific roles at arms length. As a registered charity, we are governed by a board of trustees (currently seven). While we have a small office in Totnes, Devon, we are increasingly drawing our staff and trustees from across the UK and beyond. Staff and trustees come together in person at least twice a year, when we hold "awaydays" in Totnes, and most of the staff team are able to meet in person once a month. However, a huge amount of our collaborative work - both internal and with external partners - happens online.

One of our key relationships is with the developing network of Transition Hubs that support and catalyse Transition in various countries across the world. Some of the Transition Hubs are exploring the potential offered by sociocracy and/or holacracy, and are positive about the impact.

In the 2 to 3 years ahead, we also hope to be working with Transition Hubs on a wider dreaming process to gather visions for the evolution of the international network of

Transition. We want to explore and discuss how support for the Transition movement can be delivered through a more open and truly international structure. This international dreaming process will be led by a working group of Hubs and Transition Network representatives. The 'internal' organisational development work we want to do will need to be complementary to this wider international dreaming process, supporting the changes stimulated by it and working in its emerging context.

## 2. Our evolving organisational culture

Over the past three years, the Transition Network team has undergone considerable structural and cultural change, shifting from a creative, committed, slightly chaotic group of pioneers to a more substantial and structured organisation. We carried out a strategy review in 2013/14 consulting with the wider Transition movement about our priorities and approach. The resulting strategy document (see <https://www.transitionnetwork.org/about/strategy>) is the framework we use to plan and monitor our work and to steer our decisions, partnerships and funding applications. The "How we will work" section sets out our principles and gives you a flavour of how we are seeking to develop our organisation.

In broad terms, we have identified the following as current challenges:

- The work we have done to bring in more structure, planning and coordination has been driven and held by Sarah McAdam, who was appointed Delivery Director in 2013 and undertakes many of the functions that would be performed by a Chief Executive in a more traditional organisation. This does not feel a sufficiently resilient or empowering approach to take in the longer term. We feel that the organisation now has the will and the capacity to shift the balance more towards "self-management" and away from an over-reliance on any single individual.
- Having moved from largely autonomous individual working to more collaborative group working, there is a need and an opportunity for us to clarify, streamline and decentralise our decision-making processes, find ways to get the right input from the right people at the right time into the development of proposals and further develop the process and practice of collective and individual accountability.
- We are determined to maintain and develop an organisational culture in which people can bring the whole of themselves to work, remain resilient whilst connecting with the depth and the complexity of the global problems we are seeking to address and achieve a balance of action and reflectiveness to reduce the risk of burnout and ill-health.
- We're interested in imagining and creating structures and processes which support an ongoing cycle of action and reflection, and build our capacity to respond nimbly to continually changing needs and opportunities.

We're keen to explore models such as sociocracy and holacracy and to identify and experiment with processes and structures which we think have the potential to help us

address these challenges. However, we want the experts who work with us to analyse and consider what is best for us as a particular organisation, and to be flexible in helping us develop our own culture and approach.

We want to collaborate with and learn from other organisations piloting similar work (including Transition Hubs). We want to work in a transparent way with a focus on capturing and sharing our learning about agreeing and embedding organisational change, and will seek a researcher to help us on this. We want to support the sharing of learning about “new paradigm” organisational structures and cultures across and beyond the Transition movement.

While many of the Transition Network team (trustees and staff) are very interested in this work and have some valuable expertise and experience to contribute, we need extra capacity and expertise to help us explore, design, facilitate and implement these organisational development processes and change. This is why we want to find one or more contractors to work with us.

### **3. Timescales and shape of organisational development project**

This work is envisaged over 3 years (Jan 2016 - Dec 2018) with the first year being an exploratory and design phase, and years 2 and 3 more about the implementation of changes to organisational culture. We have secured modest but ongoing funding for this work to December 2018.

Our initial idea on timescales and approach for the first year is as follows:

#### Jan – Mar 2016:

- Seeking freelance contractor(s) with relevant experience in organisational development who can help us, and a researcher to help us capture learning.
- Starting work on evaluation baseline.
- Setting up action-learning pilot.

#### Apr – Sep 2016:

- Running an action-learning pilot in defined area(s) of our work, asking the contractor(s) to join our meetings, reflect back to us what they observe, and suggest processes and methods by which incremental improvements can be achieved.
- The defined area of work could be a particular issue where we have identified scope for improvement (eg the proposal formation process) or could focus on a particular delivery group within the staff team.
- Wider work on analysing organisational issues.

- Recording and evaluating the work done with a view to harvesting learning about agreeing and embedding organisational change.
- Supporting the international Dreaming Process on the international structure of Transition.

Oct – Dec 2016:

- Assessing the pilot and other analyses, to agree the plan for Phase 2 implementation.

We are really interested in hearing other ideas and contributions from contractors on how this work can be taken forward. It is possible that it might be most helpful for us to work with more than one contractor on different aspects of the work.

We would require that the work done is Open Source and that all outputs can be freely publically shared.

#### **4. Required skills & attributes**

We are looking for freelance contractors who:

- Have a deep understanding of, and commitment to, the principles and practice of Transition, and experience of working in the field of systemic change
- Understand the dynamics, opportunities and challenges of voluntary sector organisations
- Have awareness of how to work in an international context
- Have expertise in organisational development relating to new paradigm, agile, collaborative, decentralised, non-hierarchical or self-managing ways of working – possibly with a particular interest in sociocracy and/or holacracy
- Have tools and models to offer, but can be flexible in helping us develop our own culture and approach
- Understand the idea of balance between inner and outer change
- Can work collaboratively with the Transition Network team and a researcher, to develop solutions for organisational change together and to communicate and share these ideas
- Can self-manage, plan and work, and take responsibility for maintaining momentum in this pilot work
- Have facilitation, coaching or training skills
- Are able to work effectively virtually, using technology to maintain connections across distance

We operate largely as a virtual team using online meetings, so reliable fast internet access is required. Face to face meetings in Totnes (or perhaps Bristol and/or London) are likely to be required from time to time.

## 5. Expressions of Interest

If you feel excited by this opportunity and think you have the expertise we are looking for, please send:

- Your CV, and
- A letter expressing your ideas of what you could contribute, a description of how you work, how you address the skills and attributes above, and an indication of your contractor rates.

to [nicolahillary@transitionnetwork.org](mailto:nicolahillary@transitionnetwork.org) by noon on 16th March 2016.

We will assess the expressions of interest received and aim to meet a shortlist of potential contractors during the week of 4th - 8th April 2016 to explore further what they can offer and the scope for a productive partnership.

For an informal discussion about this freelance opportunity, please contact [nicolahillary@transitionnetwork.org](mailto:nicolahillary@transitionnetwork.org) (01453 821904/ 07976 771309)

## Website Advert

Do you have expertise in helping organisations develop and embed change to become more creative, collaborative, self-managed and sustainable? Are you passionate about supporting an international movement for a healthier, low-carbon future? Can you work together with Transition Network staff and trustees to run an experimental, flexible and responsive organisational development process?

We are looking for expressions of interest from freelance contractors with experience in “new paradigm” organisational development, who can work with the Transition Network team on one or more aspects of developing more agile organisational structures and processes, to help us collaborate well, support cycles of action and reflection, and be able to be more responsive to changing needs and opportunities. We have secured modest but ongoing funding for this work to December 2018.

The need for this work comes from an exciting, challenging and complex set of challenges and opportunities which place pressure on Transition Network’s current structure, staff team and organisational culture, and require an open, imaginative and emergent response. This work will be taking place in a changing international context, where we hope to be working with national Transition Hubs to gather visions for the evolution of a more truly international structure for the support of the Transition movement.

We're keen to explore models such as sociocracy and holacracy and to identify and experiment with processes and structures which will help us be more effective. However, we want the experts who work with us to analyse and consider what is best for Transition Network as a particular organisation serving a particular grassroots social change movement and to be flexible in helping us develop our own culture and approach.

We are interested in hearing ideas and contributions from contractors on how this work can be taken forward. It is possible that it might be most helpful for us to work with more than one contractor on different aspects of this organisational development work.

Please read this document to find out more and send us expressions of interest by 16<sup>th</sup> March.