**CSIT**

A toolkit to help the culture, sport, green space & tourism sectors to

***re-group, survive & re-grow the services for the community***

Document 3.8

**Self-Assessment of ‘Innovation’**

**Assessing & understanding your organisation or partnership’s current strengths & areas for improvement**

***“He who asks the questions cannot avoid the answers”***

A Cameroon proverb!

Version 2, July 2011



**Introduction**

The *Red* *Thread* Self-Assessment tools enable you to focus on one or more *threads* running throughout the CSIT Benchmark, which represent vital subjects for the culture, sport, green space & tourism sectors. The *threads* are based on the *Vision for Excellence* shown in Document Two and contain ‘key features’ from the CSIT[[1]](#footnote-1) Benchmark.



**What are you working towards by using this ‘Innovation’ Red Thread?**

*Excellent organisations nurture, generate & make use of innovation in relation to services, marketing, partnerships and the way in which the organisation works (to achieve improvement in effectiveness, economy & efficiency) and take advantage of emerging & unusual opportunities to fund, develop & deliver services which meet the needs of the community.*

Self-Assessment method

The ‘Innovation’ Self-Assessment can be conducted by a single organisation or an existing partnership. The organisation or partnership should establish a cross-functional Self-Assessment Team, responsible for reaching a consensus on current strengths & areas for improvement and planning improvement projects. This should take approximately one day.

The following process is recommended (adjust this to suit your specific needs & style – it is your Self-Assessment!):

1. Take one section at a time (e.g. ‘Building the capability for innovation’)
2. Individually (i.e. each Self-Assessment Team member by themselves) consider the ‘key features’ shown on the Self-Assessment Questionnaire, reading the words carefully, and decide which of the following statements best reflects the organisation or partnership’s current progress for each ‘key feature’:

***a = Not yet***

***b = We are in the early stages of developing this***

***c = We partly do this***

***d = We do all of this, most of the time***

***e = We have been doing all of this for a few years - we have assessed & refined our behaviour in this area***

Shade or tick the appropriate box

1. When everyone has completed this for the section, discuss your perceptions and reach a team consensus on ratings, strengths & areas for improvement (focus the discussions on the disparities)
2. Move on to the next section and repeat the process
3. When you have completed this, review your Self-Assessment and discuss & agree the following:

**What are the most significant areas for improvement?**

**What themes run through your Self-Assessment results (‘golden threads’ & ‘fault lines’)?**

**What are the few underlying causes of most of the areas for improvement?**

**Health Warning!**

**Remember that self-assessment is not a competition, a points-scoring exercise, a ‘blame game’ or a way to improve your image; it is merely an exercise to help you to agree priorities for improvement**.

Self-Assessment Questionnaire

| Ref | Key Feature | Tick the appropriate box | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Building the capability for innovation** | | | | | | |
| 1 | Leaders develop & maintain a high-level strategic commitment to enterprise, innovation & social entrepreneurship | a | b | c | d | e |
| 2 | Leaders trigger & support innovative ideas amongst the organisation’s people, back these ideas & move quickly & energetically to translate new ideas into action, take risks and learn from what happens | a | b | c | d | e |
| 3 | Leaders identify & remove the barriers within the *system* to innovation (e.g. allowing all people to take their ideas forward into action) | a | b | c | d | e |
| 4 | The organisation learns from the practices of other departments & organisations (within & outside of the sector) and uses this to trigger innovation | a | b | c | d | e |
| 5 | There is flexibility in financial plans to allow people to be innovative and take advantage of opportunities to improve & develop the service | a | b | c | d | e |
| 6 | The organisation develops people’s ability to use creativity techniques | a | b | c | d | e |
| 7 | People are given the time & opportunities to work together and make use of their creativity & innovation to improve the organisation & develop the services | a | b | c | d | e |
| 8 | Partners are engaged in organisational improvement, change & service development activity, generating innovation and making the best use of knowledge & experience | a | b | c | d | e |
| 9 | The organisation actively obtains & uses ideas from customers & other people in the community | a | b | c | d | e |
| 10 | The creativity & innovation of people & teams is recognised & valued in a way which encourages these behaviours to continue & grow | a | b | c | d | e |
| Strengths | | | | | | |
| Areas for Improvement | | | | | | |
| Innovation in action | | | | | | |
| 11 | Leaders review, actively investigate and make use of innovative organisational models & working methodologies (e.g. self-directed teams, thematic structures, reengineering, etc) | a | b | c | d | e |
| 12 | Leaders proactively develop effective collaborative working across the wider organisation and with partners (including commercial organisations), thinking & working outside of traditional boundaries | a | b | c | d | e |
| 13 | Leaders work with other innovators in local problem solving exercises | a | b | c | d | e |
| 14 | The organisation develops innovative approaches to enable it to obtain views & ideas from different parts of the community | a | b | c | d | e |
| 15 | Strategy drives innovative design & development of the facilities & service offer | a | b | c | d | e |
| 16 | The organisation uses innovative approaches to communicate & market the services and engage all parts of the community in the activities | a | b | c | d | e |
| 17 | The organisation uses its facilities creatively to ensure they are used to capacity and meet customer needs & expectations, including joint use with partners | a | b | c | d | e |
| 18 | The organisation identifies & implements innovation process improvement & customer relationship management activity | a | b | c | d | e |
| 19 | The organisation proactively explores innovative avenues for external investment & funding to help achieve strategic outcomes (so that organisations in the same area are not rivals for funding streams) | a | b | c | d | e |
| 20 | People are encouraged, allowed & supported to use modern technology in a flexible & innovative way to improve efficiency & effectiveness | a | b | c | d | e |
| Strengths | | | | | | |
| Areas for Improvement | | | | | | |
| Results | | | | | | |
| To what extent are we achieving service outcomes? (what do the results tell us?  To what extent are we contributing to intermediate & overarching outcomes? (what do the results tell us?)  How many new ideas have we implemented relating to the service offer & marketing activities?  What efficiency gains have been achieved through innovative ideas? (what do the results tell us?)  To what extent are staff satisfied with the opportunities to be innovative? | | | | | | |
| Strengths | | | | | | |
| Areas for Improvement | | | | | | |

**What are the most significant areas for improvement (bearing in mind what is required to survive & thrive in the future?)**

**What themes run through your Self-Assessment results (‘golden threads’ & ‘fault lines’)?**

**What are the few underlying causes of most of the areas for improvement?**

1. This version of CSIT has been designed and developed in association with Steve Wood [steve-wood@talktalk.net](mailto:steve-wood@talktalk.net) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)