



Creating Possibilities  
in East London



## **Board Application Advice and Guidance**

### **Overview**

This document provides a series of hints, tips and things to consider when applying to join the board of a charity or social enterprise. Application processes are subjective in nature and the information below should therefore be considered as general guidance. You are welcome to apply to join the board of as many organisations as you wish, however, ELBA/BIG Alliance recommend that you submit applications to no more than three at any one time. Application processes are often competitive and so you may consider applying to more than one organisation to give yourself the best possible chance of securing a trustee/non-executive director position.

### **Researching your community organisation**

When conducting research on your chosen organisation(s) you should explore the following:

- Area of work/service delivery
- Vision, mission and values
- Number of years in operation
- Reporting (charity details can be found at [www.charitycommission.gov.uk](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk) and social enterprise details can be found at [www.gov.uk/get-information-about-a-company](http://www.gov.uk/get-information-about-a-company))
- Current board of trustees/non-executive directors
- Key stakeholders
- Religious (or other) affiliation

All of the above information should be publicly available, however, if you have any questions or queries then you should contact [Jonathan.Tait@elba-1.org.uk](mailto:Jonathan.Tait@elba-1.org.uk).

### **Completing your expression of interest form**

The expression of interest form is your opportunity to outline why you wish to join the board of your chosen charity and what the charity might gain by inviting you to become a trustee/non-executive director. Your expression of interest form will be submitted to your chosen organisation(s) along with your CV. If you are applying to more than one organisation, then you must complete an expression of interest form for each organisation. When completing your expression of interest form you should consider the following:

- Have you demonstrated an interest in, or passion for, the organisation's area of work?
- Have you clearly explained how your skills/experience might benefit the organisation?
- Have you used jargon that might not be easily understood by the organisation?



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- Have you been realistic about the amount of amount of time that you are able to commit?
- Is your expression of interest form structured clearly and presented well?

It is important to remember that the vast majority of application processes are competitive. You should therefore ensure that you have taken sufficient time and care when completing your expression of interest form(s).

### **Preparing for interview**

Organisations conduct interview processes in a variety of different ways when appointing board members. There is not therefore a single way of preparing for interview. Trustees and non-executive directors of social enterprises are almost always volunteers rather than paid employees and, as such, recruitment processes are not subject to the same regulations that would be applicable for a paid position. Generally, interviews tend to be relatively informal (although this is not always the case) and candidates are usually chosen on the basis of compatibility rather than via a point scoring system. You should consider the following when preparing for interview:

- Have you conducted research on your chosen organisation?
- Are you able to demonstrate an interest in or passion for the organisation's area of work?
- Are you able to clearly explain your skills and expertise? (Remember, the majority of organisations will not be familiar with your area of work and so avoid using jargon!)
- Are you able to discuss how your skills and expertise might benefit the organisation?
- Do you have any questions about the organisation or the organisation's area of work?
- Do you have any questions about the role of trustees/non-executive directors (e.g. where, when and how often does the board meet)?

The above guidance should help you with your application to your chosen charity, however, if you have any additional questions or queries then please contact [Jonathan.Tait@elba-1.org.uk](mailto:Jonathan.Tait@elba-1.org.uk).

In advance of joining the board of any organisation participating in the BoardMatch process, **you must do your own due diligence!** ELBA/BIG Alliance conduct due diligence processes on all partner charities, however, as a trustee/non-executive director, you are responsible for the governance of your chosen organisation and it is therefore essential that you have a thorough understanding of the organisation's financial position, safeguarding policies and any personal liability associated with joining the board.