

Benefacts

Stakeholders forum

Terms of reference

Benefacts: purpose and deliverables

- a) Using a definition of scope agreed with all stakeholders, create and maintain an integrated database on Irish civil society entities derived from the digitisation and aggregation of data from a range of licensed regulatory and voluntary sources
- b) Create a single web-based location where all of the registered identities of such civil society entities are listed, maintained up to date and made available at no cost to registered users
- c) Publish a searchable public website where topical data on all listed entities is freely available to anyone, and where listed entities are able to make additional voluntary information disclosures
- d) Develop a series of pilot data services under license, which are intended to
 - promote greater transparency, and improve public understanding of the work of Irish civil society entities
 - pilot practical technical solutions for facilitating cross-agency access to, and sharing of data
 - exploit information and communications technologies as a means of facilitating the interaction between Government and non-profit organisations.

Project governance

Benefacts has three principal **funders** - the [Department of Public Expenditure and Reform](#) (“DPER”), the [Atlantic Philanthropies](#), and the [Ireland Funds](#).

The **directors** of Benefacts are responsible for the governance of the company and for the delivery of its plans.

DPER has convened, and Chairs a **Project Advisory Group** (PAG), whose members, besides representatives of the two philanthropic co-funders, are senior individuals with responsibility for public policy, service delivery or regulation in areas that have high levels of interaction with civil society bodies.

Besides the PAG, Benefacts has convened a **Stakeholders Forum** with at least 8 and no more than 12 members broadly representative of the stakeholding interests outlined below, chaired by an independent sector leader (who is appointed by the Board).

The role of the Forum is to assist the company in ensuring that the deployment of the Benefacts Database of Irish Nonprofits serves the public interest. It provides a means whereby leaders in the sector and in civil society more generally are involved in active dialogue with the company about the ways in which it pursues its mission to enhance the accessibility and transparency of Irish nonprofits.

Initially, the Forum's members were nominated by the Benefacts Board; after 12 months, following the launch of the public website, the company is setting out to fill vacancies on the Forum through advertisement on the website.

Besides this forum, the Benefacts uses a variety of means of communicating with stakeholders of all kinds.

Term, rotation

- The term of membership is twelve months, renewable for one term. This is to promote broad participation and engagement. At least one-third of members serving for the first term will be asked to serve for a second term to promote continuity.

Competencies

- Members of the Forum will be selected by the Board so as to achieve a spread of knowledge and experience representative of stakeholding interests in the Project, with at least two members drawn from each of the interests summarised below
 - Charities, foundations and community bodies and their umbrella/representative bodies
 - Nonprofits or individuals interested in civil society engagement in public policy including transparency, open government and public advocacy
 - Academics, analysts and journalists
 - Professional service providers and nonprofit sector intermediaries

Membership

- Membership of the Stakeholder Forum will be non-transferable; while nominees of organisations may be seen as having a representative function, their participation is personal
- Forum members serve at the invitation of the Board; if insufficient numbers or ranges of people put themselves forward, the Board reserves the right to co-opt individuals, in consultation with the Forum Chairperson

General

- Meetings of the Stakeholders Forum will normally take place in Dublin either during or outside of office hours according to the preference of its members
- Agenda and other papers will be issued on behalf of the Chairman; administrative supports will be provided by the company secretary of Benefacts
- The Forum will meet at frequent intervals, as determined by the Chairman and members
- The Forum is advisory and does not have management responsibility for the project, its staff or its finances
- The Chairman of the Forum will meet at least twice a year with the Board of the company, and on other occasions as s/he and/or the Board consider necessary to assist the successful realisation of the project's goals.