InformAll CIC

STRATEGIC PLAN

Executive summary

InformAll is a consultancy and social enterprise that develops understanding of the importance and relevance of information know-how in contemporary society. It offers its services to help raise awareness of how skills, competences and confidence in the use of information – often known as information literacy (IL) – is beneficial for organisations and individuals. InformAll achieves this through research projects and other collaborative activities.

InformAll's aims are:

- to bring together stakeholders from different professional and organisational backgrounds that have an interest in developing an understanding of IL;

- to exploit this diversity of expertise and know-how by providing a rich and all-round view of IL;

- to undertake research projects and other collaborative activities that can help different social and economic players acquire a better understanding of IL;

- to disseminate and exploit the outputs of such work for the purpose of promoting IL as an issue of relevance to society;

- to facilitate discussion, exchange of ideas and sharing of good practice relating to IL;

- to advocate for IL in the education process, including the broader context of professional development and lifelong learning, and promote greater co-ordination and a strategic approach to the provision of IL education and training;

- to work as a collective advocate for IL across different sectors whose remit covers areas of relevance to IL.

The full version of the strategic plan describes how InformAll intends to achieve these goals. It explains how InformAll came about, and its achievements to date. It sets out how the enterprise proposes to develop its service offer: its expertise and distinctiveness, the nature of services offered to clients, its funding model, business prospects, initial budget and promotion/marketing effort. The plan also describes InformAll's business model and its governance.

A crucial and distinct aspect of InformAll's work is that it brings together partners from different constituencies and professional groups that offer distinctive perspectives on the advancement of IL. In this vein, InformAll has been building a network of stakeholders across a range of sectors. It offers a framework and a capacity for joint working which draws on these different outlooks to provide a widely-representative view on challenges to be addressed. It constitutes a pool of experts, for the benefit of different communities who wish to develop their interest, policies or activities in information-related knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence. As such, it can contribute to the building of communities of interest.

On that basis, InformAll offers the following services:

- *Facilitation:* capitalising on InformAll's networking and outreach capability by bringing together diverse players with the view to engaging collectively in the sort of activities outlined above. This would include putting together project teams made up of individuals with defined areas of expertise, identifying funding opportunities, formulating joint proposals and managing multi-player projects where the pooling of different perspectives on IL is likely to add value. It could also involve, more broadly, bringing together assorted players with a view for instance to building communities of interest, joint advocacy and generating new ideas that derive from the creative mix of different professional perspectives.

- *Research:* developing the evidence base and analysing how IL applies to (and is interpreted in) different educational, professional and social contexts; charting and investigating the relationship between IL and other literacies, such as digital literacy; elaboration of case studies and identification of good practice in the application of IL. On that basis, InformAll produces reports, syntheses, sets of recommendations and journal articles.

- *Policy:* formulating policy advice and guidance on the relevance and value of IL, tailored to the environments or needs of different sectors, through the production of guidance notes, briefing papers and similar material.

- *Tools:* designing of toolkits, frameworks and other such devices intended to help stakeholders develop a better understanding of the relevance of IL, and / or to provide them with a practical means of evolving IL-related policies and practices.

- *Events:* running of workshops, webinars and conferences.

- *Influencing:* making the case for and promoting IL, for instances through presentations, responses to consultations, contacts with policymakers and other key organisational players – and, not least, promoting the outputs and outcomes from InformAll-enabled activities.

InformAll is a social enterprise. It was founded in December 2015 as a Community Interest Company overseen by a board of directors, each of which brings considerable expertise in IL. It previously existed as a programme of works under the auspices of the Research Information Network, during which time it built up a portfolio of achievements in areas such as the information skills of academic researchers, good practice in IL training, capabilities in data handling and IL in employment contexts. Thus although InformAll is new as an independent venture, it capitalises on the track record that it developed in its former incarnation.

InformAll is looking to fund itself chiefly through the securing of grant and/or contract funding from organisations such as Research Councils, bodies representing given professional groups and relevant charitable foundations. As suggested above, project proposals will be largely collaborative, with InformAll as facilitator for bidding consortia, and income being shared with its partners.

1. Introduction

1.1 Premise

Information in all its guises, and the rich seams of data that often underpin it, are fundamental building blocks for democratic and inclusive societies. The relationship that individuals, communities and organisations have with information strongly influences their behaviour. The methods that are deployed to search for, discover, access, retrieve, sift, interpret, analyse, manage, create, communicate and preserve information and data are major factors in how people are educated, develop their careers, play their part as informed citizens

in the wider world, and generally go about their business. But they need help to take full advantage of their complex relationship with information. How members of society develop appropriate knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence, the support they receive, the training and educational opportunities provided for them, and the take-up of such opportunities are highly pertinent to the way that they relate to information. The capabilities that relate to acquiring this know-how are sometimes referred to as information literacy (IL)[1].

These capabilities are critical for individuals to function as learners, employees, employers, and also as citizens. IL may be defined as knowing when and why individuals need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner[2]. It addresses a global challenge: UNESCO affirms that IL "empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. It is a basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion of all nations"[3]. But individuals do not become information literate spontaneously or merely through interacting with an increasingly sophisticated array of technological devices. Enabling IL requires a training and education effort at different life stages and in different contexts. It also calls for an increased awareness across society about the relevance and importance of such capabilities. This is the premise for InformAll, an enterprise dedicated to getting IL better recognised and understood across society as an important contributor to education and learning at all stages, as well as to social inclusiveness, citizenship and economic effectiveness.

This strategic plan describes briefly how InformAll intends to achieve these goals. It sets out the organisation's mission and aims. The plan explains how InformAll came about, and its achievements to date. It sets out how the enterprise proposes to develop its service offer: its expertise and distinctiveness, the nature of services offered to clients, its funding model, business prospects, initial budget and promotion/marketing effort. The plan also describes InformAll's business model – founded on the creation of a community interest company – and its governance. And finally, the document includes a risk analysis.

1.2 Mission

To develop understanding and raise awareness of the relevance, importance and value of information literacy to society and the economy, through research projects and other collaborative activities.

1.3 Aims

- to bring together stakeholders from different professional and organisational backgrounds that have an interest in developing an understanding of IL;

- to exploit this diversity of expertise and know-how by providing a rich and all-round view of IL;

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[1] Information literacy is a term that is widely recognised by librarians and by some information scientists and academic educationalists, but it is little used outside these circles and general awareness of it is low. However, the term has the advantage of being succinct, and for this reason it is used by InformAll and others as convenient shorthand for the capabilities and know-how associated with the handling of information, as defined in the first paragraph of this plan.

[2] This definition of IL, devised by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, is one of the more widely-used ones; see http://www.cilip.org.uk/cilip/advocacy-campaigns-awards/advocacy-campaigns/information-literacy/information-literacy

[3] Drawn from UNESCO's Alexandria Declaration (2005): http://www.ifla.org/publications/beacons-of-the-information-society-the-alexandria-proclamation-on-information-literacy

- to undertake research projects and other collaborative activities that can help different social and economic players acquire a better understanding of IL;

- to disseminate and exploit the outputs of such work for the purpose of promoting IL as an issue of relevance to society;

- to facilitate discussion, exchange of ideas and sharing of good practice relating to IL;

- to advocate for IL in the education process, including the broader context of professional development and lifelong learning, and promote greater co-ordination and a strategic approach to the provision of IL education and training;

- to work as a collective advocate for IL across different sectors whose remit covers areas of relevance to IL.

2 InformAll in 2015

2.1 History and context

InformAll originated as a set of related activities undertaken under the auspices of the Research Information Network (RIN). RIN was a specialist research and policy consultancy focused on investigating the way that information is created, used, shared and published by academic researchers. IL in university research and library settings formed a natural part of RIN's remit, and in mid-2012, building on preliminary RIN-funded work[4], a grant was secured from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) for a one-year programme[5] to establish a loose network of individuals and organisations who would work collaboratively to address a number of IL-related questions applying to higher education settings. This initial raft of work (detailed below) provided a proof of concept and was deemed sufficiently successful for HEFCE to provide a second tranche of funding[6] that ran from early 2014 to early 2015. By then, the scope of the work had expanded from its initial focus on the academic research realm to a consideration of IL in wider contexts, in particular in relation to employment. This shift in emphasis reflected the view among InformAll stakeholders that, given the imperative of raising awareness of IL, it made sense not to restrict the conversation purely to players in and around higher education. To emphasise this point, in mid-2014 the name of the initiative changed from its initial designation, Research Information and Digital Literacies Coalition (RIDLs) to InformAll – a term which better reflects the wider societal implications of information capabilities.

HEFCE did not renew its support of the initiative beyond February 2015. InformAll was thus faced with the challenge of how to sustain itself through alternative sources of funding – an imperative that was given added urgency by the unrelated decision to close down RIN at the end of 2015. In order to carry on successfully, InformAll therefore needs to develop as an independent venture able to take on work in its own right. The way that it proposes to do so is detailed in section 3 of this plan.

[4] http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20120107235512/http://www.rin.ac.uk/our-work/researcher-development-and-skills/information-handling-training-researchers-towards-more-co

[5] http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/ridls-phase-1/

[6] http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/

2.2 Activities to date

In looking to the future, InformAll can capitalise on a growing list of achievements, and on the contacts and networks that have been built up through a range of outputs and outcomes over the past three years. In most cases, and in accordance with InformAll's collaborative ethos, such activities were undertaken in partnership with relevant stakeholders. Partnership working is critical to InformAll's approach; a list of organisations which RIDLs /InformAll has interacted with is at **Annex**. The achievements include, in rough chronological order[7]:

- Formulating and promoting the information literacy 'lens' of Vitae's Researcher Development Framework (RDF)[8].

- Mapping the RDF against SCONUL's Seven Pillars of Information Literacy[9].

- Drafting Vitae's booklet on *The Informed Researcher* [10].

- Study and report on the role of research supervisors in the imparting of IL skills and competencies to their students[11].

- Detailed criteria (and a summarised version of these) to describe, review and evaluate IL training interventions[12].

- Identification of good practice in information handling and data management[13], undertaken as part of the RILADS project (Research Information Literacy and Digital Scholarship project), co-funded with SCONUL.

- Study and report on improving knowledge, capability and confidence in making research data more open[14].

- Study and report on transferring information know-how – IL at the interface between higher education and employment[15].

- Annotated bibliography on IL in the workplace[16] .

- Organising of roundtable event (jointly with CILIP) on workplace information competencies[17].

- Study, report and toolkit on the value of IL for employers[18].

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[7] A full list of achievements over the two HEFCE funding periods is available on request.

[8] https://www.vitae.ac.uk/vitae-publications/rdf-related/information-literacy-lens-on-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework-rdf-apr-2012.pdf

[9] http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20120107235618/http://www.rin.ac.uk/our-work/researcher-development-and-skills/information-handling-training-researchers/rdf-and-pillars

[10] https://www.vitae.ac.uk/news/the-informed-researcher-booklet-and-information-literacy-lens-on-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework-out-now

[11] http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20120107235601/http://www.rin.ac.uk/our-work/researcher-development-and-skills/information-handling-training-researchers/research-superv

[12] http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/ridls-criteria/

[13] http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/ridls-phase-1/strand3/

[14] http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/ridls-phase-1/strand5/

[15] http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/transferable-skills/transferable-il/

[16] http://www.researchinfonet.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Workplace-IL-annotated-bibliography.pdf

[17] http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/transferable-skills/roundtable/

[18] http://www.researchinfonet.org/infolit/ridls/transferable-skills/il-value/

- Drawing up of a new graduate employability lens for the SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy, with associated report (due for publication by end of January 2016).

Undertaking this programme of work allowed InformAll gradually to develop its network of contacts and partners, and to set up mechanisms – through a steering group, a mailing list of supporters, an e-newsletter, webinars – to encourage a dialogue, advise on projects and ensure good governance. There have been peer-reviewed presentations of InformAll's work at the European Conference on Information Literacy (ECIL), the Information: Interactions and Impact (i³) conference and the Librarians' Information Literacy Annual Conference (LILAC); and InformAll has also taken the opportunity to present at workshops organised by organisations such as the UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE), the Society for Research in Higher Education (SRHE), the Midlands NHS Regional Trainers Forum and Jisc. InformAll has contributed news articles, for instance for the Journal of Information Literacy; and blog pieces for the National Centre for Universities and Business. Finally, in the policy arena, InformAll has provided responses to publications such as the UK Digital Taskforce report on *Digital Skills for Tomorrow's World* and the report of the House of Lords Committee on Digital Skills on *Make or break – the UK's digital future*.

The achievements to date point to InformAll's growing credibility as a facilitator and initiator of IL-related endeavours, and should serve as a foundation for future business opportunities.

3 Service offer

3.1 Expertise and distinctiveness

InformAll's aims, set out at section 1.3, stress a crucial and distinct aspect of the enterprise: bringing together partners from different constituencies and professional groups that offer distinctive perspectives on the advancement of IL. It offers a framework and a capacity for joint working which draws on these different outlooks to provide a widely-representative view on challenges to be addressed. It constitutes a pool of experts, for the benefit of different communities who wish to develop their interest, policies or activities in information-related knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence. As such, it can contribute to the building of communities of interest.

This emphasis on diverse sectors is important because, to date, IL has often been seen as the preserve of specific professions: librarians (particularly academic librarians), who are those most likely to be involved in the practice of IL; and certain academics, notably in the fields of information science and education, whose take on IL may be both theoretical and practical. The work undertaken by these players is undeniably important; but if IL is to be better understood and appreciated more widely across society – which is fundamental to InformAll's purpose – there needs to be a broadening of the dialogue also to include other stakeholders that have had less or no exposure to the concept of IL, such as teachers, trainers, data managers, professional bodies, career advisors, employers, trade unions, policy-makers, the not-for-profit sector… There is also a need to develop the evidence base on the practice and impact of IL in areas, other than in the realm of librarianship and education, where it is less-well researched. Such research, along with promotion and advocacy, is crucial if the relevance and value of IL – as suggested in section 1.1 – is to be demonstrated to players whose awareness of it is low.

InformAll is well-placed to identify and make use of experts and interested parties. In the first instance, it can use the services of its connections in the library and research worlds, in the UK and internationally (see **Annex**); and it will expand its range of contacts and prospective partners in other domains with a view to widening the scope for collaborations.

Finally, InformAll will capitalise on the expertise and know-how of Stéphane Goldstein, who will be taking forward the initiative in its new incarnation. Until the end of 2015, he is RIN's Business Manager and Research Consultant. In that capacity, he has been responsible for developing RIN's initial involvement in IL from 2010, and from 2012 for setting up, piloting and managing InformAll (and previously RIDLs); and successfully bidding for HEFCE funding. Within RIN's overall spectrum of activities, he has devoted a significant amount of time to this initiative, and latterly to preparing the ground for InformAll's independent existence beyond 2015. He therefore brings several years of experience and know-how to his future role, as well as his range of contacts. He also has considerable experience in project and business management, facilitation and networking through his involvement with RIN, since 2005; and before that, also in a variety of policy and management roles at the Medical Research Council and Research Councils UK.

3.2 *Nature of InformAll services and deliverables*

The projects listed at section 2.2 give an indication of the sort of work that InformAll can continue to undertake in its new guise. Given its track record, the types of service (and associated deliverables) that it can offer to its prospective customers and partners may be summarised as follows:

- *Facilitation:* capitalising on InformAll's networking and outreach capability by bringing together diverse players with the view to engaging collectively in the sort of activities outlined above. This would include putting together project teams made up of individuals with defined areas of expertise, identifying funding opportunities, formulating joint proposals and managing multi-player projects where the pooling of different perspectives on IL is likely to add value. It could also involve, more broadly, bringing together assorted players with a view for instance to building communities of interest, joint advocacy and generating new ideas that derive from the creative mix of different professional perspectives.

- *Research:* developing the evidence base and analysing how IL applies to (and is interpreted in) different educational, professional and social contexts; charting and investigating the relationship between IL and other literacies, such as digital literacy; elaboration of case studies and identification of good practice in the application of IL. Deliverables stemming from this work might typically include reports, syntheses, sets of recommendations and journal articles.

- *Policy:* formulating policy advice and guidance on the relevance and value of IL, tailored to the environments or needs of different sectors. Deliverables would include guidance notes, briefing papers and similar material.

- *Tools:* designing of toolkits, frameworks and other such devices intended to help stakeholders develop a better understanding of the relevance of IL, and / or to provide them with a practical means of evolving IL-related policies and practices.

- *Events:* running of workshops, webinars and conferences.

- *Influencing:* making the case for and promoting IL, for instances through presentations, responses to consultations, contacts with policymakers and other key organisational

players – and, not least, promoting the outputs and outcomes from InformAll-enabled activities.

This list is not exhaustive and other service opportunities may arise as InformAll develops and refines its agenda. These services and deliverables are complementary and overlap to a significant extent; for instance, a research project may lead to the formulation of a tool derived from the evidence gathered during the course of the research.

For all these broad activities, much of InformAll's role will be to act as broker or facilitator. InformAll can make a real contribution, as outlined in section 3.1, by marshalling expertise from different sectors; playing a crucial co-ordinating role to achieve given objectives; and serving the needs of InformAll's project partners by providing them with opportunities to take part in projects from which they will derive revenue and other benefits.

It follows that the identification of partners, the development of a network of potential associates will be an integral and fundamental part of InformAll's activities. The enterprise will need to be judicious in seeking out timely collaborative opportunities, and in identifying and persuading the right interlocutors – that is, those that will be inclined to share InformAll's stance and to make a positive contribution to joint projects. Given that InformAll is relatively unknown in many sectors with which it wishes to engage, InformAll must continue to project itself convincingly and where appropriate to exploit (and possibly join) existing networks, associations, collaborations and representative bodies. This is related to the promotion and marketing outlined in section 4.

It should be noted that training has been deliberately left out of the list of activities. Although training and education are intimately associated with IL, InformAll is not currently best placed to run or facilitate training courses or to develop training materials. But that may change in the future, and in the meantime, trainers may well figure among the experts brought in to contribute to any of the above activities.

3.3 Funding model

It is likely that the most significant source of revenue for InformAll will be grant funding for individual projects (a couple of other but less likely approaches are discussed below). Some of this may result from clients approaching InformAll with a request for a particular piece of work, but in most cases it will be necessary to bid for funding competitively, either in response to targeted calls or through response-mode schemes. In the light of the arguments set out at 3.1, bids will largely be collaborative, with InformAll acting as a co-ordinator for bidding consortia, and income being shared with its partners. InformAll will in some cases take the lead in such consortia; its precise role will vary according to circumstances, and flexibility will be required about defining precisely how it can contribute most usefully and cost-effectively to different pieces of work.

There are a number of funding organisations which might be sources of grant revenue. They are listed below in section 3.4. The identification of funding opportunities, the building of bidding consortia and the drafting of project proposals will inevitably represent a large fraction of InformAll's workload. Such opportunities are being sought out even before the end of 2015, in anticipation of building an initial programme of confirmed or expected work by the time InformAll is established as an independent venture. This should provide a sound financial basis for the early months of the enterprise, in 2016.

In the course of discussions among InformAll stakeholders during 2014 and in the early part of 2015, two other possible funding models were discussed, but were discounted as unrealistic, at least in the short to medium term:

- Core funding, in the form of a block grant to cover a programme of activities over a given period of time: this is the way that HEFCE funded InformAll (and before that, RIDLs) between mid-2012 and early 2015. However, the likelihood of securing this type of sustained support, either from HEFCE or any other funder, is slim in current circumstances.

- Membership and / or subscriptions: an alternative or complementary approach to funding is to set up InformAll as a membership organisation, and to seek fees or subscriptions. Attempts were made, from late 2014, to encourage membership based on a relatively low rate[19], but take-up has been slow. Whatever the level of the membership rate, individuals and organisations will usually join only if they perceive that there will be some form of return on their financial outlay. If this approach is to succeed, InformAll needs to do more to define a tangible set of membership benefits. It is also clear that fees would need to be set at a relatively high level (and certainly much higher than the rates set tentatively at the end of 2014) to produce a realistic income stream – which would necessitate the formulation of very significant membership benefits, such as use of consultancy services and / or privileged access to InformAll outputs. InformAll is not yet in a position to offer this sort of service.

3.4 Business prospects and customers

InformAll has already demonstrated its capacity to secure funding, initially from HEFCE and more recently, albeit on a much smaller scale, from the CILIP IL Group Research Bursaries scheme[20]. But it is evident that more needs to be done to secure funding from a wider range of sources. The indicative budget set out in section 6.1 suggests that InformAll will need to successfully bid for say between four and six projects each year (assuming that, as with the CILIP IL Group project, grants may often be relatively small – and given the collaborative nature of bids, funding will most likely be shared with partners in bidding consortia). This target is not unrealistic, particularly since there is a good range of possible funders who may have an interest in exploring the relevance of IL in a range of academic and non-academic contexts.

InformAll has drawn up a list of possible funders, essentially public research bodies and charitable foundations, and their associated funding schemes. The list will be updated regularly in the light of new or changed schemes, and InformAll will need to keep a constant lookout for funding opportunities, in the UK and beyond.

It is understood that, in the case of some funders, InformAll itself will not be eligible for inclusion in the formal list of bidders; for instance, Research Councils tend to restrict their grant support to academic recipients. In such circumstances, it should be possible for InformAll to ensure its participation as an associate or a sub-contractor.

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[19] The rate that InformAll applied at the end of 2014 was £20 for individuals (£10 for students / unwaged) and £90 for organisations – but in spite of publicity and promotion, only a handful of members have actually joined.

[20] The scheme is funding the last of the projects listed in section 2.2, on the value of IL for employers.

3.5 Competition

IL is increasingly recognised as an academic discipline in its own right, in the UK and internationally; hence there is a significant cadre of individuals (academics or practitioners, notably university librarians) who undertake research in this area, and who may be seen as competitors. However, given InformAll's necessarily collaborative approach, they are also prospective partners. There is therefore a tension to be reconciled, and the challenge is to make use of potential competitors by maximising the opportunities for partnership, and persuading such partners that InformAll can add value to their own expertise; and crucially, that it can help them exploit funding opportunities.

For those IL-related activities that are less closely related to research – facilitation, promotion, outreach, community-building, etc. – InformAll may face competition from a range of consultancies and other organisations. But few of these have a focus on IL (although there are a number of initiatives with an interest in the closely related area of digital literacy), which may help InformAll to identify and occupy a niche position.

4 Promotion and marketing

Much of InformAll's *raison d'être* is to nurture relationships between diverse stakeholders. As suggested in section 3.2, the building and constant developing of an outreach and networking capacity follow naturally from that. This has served as the basis for promoting the organisation, and will continue to do so. Rather than engage in potentially expensive marketing exercises, InformAll will exploit its growing number of contacts to present itself, in a judicious and targeted way, as a credible player, all the while identifying collaborative project opportunities. This effort will not be limited to the UK, and it is important to continue engaging internationally. InformAll's presence at major events such as the European Conference on Information Literacy (ECIL) will be an important component of this effort; its capacity to get itself on the programme of such events, through presentations and papers, will help to underpin its visibility.

InformAll's online presence will be a crucial factor. During 2014, InformAll's web pages, within the RIN website (but with their own URL: www.informall.org.uk; rights have also been acquired for the www.informall.co.uk and www.informall.eu domain names), were restructured, expanded and given their own distinct look, with a logo to match. In December 2015, a completely separate InformAll website was created, using the same URL, with a clearer and cleaner structure (but with the same visual identity; this is attractive and well thought-out, and there is no reason to change it). However, InformAll's presence on social media – particularly Facebook and Twitter – is undeveloped at present, and there is a case for building that up.

Printed promotional material will also feature in the promotional effort, through occasional leaflets or flyers to be distributed, for instance, at conferences and other events.

5 Business model and governance

InformAll was set up in December 2015 as limited liability company in its own right, to enable it to function independently and to give it a distinct personality with a capacity to bid for contract work as a recognised organisation. InformAll stakeholders have taken a strong view that it should operate as a social enterprise.

Given this last requirement, the form chosen for the business model is that of a community interest company (CIC), limited by guarantee. The *BIS Guide to legal forms for social enterprises*[21] offers a useful rationale for choosing CICs as a suitable vehicle:

> "*A Community Interest Company (CIC) is a form of company specifically created for the social enterprise sector. CICs are required by law to have provisions in their articles of association to enshrine their social purpose, specifically an 'asset lock', which restricts the transfer of assets out of the CIC, ultimately to ensure that they continue to be used for the benefit of the community; and a cap on the maximum dividend and interest payments it can make. CIC structure provides a clear signal to investors that the enterprise operates for the benefit of the community, and that this social purpose is protected by proportionate regulation.*"

In reaching a view about the suitability of a CIC, a number of factors were considered:

- Charitable status is excluded because, although this confers a number of advantages (notably tax relief and the public recognition and trust that charities are associated with), it could lead to restrictions on commercial activities if these do not correspond strictly to defined charitable objectives; charities that engage in broader commercial activities tend to overcome this by setting up a trading arm, which would be over-complex for InformAll's purposes. In addition, the regulatory requirement, as overseen by the Charity Commission, is stringent and is likely be burdensome in comparison with the regime operated by Companies House and the Regulator of Community Interest Companies.

- There was also consideration about whether InformAll should be run as an unincorporated business – in effect, as a sole trader – or an incorporated company. Unincorporated businesses imply that the risk and liability (including contractual, debt and tax liabilities) are carried by individuals rather than the company. This model is suitable for small-scale concerns, and is subject to fewer requirements – for instance, there is no obligation to provide annual returns and accounts. However, given the nature of InformAll's business, the easier route afforded by sole trading is probably not the most appropriate. According to guidance from the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)[22], incorporation is advisable, and often necessary, where businesses take on significant contractual obligations; and also in the event that there is a need to raise capital. Incorporation also limits the liability to the company as a whole, rather than to the individual(s) running it as sole traders – so the risk is carried by the company as a distinct legal person.

- As with any other company, CICs may be formed as companies limited either by shares (CLS) or by guarantee (CLG). The raising of share capital is unlikely to be a realistic option, so InformAll has opted for a CLG status. CLGs do not have shareholders, but instead have members; these cannot personally profit from any increase in value of the company, but they nevertheless act as its guarantors.

- Finally, RIN has operated successfully as a CIC since early 2012. This has set a useful precedent, and demonstrates that the CIC model works well for small research and policy consultancies operating in the broad education and learning sector.

[21] Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) – *Guide to legal forms for social enterprise* : https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/31677/11-1400-guide-legal-forms-for-social-enterprise.pdf

[22] Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) – *Guide to legal forms for social enterprise* : https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/31677/11-1400-guide-legal-forms-for-social-enterprise.pdf

CLGs, including CICs, are overseen by members, who are collectively the company's ultimate decision-making body, and by at least one director. A two-tier oversight structure made up of members and one or more director is unnecessary complex, so that the governance structure is formed of members who are also all directors – an arrangement that is permissible under company law.

The six founding members/directors are: Moira Bent, Stéphane Goldstein, Charles Inskip, Jane Secker, Geoff Walton and Andrew Whitworth.

6 Business management - Staff and accommodation, budget

6.1 Business management

InformAll will operate on a small scale, with minimum overheads. From January 2016, it will employ Stephane Goldstein, full-time; this is very unlikely to change in the short to medium term. He will also be one of the company's directors / members. To keep costs down, he will operate from home, or from premises which do not involve the payment of rent. However, as outlined in the budget, an allowance is made for the purchasing of professional services (book-keeping, accounting and legal); this is likely to be a worthwhile investment to ensure a reliable and effort-minimising compliance with business requirements and expectations. Although the InformAll website will be managed in-house, costs have also been included for external support with set-up and configuration.

6.2 Budget

It is anticipated that, in its first year of operation, from January 2016, InformAll's budgetary requirement will be as follows:

Projected costs for InformAll during 2016	
Salary (incl. PAYE, employee NIC & employee pension)	£32,400
Pension costs (employer contribution at 10%)	£3,240
Employer NIC	£2,520
Equipment (incl. IT)	£200
Website and IT set-up costs	£3,000
Running costs - IT, telephony, web hosting/security	£1,600
Running costs - publicity, marketing	£1,000
Running costs – printing, postage, stationery	£120
Running costs - room hire, other meeting/events costs	£1,000
Running costs - travel, subsistence, expenses	£3,000
Running costs - attendances at events, training	£2,000
Running costs - subscriptions	£200
Professional services - book-keeping, accountancy, payroll	£1,180
Professional services - legal fees	£2,400
Insurance - employer's liability, professional indemnity	£800
Contingency	£3,000
VAT	£5,000
Corporation Tax	£0
	£62,660

These projected costs carry the following assumptions:

- *Employer NIC:* it is assumed that this will be at band D, payable at 10.4% with an allowance of £676/month[23].

- *VAT:* all above costs are VAT exclusive. Although in its first year InformAll is very unlikely to reach the VAT turnover threshold of £82,000 pa, the company will be voluntarily VAT-registered, and the budget includes an estimate of net VAT contributions[24].

- *Corporation Tax:* it is assumed that InformAll will make little or no profit during its first year, which equates to zero Corporation Tax (chargeable at 20% of taxable profits) - but it is not inconceivable that, in the event of a small profit, a few hundred £ might need to be added.

7 Risks

Key risk	Mitigation	*Likelihood, 1-3*	*Severity, 1-3*	*Risk score, 1-9*
1. Financial shortfall: failing to generate the income necessary to meet InformAll costs.	(i) actively looking for funding opportunities, in collaboration with partners (ii) keeping rigorous control over costs, and regularly monitoring cash flow to ensure that cash is available to meet all anticipated costs (iii) participating in bids only if there is certainty that both direct and indirect costs can be covered, and if possible aiming for a surplus for investment in unfunded activities	2	3	**6**
2. Overstretch: over-committing and failing to deliver because of insufficient capacity	(i) ensuring that projects are realistically drawn up (ii) securing solid commitment on the part of collaborative partners, thus allowing for well-defined spread of workload	1	3	**3**
3. Added value: failing to provide outputs or outcomes that move forward or influence the IL agenda	Maintaining dialogue with partners and stakeholders to ensure that their interests, priorities and aspirations are address in the way that projects are defined	2	3	**3**

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[23] For further information, see see https://www.gov.uk/national-insurance-rates-letters/contribution-rates

[24] For the present, InformAll has opted to pay VAT under HMRC's Flat Rate Scheme, amounting (in the first year) to 11% of turnover – see https://www.gov.uk/vat-flat-rate-scheme/overview . For general VAT rules, see https://www.gov.uk/vat-businesses/how-vat-works ; for details of VAT turnover thresholds, see https://www.gov.uk/vat-registration/overview

4. Reach: failing to generate interest in or reach diverse sectors and communities	Constantly developing networking capacity, exploiting existing contacts, proactively and persuasively engaging with prospective stakeholders, including less obvious interlocutors	3	3	**9**
5. Partnership drag: difficulty in identifying partners / collaborators for projects, or excessive time taken to put together such partnerships	Advance planning and foresight to generate interest in collaborative project opportunities well before the desired start of possible activities	2	3	**6**

11 January 2016

Annex

Organisations with which InformAll has principally interacted

AGCAS – Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services

British Library

CBI – Confederation of British Industry

CILIP – Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

DCC – Digital Curation Centre

DPC – Digital Preservation Coalition

ECIL – European Conference on Information Literacy

EnIL – European Network on Information Literacy

Go ON UK

GMCVO – Greater Manchester Council for Voluntary Organisations

HEA – Higher Education Academy

HEFCE – Higher Education Funding Council for England

Hireserve

IFLA – International Federation of Library Associations

INASP – International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications

Institute of Development Studies

Jisc

Jorum

London Borough of Camden

NCUB – National Centre for Universities and Business

QAA – Quality Assurance Agency

SCONUL – Society of College, National and University Libraries

Selex ES

SLA – Special Libraries Association

SRHE – Society for Research into Higher Education

TeenTech

TUC – Trades Union Congress

UKCES – UK Commission for Employment and Skills

UKCGE- UK Council for Graduate Education

UNESCO

Vitae

WILP – Welsh Information Literacy Project

In addition, InformAll has collaborated or worked closely with individuals from the following academic institutions:

London School of Economics and Political Science

Loughborough University

Newcastle University

Northumbria University

Robert Gordon University

University College London

University of Glasgow

University of Manchester

University of Stirling

University of Surrey

University of Warwick