

## **“BIG CONVERSATION”: BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS DOCUMENT**

### **Purpose**

1. The “Big Conversation” is part of the process of defining our professional future and ensuring a sustainable future for CILIP. There are two main drivers for this work: recognition that the world in which CILIP operates is changing rapidly and that CILIP may also have to change so that the Institute remains fit for purpose; and recognition that the post-recession economic environment may require CILIP to change its business model in order to remain financially viable in 2011 and beyond. The objectives of the work are, ultimately, to ensure that our professional Institute is seen to provide value for money for its stakeholder community and has a business model which is financially viable.
2. In this context the “Big Conversation” can be defined as a “productive enquiry” – an enquiry designed to find out the things CILIP needs to know in order to do the things CILIP needs to do. What will the world of the knowledge and information domain look like in the next decade or so? Where will a professional association fit in to that domain? How will colleagues engage with that professional association? The intention of the “Big Conversation” is to engage the CILIP stakeholder community in discussion about the future for our profession and our professional Institute, consulting widely and reporting the outcomes back to CILIP Council in order to deliver a vision for the future, a roadmap to achieve that vision, and ownership of both the vision and the roadmap.

### **Requirements**

3. An expert and independent consultancy will be commissioned to carry out the conversation. The conversation itself will be carried out using a recognised “customer value” methodology which gives credibility to the outcomes and which then enables CILIP Council to make real choices about the future for CILIP.
4. To manage the Big Conversation, CILIP Council has established a Project Board, chaired by the CILIP President and drawn from the CILIP community. The Project Board will: steer the programme of work; appoint the consultancy; guide and oversee progress; and report to Council. A recognised project management methodology, proportionate to the scale of the project, will be used by the Project Board.
5. The Big Conversation will surface the issues and views which will need to be addressed by CILIP Council in planning the future for CILIP. It is not the role of the Big Conversation project to plan that future: that is the role of CILIP Council.

### **Scope**

6. CILIP Council has agreed that the Big Conversation will “consult widely” about “the future for CILIP.” This is a deliberately open brief in terms of both content and process. The content of the conversation will extend beyond CILIP itself to consider

the future of the knowledge/information domain. The conversation as process will be an “open system” which recognises the validity of informal discussions outside the organisation of the conversation itself. A key requirement of the methodology will be to capture informal as well as formal discussions, including those already taking place before any “official launch” of the conversation.

7. In terms of the content of the conversation, the aim is for the conversation itself to surface the issues for discussion. There will be no attempt to prescribe in advance what those issues might be. It is hoped that the conversation will (a) surface issues, (b) consider those issues, and (c) draw conclusions about those issues. The initial framework for the content of the conversation is therefore the three questions as stated in paragraph 2 above:
  - \* What will the world of the knowledge and information domain look like in the next decade or so?
  - \* Where will a professional association fit in to that domain?
  - \* How will colleagues engage with that professional association?
8. CILIP has carried out a substantial amount of market research since its establishment in 2002 to gather the views of CILIP Members and to compare CILIP with other professional associations and membership bodies. It seems sensible for the findings of this market research to be fed in to the conversation as appropriate.
9. In this context the “Big Conversation” can be described as an example of “integrative learning” – integrating information from a range of sources: the conversation itself; the informal discussions which will surround the conversation; and the market research already carried out by CILIP.
10. In terms of the process of the conversation, the aim is to include the widest possible stakeholder community and to engage a sufficiently large number of colleagues across the knowledge/information domain to give credibility to the conclusions drawn from the conversation.
11. As already noted above, the conversation is likely to take on a life of its own at an informal level, particularly through social media websites. The methodology employed will need to encompass the informal conversations which will take place around the “fringe” of the structured conversation itself.
12. Engaging the widest possible stakeholder community suggests that the process by which the conversation is conducted needs to include all three of the main channels of communication: print, online, and face-to-face. Comments received have highlighted two things: the need for all channels to be interactive; and the desirability of arranging opportunities for face-to-face interaction at regional level. This suggests that one approach to be included in the conversation could be the preparation of tools or materials to enable face-to-face discussions to take place without the consultant being present.
13. The “Big Conversation” project is the first stage of a wider programme to determine a new model for the professional association which serves the knowledge/information domain. That wider programme has four stages, as follows:

- The conversation – to surface and consider issues, draw conclusions from those issues, and report to CILIP Council.
  - The vision – to be synthesised by CILIP Council from the outcomes of the conversation and then verified with CILIP Members and the wider stakeholder community.
  - The roadmap – to be developed by CILIP Council and other key stakeholders as the means by which the vision will be put into practice.
  - Ownership and implementation – by which the vision and roadmap is owned by the CILIP community and implemented by CILIP Council on behalf of that community.
14. In terms of the “Big Conversation” project only stage one of this wider programme is “in scope.” The remainder of the programme – establishing the vision, developing the roadmap, generating ownership, moving through implementation – is “out of scope” so far as the “Big Conversation” project itself is concerned.
15. The elements of the “Big Conversation” project which are “in scope” are: the conversation itself; the informal discussions which will take place around the structured conversation; the market research already carried out by CILIP; and the creation and use of tools and materials to enable face-to-face discussion, and to support conversation through print and online media.

### **Timeline**

16. The aim is to complete the Big Conversation in June 2010 so that the outcomes can be reported to, and considered by, Council at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> July. This enables Council to put any consequent matters to the CILIP AGM in October, if need be.
17. The project timeline therefore, in outline is:
- Planning the project: February.
  - Appointing the consultant: March.
  - Conducting the conversation: April to June.
18. The outline timeline for the wider programme is:
- Complete the conversation and report to Council: June/July 2010.
  - Establish and verify the vision: October 2010.
  - Agree the roadmap: December 2010.
  - Implement the outcomes: during 2011.

**24 February 2010**