

Brief for an evaluation of project V-JAM

Background to brief

About NESTA

NESTA is the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts. Our aim is to transform the UK's capacity for innovation. We invest in early stage companies, inform innovation policy and encourage a culture that helps innovation to flourish. NESTA's mission is to transform the UK's capacity for innovation. It aims to do this by:

- establishing well-evidenced models of how innovation happens in the UK
- establishing NESTA as a renowned centre of expertise in innovation
- having NESTA's models adopted by others

NESTA's Innovation Programmes

NESTA's Innovation Programmes develop pioneering but practical projects designed to demonstrate how to stimulate and support the UK's capacity for innovation. Our approach is to develop a hypothesis, run tests to develop insights and evidence, and then market these insights and evidence, with a view to adoption.

Across NESTA's programmes, we aim for our evaluations to address the following core questions:

- Did the programme/project deliver what it set out to deliver?
- Can we identify which aspects of the programme/project worked and which did not?
- Does the programme/project demonstrate processes or models that can be scaled up?
- Can we demonstrate that the intervention made a lasting impact?
- Does the programme/project represent value for money?
- Does the programme/project demonstrate 'amplification', i.e. is it influencing UK innovation policies and programmes?

NESTA Connect

Innovation occurs at the point where disciplines, organisations or cultures collide. We believe that the majority of businesses and research and education institutes in the UK have yet to wake up to the benefits of collaborative innovation. This is why NESTA Connect exists: to disrupt traditional boundaries and support extreme collaborations. We want to encourage the collisions between different worlds that stimulate innovation.

NESTA Connect is focussing on three core themes.

Knowledge Connect – focusing on activity that creates innovation through the interaction of two or more disciplines or sectors.

Corporate Connect – working with big companies such as P&G, Virgin and Oracle to stimulate innovation by collaborating with small companies or individuals.

Web Connect – understanding the future of the web on collaborative innovation and its geographic, political, organisational impact.

Project summary

The V-JAM project is part of the 'Corporate Connect' strand of investigation.

V-JAM is a project that investigates a specific approach to engaging users in leading innovation. The first component of V-JAM is a day long event, to be held at NESTA headquarters. Two main groups of people will be invited to the event: firstly individuals associated with Virgin Atlantic (such as staff, cabin crew, members of the frequent flyer programme, members of the 'V-Flyer' community) and secondly web developers. Lead by external facilitators, they will be encouraged to work together in generating and developing ideas in an area of interest to Virgin Atlantic. Further details on the event can be highlighted by an excerpt of copy from the draft invitation to the event:

We're interested in ways for social media to help make air travel more convenient, useful and enjoyable. We've gathered together some diverse people to do this: some of you're experienced travellers, some are entrepreneurial web developers, and some of you are employees of Virgin Atlantic.

This is an Open Innovation Event. That means whatever gets shared here can be used for inspiration by anyone in the room. We'll all be free to make use of what we learn.

But what we would like to highlight is that NESTA and Virgin together are looking to support specific innovations that might get started today: support in the form of advice, but also support in the form of money.

We hope that all of you will get into conversations that inform and interest you. But we also very much hope that some innovative projects can get started here, and at the end of the afternoon, before breaking for well earned drinks, we'll have space for those projects and ideas to be shared.

The second component of V-JAM will investigate post event strategy: what is the best way of maintaining momentum and making the next step towards a new innovation?

Objectives of evaluation

NESTA has 3 main objectives for this evaluation (but, evaluators are encouraged to suggest additional questions or areas of investigation, based on their expertise):

1. To assess whether this method of engaging users in leading innovation is:
 - a) effective
 - b) re-usable

Some of the associated questions we are interested in answering:

- How would you describe the approach that has been undertaken? Does this approach work? Why or why not?
- Could this approach be used as a basis for a generic approach to engaging users in innovation (in fields other than aviation and for solutions other than web apps)?
- Are there ways we could improve upon the method to make it more effective and re-usable?
- Across the spectrum of attendees, what are the motivations for attending the event? How has the event benefited them?

2. To capture learnings from this approach to engaging users:

- a) in order to feed back to Virgin Atlantic
- b) to add to our knowledge base in the area of 'user lead innovation'

3. To produce a visually stimulating record of the V-JAM project:

- a) in order that we can communicate effectively what the project is all about and why we've been involved
- b) to encourage other corporations to deploy the method, if the method is re-usable

Preferred approach to evaluation

NESTA Connect generally asks evaluators of its projects to combine traditional analytical approaches with an ethnographic approach in order to gain insights on the impact of difference, relationships and interactions on the successful outcomes of collaborative innovation. For this evaluation project, the focus will be on conducting video ethnography at project events, but evaluators will also be required to edit this material (using their observations and insights) to address the objectives of the evaluation. More detail on the key project aspects to be captured and deliverables is detailed in the sections that follow.

Key project aspects to be captured

V-JAM 28th November 2008
10:00 – 17:00 (exact timing unconfirmed)

- 50/60 attendees
- we would like to capture in writing and on video the general dynamics, atmosphere and flow of the event, with emphasis on individuals and relationships

Individual participant ethnographies

- we would like to capture the experience of participation, how they see their role, what their attitude is to the event and approach etc.

Virgin Atlantic

- we want to capture the thoughts and attitudes towards the event (and more generally to engaging 'users' in leading innovation) of key individuals from Virgin Atlantic

- there will be a small number (under 5) of individuals concerned
- we want to capture this information **before**, **during** and **after** the event

Follow-up projects (number unconfirmed, probably 2 or 3)

The V-JAM event will instigate further activity that we will want to evaluate. The number, content, scope and timings of these spin-out projects will be determined after the V-JAM event. For the purposes of your proposal, please quote for two additional 1 day observation sessions or interviews.

Deliverables

1. Report - full written report combining analysis and critique from the observations, with a 1-page executive summary. Use of visuals/diagrams to illustrate key points is encouraged.

2. Footage – the footage captured (format to be agreed)

3. Edits – 3 edits of the footage (format to be agreed):

a) the story – a 2 minute edit which summarises what V-JAM is all about: Who is involved? What is it? Why is it important?

b) the learnings – a longer edit presenting the key findings from the project (however long is required – usually about 15 minutes).

c) sorted clips – we have identified some cross-cutting themes that are important factors in collaborative innovation: **Difference** (between partners with implications on creativity, tensions etc.); **Relationships** (trust, shared risk etc.) and **Interactions** (facilitation, leadership etc.). We would like to capture clips of individual instances in the project where these themes are identified and explored.

The different edits will be used as our primary means of communication with a range of audiences, from the general public through to CEOs of big business. We want to be able to tell the V-JAM story, present the detail and learnings from this specific approach and influence other organisations to follow our method if it's relevant.

4. Presentation – a power point presentation summarising the evaluation.

Submitting your proposal

Please provide a quote for the whole project within your proposal, including a suitable breakdown. Feel free to supplement or to supplant any of the specifications made above, with clear reasoning and cost implications.

Please email your proposal to jonathan.crowley@nesta.org.uk by 10am on Wednesday 29th October.

We will hold interviews and appoint evaluators in the week commencing Monday 3rd November.

Direct any questions to jonathan.crowley@nesta.org.uk.