



Business model of the National Forest Gardening Scheme

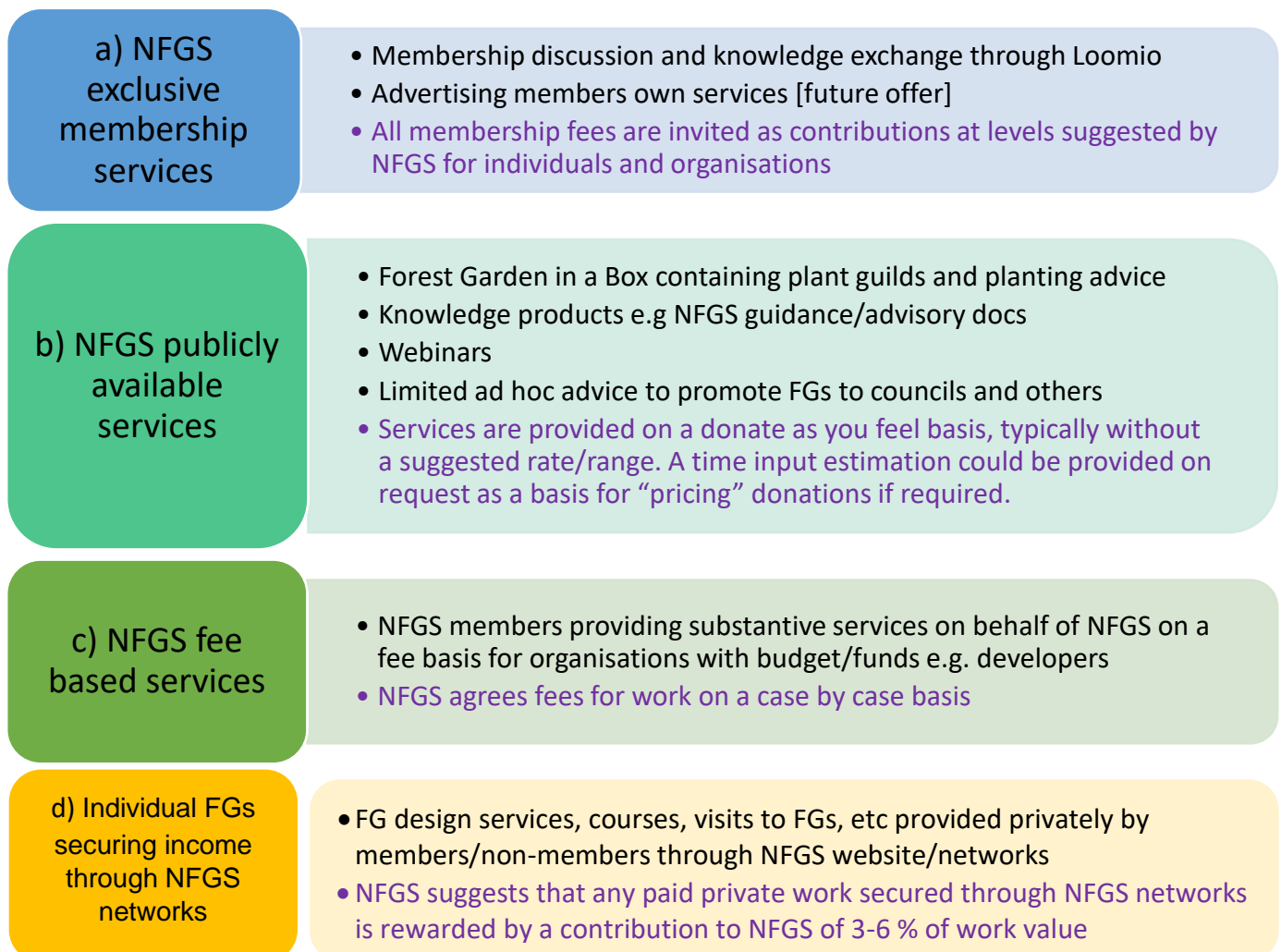
This business model of the NFGS will be reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis

Introduction

The NFGS was registered as a Community Interest Company on 27/6/2019. As a CIC the NFGS endeavours to generate income in order to fulfil its social purpose. The NFGS has very limited expenditure and does not plan to expand this significantly in the coming year, so its income requirements are quite modest. To date directors have undertaken a significant amount of work on a pro bono basis and this is envisaged to continue for the foreseeable future so income generation is not required to pay directors. Nonetheless the NFGS does incur some costs and these need to be covered. The business model is based upon the gift economy approach to the knowledge/tools prepared on behalf of NFGS, in part as so much work has been gifted to date. A pay as you feel approach to income will be the default, though provision has also been made for commissioned/ fee-based work too.

Income model overview

This model is evolving and opportunistic, describing a mixture of what is now starting to earn income and what we hope will do so in the future. It does not set targets for income from sources/activities, though actual income will be reviewed retrospectively as understanding builds from trial and error of what works. The visual below defines four main categories of income.



Further explanation;

- a) NFGS exclusive membership services. The Loomio platform provides the main current exclusive benefits with further envisaged benefits such as members advertising services via the web site to be added in future. Membership payments are suggested on a donations/contributions basis. The importance of offering good service and value for money for members is recognised even though payments are not obligatory.
- b) NFGS publicly available services. Services provided by NFGS in this category are defined as those when input is provided solely for NFGS benefit (currently all work in this category has been undertaken pro bono), and the output is owned by NFGS. These are available through channels outside the exclusive membership category and so are open to the wider world to draw upon. In such cases a general donation will be requested.
- c) NFGS fee-based services. It is possible that in the future NFGS directors/members may provide services on behalf of NFGS [as opposed to working for themselves as in category d)] on a negotiated fee basis to developers, local councils etc. In order to distinguish between services gifted as in b), as a guide it is suggested that when a single organisation is requiring a higher level of NFGS support that is likely to go beyond one day's work in three months, that work should be undertaken on a negotiated fee basis. In such cases it is likely that the NFGS members providing services, which by definition will require a more significant time/work input, will also be paid for this work. [Official invoices are likely to be required for fee-based services.]
- d) Individual FG [Forest Gardeners] securing income through NFGS networks. Individuals, either as members or non-members, who earn some living through their forest gardening/ permaculture/ gardening work, may wish to promote their work [where their activities are in line with NFGS aims] through the NFGS, e.g. website, or by bi lateral connection. If income for the individual is secured that arises which is attributable to introductions made through NFGS networks, then it is suggested that a contribution is made by the individual who has earned income to the NFGS.

Income management

The NFGS will need internet-based systems that can distinguish between the above categories so money received can be linked to each of the different income categories. This distinction will help evolve the business model by enabling NFGS to understand which activities are more or less successful in securing income. The table below sets out what business systems are in place and what needs to be developed.

Income category	Internet based business system requirements
a) NFGS exclusive membership services	In place: NFGS website membership form button leads to a PayPal membership donation button
b) NFGS publicly available services	In place: NFGS website PayPal general donation button
c) NFGS fee-based services	To be established. Ideally this could be via an internet payment, but it is likely that some organisations will require on invoice and on off line payment
d) Individual FG [Forest Gardeners] securing income through NFGS networks	To be established: any paid private work secured through NFGS networks is rewarded by a contribution to NFGS of 3-6 % of work value. It will be useful to have a distinct payment channel for any income in this category.

It would be useful to establish a dashboard system that could link through to each of the categories so that quarterly and annual snapshots could be provided. For the time being this could be off line/only visible to directors but in future it may be beneficial to have this available for members and others to see.