

LGA International work

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

This report sets out the principles behind the LGA's international programmes, describes the externally-funded work currently being managed by the LGA and updates members on future activity.

The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), Carl Wright, will present to the Board, set out the work that CLGF has undertaken with LGA member councils in the past few years through the Department for International Development (DFID) funded Good Practice Scheme and highlight potential for future funding and joint LGA/CLGF work.

Recommendation

Members are asked to comment on the report, assess current priorities for lobbying and discuss potential lobbying over the coming year.

Action

Officers to action as directed by Members.

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LGA International work

Background

1. The LGA delivers a number of projects which provide support to local government in the developing world. This work includes capacity building, peer support and general training/development. There are a number of basic political steers which guide the LGA's work in this area:
 - 1.1 All work is based on demand from sister LGAs or councils in the developing world.
 - 1.2 The funding for projects is sourced externally.
 - 1.3 Delivery is based on practitioner-to-practitioner support, rather than the use of expensive consultants.
2. There is also a clear geographical focus (Commonwealth and Eastern Europe) which guides how we prioritise our response to demands for support.
3. There are three important issues for members to consider:
 - 3.1 Our partnership with the Commonwealth needs further work as resources from DFID ended in December 2011.
 - 3.2 In Jan 2012, the LGA achieved "approved supplier" status with DFID and this will develop new work.
 - 3.3 As our record of delivery develops, there will be increased demand upon the sector.

The context of our work

4. There is increasing demand for the skills and expertise of the UK local government sector from councils and associations of councils in developing nations. We have a clear view from sister associations that local government in the developing world prefers support from current practitioners rather than costly consultants. It is more effective, less expensive and provides for long-term relationships which make a difference.
5. With an extremely limited resource base to meet this demand upon English councils, the LGA looks to sources of external funding to help develop projects. In this area, we have worked extensively with the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) and we have developed partnerships with a range of agencies to support capacity building and development work.

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6. We work with a variety of aid agencies to facilitate local government practitioner engagement in project delivery and to meet demand from the developing world. As a result the LGA has a reputation as the gateway to UK local government expertise and supporting good governance in developing democracies.

Summary of our recent and ongoing work

Peer Review in Africa

7. Between January and September 2012 the LGA and the United Cities & Local Government Africa (UCLGA) will deliver five pilot peer reviews across Africa, shadowed by UK teams. The selection process for the five participating UK member peers has begun and despite the postponement of the peer training event in December, this is now scheduled for the week of 30 January.

Pakistan

8. A three year DFID-sponsored capacity building project with the Local Councils Association of Punjab (LCAP) was completed in December 2011. However, there is continued demand for UK local government to support calls for the reinstatement of democratically elected local government in Pakistan. In October Cllr Richard Kemp chaired a seminar on how UK institutions with connections to Pakistan, and the wider diaspora can play a more active role in supporting the country's return to elected local government. The LGA is working closely with CLGF on how this work can progress both within the UK and in Pakistan.

South Africa

9. Our DFID-sponsored work with the South African LGA (SALGA) was completed in December 2011. This work included a peer review of SALGA which initiated the above pan-African work. There is potential for the LGA to play a further role in supporting SALGA's work around peer support for South African municipalities. This is being pursued with SALGA's management.

Arab Spring

10. The LGA was asked look at how UK local government could respond to events in North Africa. As a result, the LGA made a written submission to the Common's Foreign Affairs Select Committee inquiry into the British government's role in building the institutions of democracy and civil society in Egypt, Tunisia and other Arab countries. This follows discussions with Whitehall about the Arab Partnership Fund and the potential for the LGA to

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support the DFID/FCO programmes on transparency, accountability and governance. Contacts are being pursued with the British Embassy in Morocco.

Kosovo

11. The DFID funded project “Strengthening Financial and Administrative Systems for the decentralisation of the Social Care Services Programme” started in January 2011. The LGA is delivering the project with the lead partner, COFFEY International and two other implementing partners from Kosovo and Slovenia. The project has experienced a number of difficulties in its implementation but despite this the LGA contribution has been delivered successfully with very positive feedback from the Association of Kosovo Municipalities. We are also supporting an EU-funded project by NICO in Northern Ireland.

Overseas Territories and the FCO

12. The LGA has been supporting the capacity building of the Falkland Island Government (FIG) over the last year. While the project has come to an end the government of Falkland Islands is pursuing further funding to continue the project to focus on reviewing the leave system in FIG.

NEW PARTNERS AND NEW WORK STREAMS

DFID Framework Agreement

13. Much of DFID’s work (i.e. the UK aid budget) is contracted out through “framework agreements”. The LGA has lobbied both DFID ministers and officials about the demand for local government expertise in the delivery of UK aid. Both Ministers and officials have advised that the most effective route to providing more practitioner input into UK aid is to establish the LGA as a partner with aid organisations in bidding for DFID contracts.
14. In late 2011, the LGA became a member of an international consortium led by an international consultancy, HTSPE which bid for DFID work. In early January 2012, this bid to DFID to become a “preferred supplier” was successful. This bid was under for Public Sector support under the “Governance and Security Framework Agreement”.
15. As an agreed supplier, the LGA will now be part of a partnership to provide delivery of services as part of bilateral programmes in DFID priority countries. These contracts will be awarded through mini-competitions of agreed suppliers. This is the first time that LGA has won preferred supplier status with DFID and thus we need to consider how we use this area of new influence.

Demand as a result of growing work on peer review abroad

16. As a result of this and the pan-African peer review work, the LGA has been asked to consider work with other partners. For example, FCO has asked the LGA to investigate extended peer support and modern twinning to governments of the Overseas Territories. Officers presented a paper, jointly with CLG, to a meeting of OT officials at the end of 2011.
17. Thus there are two issues for members to consider here:
 - 17.1 Firstly, the quality and quantum of our current work (especially the innovative peer reviews with the Pan-African LGA) is generating demand for the LGA as a supplier of expertise. This is shown in the interest of FCO in the concept of peer reviews.
 - 17.2 Secondly, our new role as a formal “DFID supplier” presents the opportunity to bid for formal DFID contracts where the LGA can help supply local government practitioners to enhance the delivery of aid projects.
18. Members are asked to consider how we develop our work in these areas over the next few months and how members provide oversight of this developing work.

Working with the Commonwealth

19. Much of our international development work is delivered in partnership with the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (the Commonwealth LGA) which has more than 160 members in 40 Commonwealth countries including local government associations, individual local authorities and ministries dealing with local government. It works to promote and strengthen democratic local government across the Commonwealth and to encourage the exchange of best practice.
20. CLGF also delivers programmes to support and improve local governance in a number of Commonwealth countries and regions and this includes the DFID funded Good Practice Scheme (GPS), a three year programme bringing together local authorities in the UK and a number of developing countries. The scheme also funds local government associations and the third GPS (2008-2011) which has funded our work in Pakistan and South Africa is now complete.
21. In response to this growing demand from across the Commonwealth for UK local government expertise, the following UK councils received DFID funding

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to participate in the third phase of the Good Practice Scheme which was delivered in India, Ghana, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Jamaica:

- 21.1 Leeds
 - 21.2 Sunderland
 - 21.3 Cardiff
 - 21.4 Birmingham
 - 21.5 Glasgow
 - 21.6 Hull
 - 21.7 Leicester
 - 21.8 Worcester
 - 21.9 Hastings District
 - 21.10 Cannock Chase District
 - 21.11 Staffordshire Moorlands District
 - 21.12 London Borough of Lewisham
 - 21.13 London Borough of Hounslow
 - 21.14 London Borough of Greenwich
 - 21.15 Hampshire County Council
 - 21.16 Kent County Council
 - 21.17 Warwickshire County Council
22. CLGF is in discussion with DFID on the possibility of further funding for local government related activities and the LGA will be supporting as much as possible.
23. Carl Wright, Secretary General of CLGF will be attending the Board meeting and will present on future opportunities for the LGA and UK local government to continue supporting local government across the Commonwealth. He will also look at how future lobbying between the Commonwealth and the LGA make could enhance this work.