

International Project Update

Summary

Over the last 12 months the LGA has been developing relationships with a range of consultancy organisations. The aim is to work in partnership with established delivery agencies to secure UK, EU and international funding resources to respond to the growing demand from overseas counterparts for UK local government practitioner expertise.

This report updates members on the significant progress that has been made in securing new project funding within the last few weeks. The report also provides information on how we propose to ensure the effective delivery of these and future projects, and how elected members and officers from the sector could participate.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the report and discuss the transparency of the recruitment process to delivery these programmes.

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International Project Update

Background

1. At the last Programme Board meeting in November, members received a report outlining the progress that had been made in developing a small group of *preferred-partner* relationships with a range of companies that have an established track record and reputation in delivering UK government, European Union and international "aid" projects.
2. An increasing number of donors are looking to focus a greater proportion of their aid programme activity at the sub-national level. The organisations that we have started to work with have an established record in winning competitive bids and the financial and legal expertise to ensure effective delivery. What they do not have is access to local government practitioner expertise, hence their interest in working in partnership with the LG Group as we provide a gateway to the sector.

Recent Success

3. In late 2010, we started to deliver results from this area of new work:
 - 3.1 In partnership with the UCLGA (the African LGA), the LGA have successfully bid for €300k from the Luxembourg government to develop an Africa-wide Peer Review programme over the next 18 months. This programme which has been developed in consultation with the Peer Review Team at LGID, is the first time the LGA has developed a project concept from scratch and successfully marketed a ready-made project to an international donor. The value of the work within the LG Group from this project is envisaged to be around £70,000.
 - 3.2 NI-CO and the LG Group have successfully won a £4m, three year EU contract to strengthen the human resources and the institutional capacity of Kosovo local public administration. It is expected that at least £7k worth of work will be delivered through the LG Group in the first year.
 - 3.3 Coffey International and the LGA have been awarded a £1.4m DFID funded project aimed at Strengthening Financial and Administrative Systems for the Decentralisation of the Social Care Service Programme in Kosovo over the next two years. The LGA have provided expertise for the first phase of this project – a capacity assessment and training needs analysis of the Association of Kosovan Municipalities is taking place in January.

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- 3.4 The LG Group has reached agreement with RIPA International to deliver jointly a new “Community Driven Development: *Building Effective Local Services through Community Empowerment*” course that has been developed by LGA EIU and LG Leadership. This course will be run in July 2011 and is envisaged to be the first of a range of collaborations with RIPA International.
4. These new projects are in addition to current programme work that the LGA is delivering in Zimbabwe (EU funded), South Africa (DFID), Pakistan (DFID), Mexico (DEFRA) and the Falkland Islands (FCO and the Falkland Islands Government).
5. The LGA have also assisted East Riding of Yorkshire Council to access EU funding to participate in a programme managed by the United Nations Development Programme that enables Turkish municipalities to receive technical assistance and support from EU counterparts.

Future work

6. Building on this success, the LGA is currently pursuing the following new project opportunities:
- 6.1 In partnership with the Inter-climate Network, an application has been submitted for a £500k, four year project focused on Mobilising Kenyan Youth for Action on Climate Change
- 6.2 A £100,000 bid for FCO funding to continue support for Israeli Arab municipalities has been submitted
- 6.3 HTSPE and the LG Group have been shortlisted for a £2.2m EU funded project to build the capacity of Jordanian municipalities over a 16 month period
- 6.4 The Falkland Islands Government have given strong indications that they envisage requesting the LG Group to deliver a further programme of work around leadership development and HR support in 2011/12 – approximate value £30k
- 6.5 The LGA have been approached by UN Habitat regarding a £500k project to produce a report on international approaches to urban planning.
- 6.6 The Abu Dhabi Municipality have asked the LGA to organise a week-long study visit to the UK for a group of senior city managers. The visit will focus on a range of service delivery issues and has the potential to lead to further project cooperation.
- 6.7 The British Embassy in Mexico has requested the LGA’s help in arranging a visit from regional and city councillors to look at UK good practice around sustainable development and public safety issues.

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An Infrastructure to Deliver

7. We will need to be able to commission the most appropriately skilled members and officers for project assignments and a process needs to be in place to ensure that this is done fairly and transparently. The aim is to use the established Peer Clearing House (PCH) mechanism to identify member and officer experts for future project activities,
8. Work is already developing with the PCH to ensure that the information held in the future includes experience of international work. The hope is that elected members and officers interested in contributing to LG Group international projects in the future will register with the Peer Clearing House.
9. This will need to be supplemented by a process that also captures the experience and expertise within the LG Group (and other UK associations) that is not included in the PCH. Work will also be developed with the professional associations in the local government sector where specific skills are needed.
10. Members will be aware of the wider LG staffing review which will establish the new staffing arrangements for the Group.