

19 July 2011

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Future LG Group International Work

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

This report gives members an overview of the current international work in the LGG and how the new LGG structure will be used to refresh delivery programmes in the future.

There will be a presentation at the meeting which will set out our strategy to develop this work in the future through working with a series of partners who are interested in working with local government on international development issues.

Recommendations

Members are asked to consider this report and comment on the presentation

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

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Future LG Group International Work

Background

1. The reputation of the LG Group and the councils it represents is shaped locally, nationally and internationally. There is increasing demand upon the UK local government sector from developing countries for the skills and expertise of British councils. It is clear that our sister associations prefer support from practitioners and peers rather than costly consultants. Responding positively to this demand is a core part of our mission to support, promote and improve local government. It also widens the opportunities for our own councils to benefit from their membership of an internationally active, well networked association committed to engaging with the wider world and the mutual benefits this can have.

A new “brand” and refreshed principles

2. The development of the new LG Group gives us the opportunity to refresh some of this work and to revisit the principles to which we work. Members are asked to comment on the issues below:
3. **Responding to demand:** Our work responds to demand from our sister associations.
4. **Cost:** Despite increasing demand, our international work must also be responsive to the challenging financial climate that both the association and its membership are in. Where the LG Group can support local government abroad within its modest means, it will do on the basis that running costs are covered by external funding (outside top-slice and membership fees).
5. **A New “Brand”:** While the uncertainty of the recent LG Group restructure caused some concern amongst the organisation’s international stakeholders, this has been proactively managed in recent months and the clear message is that the UK’s national association remains committed to its international relationships and its role as a provider of support to developing countries. The day to day management of the Group’s international project work as well as maintaining our relationships with our international partners will be coordinated by two advisors in the Programmes Team, but a newly created LGG officer level steering group pulling together teams from across the Group will also ensure a better system of delivery and synergy between our lobbying, peer review and leadership teams.
6. **Refreshing our products:** The new LG Group has also allows us to renew our product and offers to sister LGAs. We have worked across the Group to ensure

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that our work is clearly linked to our core offer to UK local government as this is the basis of our reputation (and attraction) abroad.

7. Thus our refreshed Group international offer will be guided by demand for the skills and expertise of UK local government, as well as the capacity to deliver good services. Our products reflect the Group's core business and are designed and delivered by individuals and teams across the Group and where appropriate we can also commission work within the sector.
 - 7.1 Peer Review & Sector-led Improvement
 - 7.2 Innovation & Best Practice Exchange Programmes
 - 7.3 Leadership Development
 - 7.4 Association Capacity Building
 - 7.5 Community Engagement/Citizen participation
 - 7.6 Workforce Development
 - 7.7 Local Economic Development
 - 7.8 Election Monitoring
8. **Focus:** The LG Group will retain some flexibility on where it operates geographically in order for it to be able to respond to changing UK foreign and development policy objectives and other political considerations. However, it is proposed that project activities focus primarily on the transitional countries of Eastern Europe, developing Commonwealth countries of Africa and South Asia and fragile and post-conflict states where HMG has an interest.
9. **Political leadership:** There is demand upon the LG Group from abroad as a result of the clear political leadership of improvement. Thus the organisation's international work must be owned, championed and guided by elected members. Whilst members in the past have had a clear political overview, it is proposed that each international project should also have a member champion to ensure that work with members in sister associations have a clear political anchor in the LGG.

Current projects

10. Currently, the LG Group has eight projects in delivery phase and two in various stages of the bidding process. Whilst members were given an overview of each project at the last Board (**appended** for information), they asked for the value of each project:

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Delivery phase:

	Value of LGG work (NB all resources are externally funded)
Two multiannual projects in Kosovo (where LG Group is partner in two international consortia, one lead by Coffey International and second by NI-CO)	£100,000
Falkland Islands	£20,000
RIPA International	£15,000
Pakistan; supporting the Local Councils Associations of Punjab (CLGF Good Practice Scheme)	£45,000
South Africa; supporting the South African Local Government Association (CLGF Good Practice Scheme)	£45,000
Zimbabwe; supporting the Urban Councils Association of Zimbabwe (EU Commission funded)	TBC
Pan-African Peer Review, supporting UCLG Africa (Grand Duchy of Luxembourg funded)	£100,000

Developing future work

11. Since June, we have undertaken a review of our activities and assessed the potential partnerships that can be formed in the next year to develop this area of work. In summary, the only way in which we can meet the demand for support by developing associations is to work with those bodies which have a record of delivery and winning competitive bids, but who recognise the benefit of a public service input.
12. Our future work will be broadly under the following heading:
 - 12.1 Developing existing work
 - 12.2 Developing new private sector partnerships
 - 12.3 Linking to national policy priorities
 - 12.4 Linking to new funding streams
13. Officers will provide a presentation on these issues at the meeting.

UPDATE ON EXISTING WORK
(from June report)

UCLGA Pan-African Peer Review Project

The LG Group is embarking upon a pioneering pan-African peer review project with the pan-African LGA (UCLGA). This work is funded by the government of Luxembourg. The project will be delivered over an 18 month period will pilot one peer review in each of UCLGA's regions (north, south, east, west and central). The African participants in each of the five peer reviews will be selected through UCLGA's internal political processes, but there is flexibility around whether the reviews are between two LGAs or two councils within a region. To take one region as an example, this could mean that the "eastern pilot" could be a peer review between either the Kenyan and Ugandan LGAs, or the cities of Nairobi and Kampala. For the local authority reviews, there is also flexibility to include both urban and rural authorities.

The project will be delivered in two stages. 1) initial training and capacity building delivered by the LG Group to the UCLGA Secretariat on facilitating and supporting peer learning, and 2) delivery of five peer reviews with each peer review team being an equal mix of African and UK peers.

The process for the selection of African member peers will be addressed in the initial training stage of the project and broadly modelled on the peer accreditation mechanism used for UK peer reviews (adaptations of course will need to be made to take into account differences in political and leadership structures and local and regional contexts). It is proposed that the selection process for UK member peers is carried out along the same procedures as current UK peer reviews whereby members participating in reviews must be 1) accredited peers and 2) selected by the four national member peers. In addition to this however, given the international dimension of this project, it is also suggested that the Chair of the European & International Programme Board play an active role in the selection process for member peers.

Kosovo

DFID funded project "Strengthening Financial and Administrative Systems for the Decentralisation of the Social Care Services Programme" started in January 2011. The LG Group is delivering the project together with the lead partner, COFFEY International and two other implementing partners from Kosovo and Slovenia. LG Group has made a significant contribution to work budget and finance reform and is now working on a detailed implementation plan.

South Africa

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The project with South African LGA (SALGA) – funded by the Commonwealth LGA (CLGF) - comes to an end in September and there is one more phase of activities planned to wrap up the project. Local government elections were held in South Africa on 18 May and SALGA has naturally been preoccupied in recent months. However, the final activities will take forward some of the recommendations of the peer review carried out by UK local government practitioners in 2010 to ensure that the issues raised are provided to the new political leadership of SALGA.

Pakistan

Like the South Africa project, our work with the Local Councils Association of Punjab (LCAP) is also funded by the CLGF and will be coming to an end in September. The strategic planning workshop held in January has resulted in a new national campaign to strengthen elected local government, while also mobilising more funding. The final activity programme will focus on capacity building and dates are being finalised.

Zimbabwe

The EU-funded project with the Urban Councils Association of Zimbabwe is ongoing, despite significant delays at the Zimbabwe end. All but one of UCAZ member councils are controlled by the Movement for Democratic Reform. By mid June we expect to have a clear indication of the LG Group's contribution to the project, which is focussing on strategic business review of the association, stakeholder engagement with members and a leadership training programme.