

**Item 2**

**International Activities - Update**

**Purpose**

For discussion.

**Summary**

This report provides an update on recent externally funded international project activities, as well as outlining the project delivery timetable for the rest of the year.

**Recommendation**

Members are asked to comment on the report and make any recommendations for officers to action.

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## **International Activities Update**

### **Background**

1. The LGA is committed to respond, where external funding is available, to the growing demand from developing countries upon the skills and expertise of British local government. This report summarises our current work in the following areas:
  - 1.1 African Peer Review
  - 1.2 DFID contracts
  - 1.3 Kosovo.

### **International Peer Review Project**

2. United Cities & Local Government Africa (UCLGA), the pan-African LGA, is piloting the concept of peer review across Africa in 2012 with donor funding. In light of the UK's experience of peer review over the last decade UCLGA has commissioned the LGA to train a pan-African cohort of local government peers in peer review and support the delivery of five pilot peer reviews across Africa with funding from the government of Luxembourg.
3. From 30 January – 2 February the LGA hosted local government peers from thirteen African countries in London for a training programme to learn about the principles and practice of peer review.
4. This group was made up of chief executives, politicians and sector experts who participated in the four day course, supported by UK officer and member peers, which was designed to prepare them to deliver the peer reviews in Africa.

### **Next Steps**

5. The next stage is the delivery of five pilot peer reviews throughout the course of 2012. These will be peer reviews of either a council (municipality) or local government association. This stage of the programme will be delivered in two parts.

PART ONE; Adaptation & Benchmarking - *February to end of April.*

6. The success of the programme depends not only on the successful delivery of five peer reviews in-country, but also the adaptation of the peer review benchmark to each of the pilot countries beforehand. Sound preparation, including full political and managerial ownership, as well as a thorough self assessment process is important.

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7. The LGA will be remotely supporting the local sector expert peers in their discussions with the organisation being reviewed and its wider stakeholders in each of the five countries. The tailoring of the peer review benchmark will be led by the sector experts in collaboration with key stakeholders so that it has maximum relevance and enables effective and appropriate challenge.
8. In the meantime is anticipated that the dates for each of the five peer reviews will be agreed by early March. The month of May has been set aside for quality assurance of the benchmarks as well as ensuring that the national policy context is adequately captured.

PART TWO; On-site Delivery of Peer Reviews - *June to October*.

9. Once the adaption stage has been completed the peer reviews will be delivered sequentially between June and October in the following order;
  - 9.1 Namibia
  - 9.2 Ghana
  - 9.3 Uganda
  - 9.4 Cameroon
  - 9.5 Ivory Coast
10. It is important that the selection of the UK peers is based on a good understanding of the hosting authority/association. It is therefore anticipated that the process will begin shortly after the confirmation of dates for each of the five reviews in early March and upon receipt by the LGA of a clear brief on the administrative and political makeup of the hosting organisation.

**DFID Consortium**

11. Members will be aware that the LGA is now an official approved supporter to DFID. It is part of a consortium led by the consultancy company, HTSPE Ltd, which has been selected as part of a panel of preferred suppliers to support governance services under a DFID-funded framework agreement.
12. The framework is awarded for 2 years with 2 possible extensions of 12 months each. Separate mini-competitions will be run for specific requirements in 28 countries or groups of countries.
13. DFID will notify all suppliers through their consortium leaders of upcoming competitions. Consortium members will then amongst themselves decide who will lead on the bid. Individual programmes will typically be 3-5 years in duration.

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14. Following a stand-still period, framework contracts are expected to be signed in early March with the official launch following two weeks later. Competitions are expected in April. HTSPE will convene a consortium partners meeting soon after the official launch of the framework agreement.

**Kosovo Project**

15. The LGA has been implementing the DFID funded project “Strengthening Financial and Administrative Systems for the decentralisation of the Social Care Services Programme” in Kosovo for over a year. The LGA’s input will continue by organising two training visits to UK. The first visit by the group of five elected mayors in March (12-15) will be focusing on financing of adult’s and children’s social care.

16. The second training will be for slightly larger group of elected mayors and senior officials from Kosovan Ministry of Local Government. It will take place between 29 April and 5 May focusing on the delivery of adult’s and children’s social care in England as well as relations between local and central government.

17. UK members and officers are being recruited through Local Authorities’ existing procedures for selecting peer reviews. UCLEA is having early discussions with donors about this project could be expanded. It is anticipated that LGA would play a role in this roll out.