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Notes of Leap Project Meeting

Date: 24th and 25th November
Place: Leicester City Council

1. Welcome to Leicester City Council

Frazer Robson, Service Director from the Environment Regeneration and Development Department of Leicester City Council opened the meeting by welcoming LEAP partners to Leicester.

2. Introduction: Bruce Cockrean

Bruce Cockrean from Global to Local gave a presentation to the group. The presentation (annexed to these notes) introduced the LEAP project. The presentation looked at the LEAP vision, the background behind the project, the project objectives and a brief summary of the 10 tasks. The presentation also described the role that ICLEI were taking in the project and detailed the tasks that they would be helping with.

3. Introductions from partners: Helmut Lusser

Helmut Lusser facilitated a discussion session with the LEAP partners, partners were asked to talk about their experience of Environment Management Systems and Eco-Procurement. The session proved to be very useful, partners had a wide range of experiences in both areas.

4. Project Management: Alison Lea

Alison Lea from Leicester City Council (the beneficiary of the LEAP project) introduced the Project Handbook to partners. (presentation is annexed to this report). The aim of the Handbook was to ensure that all partners kept a record of important project documentation. This was felt to be particularly important where there may be several members of staff working on the LEAP project or when new members of staff start to work on the project. Throughout the 3 years of the LEAP project further documents will be produced for inclusion into the Handbook.

Alison highlighted to partners the proposed dates for the Project Management meetings and asked partners to consider whether they would like to host a project meeting. The project will have 5 management meetings and will conclude with a final conference.

Action: ALL

The LEAP funding includes an allocation for the organisation of the final conference.

A discussion took place about the possibility of combining the LEAP final conference with an EcoProcura conference in 2006, the 2 events would attract similar audiences. ICLEI offered to postpone its EcoProcura 2005, if the LEAP partners want to commit combining the two events.

It was decided that this approach would be the most favourable option and Goteborg and ICLEI agreed to provide information to Alison Lea and each partner expressing interest in hosting the event about the costs of the EcoProcura conference held in Goteborg in October 2003.

Action: ICLEI and Goteborg

Partners were asked to consider whether they would like to host the final conference. They should then work with ICLEI on a proposal for the conference concept and report back to the next meeting in April 2004, where a decision will be taken.

Action: ALL

Project Meetings: the project will hold 5 project management meetings during the 3 years, discussion took place about the location of these meetings.

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The date for the next project meeting was agreed as 26th and 27th April. Holargos offered to ask their Local Authority if it would be possible to hold the meeting in Holargos. and let Alison Lea know.

Action: Holargos

Goteborg offered to host the May 2005 meeting

Barcelona offered to host the October 2005

There are 7 UK partners and it was felt that another meeting could be held in the UK. Could a UK partner offer to host a meeting?

Action: UK Partners

Publicising EU support: a condition of the funding is that the Commission is acknowledged as the funding body. The LIFE logo is available from the LIFE website:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/life/life/environment.htm>

It is a: .eps file. Alison Lea reported that she had been unable to download and use the logo easily and agreed to talk to an IT expert for advice.

Action: Alison Lea

5. Project Administration: Alison Lea

Alison Lea gave a brief presentation (annexed to this report) about Project Administration.

It is essential that the beneficiary and partners keep up to date and accurate records, including:

Financial records

Time Sheets for all personnel working on the project

Receipts for eligible expenditure

Reports and records of all work carried out

Action: All

The 3 key documents that all partners need to familiarise themselves with are:

The project proposal –the final version is attached to these notes

The commission decision –contained in the project handbook

The Standard Administrative Provision –contained in the project handbook

Action: All

The LEAP project will be making regular progress reports to the Commission and all partners will be asked to submit information to be included in the reports.

Once the project has ended an independent audit will be carried out before final payment will be released by the Commission.

6. Communication Strategy: Group Discussion

Global to Local produced a discussion paper on developing a Communication Strategy for the LEAP project.

Good dissemination is critical to the effectiveness of LIFE Environment projects and it is a condition of receiving Commission funding that projects disseminate widely throughout the 3 years.

The group identified how they would disseminate locally, nationally, within European and Worldwide.

Task 9 in the LEAP work programme is the dissemination of project findings throughout the 3 years. Each partner has committed staff time to this task. Partners are asked to look at the staff time allocated to this task and identify what activities they can carry out locally and nationally to facilitate the dissemination of the LEAP project.

Action: All

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Global to Local and Leicester will produce a draft Communication Strategy for partners to comment on
Action: G2L and Leicester

7. Recent projects and newest findings on Green Procurement

Christoph Erdmenger from ICLEI gave a short presentation on recent Green Procurement projects and findings. A copy of the presentation is attached.

8. Taking stock of existing EMS activities

Bruce Cockrean introduced a questionnaire that will form the basis of Action 2 in Task 1, a Review of Existing EMAS practice. Partners are asked to comment on the draft questionnaire by December 9th.

Action: All

The draft questionnaire will be piloted by G2L and ICLEI on 10 authorities, feedback will be sought and the questionnaire amended before being sent to all authorities with an EMS.

Action: G2L and ICLEI

9. Identifying products

Christoph Erdmenger from ICLEI gave a presentation (attached) which was the 1st step in identifying products that could be considered during the 2 procurement exercises of the LEAP project.

After discussion and voting the list of possible products was:

<u>Product</u>	<u>No. votes</u>
Electricity	5
Flatscreen Monitors	5
Desktop computers	5
Fuel efficient cars	4
Office supplies	6
Cleaning Products	8
Recycled paper	7
Furniture	5
Timber framed windows	3
Lighting equipment	5
Heating equipment	4

The 1st procurement exercise does not take place until November 2004, however partners need to consider carefully the above list. For the procurement exercise to be a success we need to chose products that

- 1) there is sufficient environmental gain
- 2) It is a product partners want to purchase
- 3) The choice of product fits in with each partner's procurement plan or existing contracts.

ICLEI needs each local authority partner to provide the following information

1. 10 most purchased commodities
2. How many units will likely to be bought during the procurement exercise for each of these 10 products.
3. How are calls to tender designed in each authority (restricted, open, European....)
4. How are contracts designed, eg framework contracts or part of service contract
5. Who is your current supplier for each of the 10 products.
6. What are partner's particular concerns about this product group.
7. What price do you pay for each product?

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This information is required BEFORE the April 2004 meeting when decisions will be made about products or services to be procured.

Action: ALL local authority partners

10. Consortium Agreement and Subcontract to ICLEI

Alison Lea explained that the role of the beneficiary meant that Leicester City Council is legally and financially responsible for the project and that the Chief Financial Officer at Leicester City Council wanted to minimise the financial risk, should the project fail to meet the Commission requirements.

To minimise the financial risk Leicester City Council proposes to only release funding to partner's once work had been carried out ie in arrears. Paresh Radia from Leicester City Council's Financial Department attended the meeting to listen to the concerns partner's had expressed about this method of payment.

Partners were unhappy about the proposal and felt that the Beneficiary should forward funding to the partners in the same manner that it received the funding from the Commission ie 1st payment of 40% of total funding, interim payment of 30%, and a final 30% payment once the project has been completed and audited to the Commission's satisfaction.

Paresh agreed to take this request back to the Chief Financial Officer and express the partner's concerns about receiving payments in arrears.

Alison Lea also circulated draft copies of the Partnership Agreement that partners will be required to sign. Again the purpose of this document is to minimise the risk that Leicester City Council is taking in being the project beneficiary. This document is currently in draft awaiting confirmation on the method of payment to Partners.

Leicester City Council has signed and returned the LEAP contract and the request for the 1st payment to the Commission on the 2nd December. The Commission undertake to forward the first payment 60 days after receipt of the request. By the time Leicester receives the 1st payment it is hoped that the method of payment issue will have been resolved.