

Minutes of the LCF Communications Working Party
Monday 25 January 2010
At 60 Holly Walk, Royal Leamington Spa

Present:	Cherry Williams (CW) (Chair)	ENTRUST
	Hannah Williams (HW)	ENTRUST
	Mary Hawkins (MH)	ENTRUST
	Marek Gordon (MG)	SITA Trust and ADEB
	Andrew Saunders (AS)	SITA Trust
	Peter Cox (PC)	WREN
	Matt Young (MY)	GrantScape

Minutes:	Pardeep Bansi (PB)	ENTRUST
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1. INTRODUCTIONS

1.1 CW welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that PB would be taking the minutes.

1.2 It was agreed to discuss the following:

- Communications Guidance for Environmental Bodies, which ENTRUST has issued; and
- Value for Money Questions.

2. COMMUNICATIONS GUIDANCE

2.1 HMRC had not issued a position statement and so ENTRUST had issued guidance.

2.2 MG thought that publicising LCF funded projects is important, in order for the various spheres of society and government to understand the positive outcomes the LCF scheme achieves. This is not promoting the scheme but it helps individuals understand how the scheme works and what it provides.

3. VALUE FOR MONEY QUESTIONS

3.1 The timeline for changing the value for money questions

3.1.1 MG asked if the value for money questions (VFMQ) are changed, when could this be implemented. MH advised that if any consultation requirements were dealt with to the satisfaction of HMRC then changes could be in place when a new EOL is launched in 2011. The March Board is due to consider a report authorising the project, which is included in the draft corporate plan.

3.1.2 MH stated that ENTRUST attempted to make changes to the VFMQ's when the Small Grants Scheme was implemented, however this was not possible because HMRC required evidence in order to support any changes.

3.1.3 MG advised that he felt that there would not be changes in the current questions, only new ones. MH advised that consultation is still likely to be required.

- 3.1.4 MY questioned why HMRC are collecting VFM data. HW advised that HMRC have access to EOL and can view this information. MH stated that Leonne Jackson at HMRC, had agreed to look into how the Treasury uses the VFM data; however she had not been able to report back. *(She has since advised that the data requirements had arisen from an earlier working party).*
- 3.1.5 HW and MH clarified that our view at present is that any compulsory question must be required to assess compliance with the Regulations. In order to make any new VFMQ's compulsory questions, the proposed VFMQ's would first need to be consulted on in order to provide HMRC with the supporting evidence, and to seek their approval. We would have to prove that any new questions would not be overly onerous for smaller EBs.
- 3.1.6 MG commented that the large DEBs are happy to assist in new data collection as long as they can understand the reasons behind it. However, the current VFMQs are very frustrating in that they are onerous to complete and the reasons behind them are not clear, as it is difficult to see the use of the data provided. MG thought that the questions were formulated 12-13 years ago when the scheme was very different to the way in which it operates now.
- 3.1.7 The EBs present had considered both the project application forms and the VFM changes and there was then comment and discussion.
- 3.2 Issues concerning the Form 2 (NB. questions vary according to which form is used)**
- 3.2.1 Recycled material or secondary aggregate - does not supply hard data as it is a simple question answered 'yes' or 'no'. Therefore this question was said to add little value. MH stated that the nature of this question would need to be clarified, and HMRC would have to be asked why they require this information.
- 3.2.2 Full-time jobs created or maintained - is difficult to answer precisely. What is meant by 'full-time jobs that will be created or maintained'? This doesn't distinguish between short-term for construction, and longer term for ongoing management made. Should the question ask for both?
- 3.2.3 Part-time jobs created or maintained - also needs more definition. In particular there are different types of part time jobs, and without a full time equivalent there is little comparability. MH advised that we should ask HMRC why they distinguish between full-time and part-time jobs created.
- 3.2.4 Training opportunities created - requires more definition for consistency, as what one person may regard as training, another person may not.
- 3.2.5 Visitors to site on completion - needs clearer definition to avoid ambiguity.
- 3.2.6 School visits - needs further definition:
- What constitutes a school visit, is it a one-off visit like a visit to a museum; or is each trip to a sports facility a visit, even if made on a regular basis?; and
 - Is this numbers of groups or individuals?

- 3.2.7 Visitors and school visits may offer little value because these figures are not revisited post project. In other words, if an EB initially reports on the Form 2 that a project will attract 2000 visitors, there are no ramifications if the actual amount of visitors is a lot less than the original estimation. This gave rise to the possibility of having a post-project evaluation form and whether these could be centrally collated. However, MH advised that ENTRUST is a regulator, and we look at compliance which would rarely be affected by changes in visitor numbers.
- 3.2.8 Improved facilities for people with disabilities - also a 'yes' or 'no' answer giving little useful data. It was suggested that EBs should report spend on these facilities. MH stated that this is the type of requirement that might need to be tested through consultation. AS thought it would not be too onerous as EBs have itemised billing for projects and should be able to report how much was spent on disabled facilities.
- 3.2.9 Energy efficiency - could be replaced with a question that asks about the utility cost saving and is discussed further at paragraph 3.5.6 below.

3.3 VFMQ's

- 3.3.1 Number of hectares - is probably only relevant to Object A, B and DA projects, and some Object D projects, for example when works are done to sports fields.
- 3.3.2 Estimated number of metres of footpath - needs to clarify if this is square metres, or metres in length.
- 3.3.3 Different uses - is very difficult to answer, and the data is not thought to be useful.

3.4 Proposed changes to sub-categories

- 3.4.1 MG/AS/PC proposed the addition of a sub-categories field. MH noted that ENTRUST already uses sub-categories. EBs suggested changes to the Object D subcategories as follows:

- 'Activity centre' should be left unchanged ;
- 'Bridleway' and 'public footpath' should be grouped together as one category;
- 'Church hall', 'community centre' and 'village hall' should be grouped together under a common category as 'community hall/centre', and the guidance notes should be tightened to reflect this ;
- 'Community woodland' should be changed to 'public woodland';
- 'Country park' and 'public park' should be grouped under the common category 'park' and the guidance notes should be amended to reflect this;
- 'General public sports field' and 'sports club' should be replaced with the following three categories: 'sports club equipment', 'sports club building' and 'sporting facilities';
- A category of 'canal works/waterways' should be added;
- A category of 'bridge' should be added;
- A category of 'zoos and farms' should be added.

ENTRUST agreed to consider these.

- 3.4.2 EBs agreed to provide their suggestions for new categories for Object DA, and PB agreed to review other Object sub-categories.

ACTION: attending EBs to look at new categories needed for Object DA, like grasslands

ACTION: PB to look at other potential sub-categories

3.5 Other suggested changes

- 3.5.1 MG/AS/PC advocated the addition of a customer type field (e.g. NGO, Scouts group etc). They agreed to provide details of what they would suggest for ENTRUST to consider.

ACTION: attending EBs to formulate lists of customers

- 3.5.2 MG/AS/PC proposed the addition of a field to record the local authority and area (i.e. whether it is a County or Borough) that the project comes under.
- 3.5.3 MG/AS/PC mentioned the addition of a field to record the postcode of the project. However, this field already appears on EOL.
- 3.5.4 MG/AS/PC proposed the addition of a field to record the user numbers both pre- and post-completion of the project.
- 3.5.5 MG/AS/PC recommended the addition of a field to record the amount of money from each non-LCF funder.
- 3.5.6 MG/AS/PC advocated the addition of a field to record the utility cost saving of the project. It was agreed that this would be the most onerous questions to ask, but is potentially a valuable piece of data. Any implementation of the measure or indicator of utility cost saving would have to take into consideration the wide disparity in the competency of EBs that would be supplying this data.

3.6 Proposed changes to Object DA Questions

- 3.6.1 MG/AS/PC recommended the addition of three further fields to record the contribution of the project to: (a) national BAP; (b) regional BAP; and (c) local BAP. MG believed that it would not be possible for ENTRUST to collect this data. AS stated that all projects registered with SITA Trust should be tagged with the BARS (Biodiversity Action Reporting System) reporting tool. MG/AS/PC offered to write up a summary of how BARS works for ENTRUST. BARS is linked to European funding and is crucial to biodiversity projects.

MG thought there was a case for ENTRUST to require EBs to report on the BARS system (as opposed to ENTRUST). However, since BARS is a tool set up by DEFRA, MH advised that it is unlikely that ENTRUST could make this compulsory as it is not a regulatory issue.

PC added that BARS is a Government created tool, and that Object DA was introduced through the Regulations to help achieve biodiversity plans nationally. MH suggested that a more appropriate way to make the change compulsory would be for DEFRA to justify the case to HMRC.

It was also noted that 2010 is the international year of Biodiversity as declared by the UN.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

4.1 No other business.