

# EAUC

## Promoting poverty aware procurement on campus

Minutes of first meeting of the Advisory Board on 26 August 2008

Royal Station Hotel, Newcastle upon Tyne.

**Present:** Catherine Dishington (NUS services Ltd); Forster (PPAPC project manager-John Forster Associates); Helen Foster (Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges); Alex McFarlane (Association of University Procurement Officers); Iain Patton (EAUC) (Chair)

**Apologies:** Mike Briggs (Leeds Metropolitan University); John McCallion/Betsy Reed (Scottish Fair Trade Forum).

### 1 Advisory Board

We discussed PAPER AB-080826-01 setting out the proposed terms of reference, composition and membership of the Board. .

#### 1.1 Role of Board and of Board members

We noted that the role of the Board was to provide advice to the EAUC and through them to the project manager. Specific areas of work identified in the paper were the review of plans and budgets, the provision of advice on implementation, linking the project with other people and initiatives, and commenting on the outcomes and the evaluation.

We agreed that there was no obligation on Board members to attend partner meetings; though they would be very welcome if they did so.

#### 1.2 Membership and composition of Board

We considered the people and organisations that have agreed to be Board members as listed in the background paper. To bring the board to its full strength we identified the following actions:

Activity	Action
To recruit an FE member and confirm the existing HE member	<i>JF to arrange process at first partner meeting to identify and confirm FHE board members</i>
Identify additional sector procurement representative	<i>AMcF to review possibilities and let JF know.</i>
Approach CIPS to nominate representative	<i>JF to discuss with Ann Ellis of CIPS and then IP to approach Renee de Sousa</i>
Ask People and Planet to become a member	<i>JF to ask Emily Cantrell.</i>
Identify additional poverty related organisation	<i>JF to approach Oxfam North of England contact</i>
Identify representative of a private sector catering contractor	<i>JF to speak to Fair Trade Foundation contact to get name and, if necessary, IP would identify someone also</i>

We agreed other matters relating to board membership as follows:

- We should have a sustainability or environmental manager as we had several procurement professionals on the Board;
- We should try and ensure that the board has access to legal advice;
- Students from individual institutions such as local P & P or NUSSL contacts would be better engaged with the project as partners;
- We could ask additional people to join the Board or make representation to it
- During the meeting, NUSSL provided details of its membership and activities and it was agreed that it would be very helpful if all members of the Board in due course did this.

#### 1.3 Arrangements for meetings

IP said that either he or a newly appointed staff member would attend all board meetings and would take the chair. We noted that minutes would be taken by the project manager, would be circulated in draft for comment and when agreed would be made available publicly. We also noted that though the minutes could inform people about the project, they would not be as effective as the proposed project "Newsletter".

Other matters about the arrangements for board meetings that we agreed were that:

- Meetings should generally be held shortly after partner meetings so that the outcomes from the partner meetings could be considered;
- We should meet face-to-face for the first two meetings, but later we could use videoconferencing;
- For face-to-face meetings involving the whole board, north-east England is a good location;
- **EAUC would create an e-mail discussion list on "JISC mail" for board members;**
- The reports provided to DFID by EAUC should be included as a regular agenda item.

## 2 Introduction to EAUC

We noted PAPER AB-080826-02 which provided background on EAUC for board members.

## 3 DFID papers

We noted EAUC's bid to the Development Awareness Fund which had been circulated as PAPER AB-080826-03 and the grant arrangements from DFID which had been circulated as PAPER AB-080826-04. JF explained that claims for reimbursement needed to be made to DFID quarterly and that two annual narrative reports were required; one within three months of the end of the first year, and one within four months of the end of the project.

## 4 Report on period 1 April to 20 August 2008

Report on work undertaken project between April and 20 August 2008 had been circulated (PAPER AB-080826-06) but was not discussed.

## 5 Project plan

PAPER AB-080826-05 setting out the project plan had been circulated. We discussed the intended outcomes, which were in summary:

- Greater understanding of links between poverty and procurement by project partners ;
- Proposals for changed procurement processes to enable poverty implications to be taken into account;
- A review of the best means of enabling institutions to introduce the changes to procurement processes that will be needed;
- Increased awareness amongst FHE as a whole and in collaborative procurement organisations.

The Board noted that:

- The effective duration of the project was 18 months – ending in March 2010
- Iain Patton or a new project coordinator to be appointed by EAUC would have an oversight of the project which would be managed by John Forster
- ***The project was intended to include that FHE partners in Northern Ireland and steps would need to be taken to ensure we included at least one representative from there.***

## Poverty

We considered what was meant by poverty in the context of the project. We agreed that the principal focus must be on those on less than two dollars a day and on whom the millennium development goals were focussed. But we believed that partners would not expect us to ignore poverty issues in Europe or in the UK although the problems are of a much lower order of magnitude and we agreed that the background briefing document on poverty should discuss this issue.

***JF to edit the background briefing document poverty to take account of this.***

## Processes and guidance

We discussed issues relating to the new and changed procurement processes and to the associated guidance that would be outputs from the project and agreed that:

- The new procurement processes should be designed so that they could be embedded into an organisation's normal practices.
- The outputs should include descriptions of generic processes and provide links to the specific issues that will arise with specific categories.
- The guidance must be very practical and have templates etc that people could readily implement it; [but noting that there are areas where judgement will have to be exercised and background material must be provided to enable people to make these judgements on an informed basis].

HF said it should be possible in due course to embed the new guidance into the best value audits which applied to Scottish colleges. She also said that she was involved with a wide range of networks and forums in Scotland which would provide vehicles for dissemination.

Board members provided information about sources of information on sympathetic procurement processes and guidance. These include:

- APUC's online CSR guidance
- The Environment Agency web site– SPRAT sustainable procurement risk assessment tool
- NUSSL's accreditation scheme for suppliers -- which is criterion based
- AUPO guidance (AMcF say these include social elements, but need to be more specific about poverty).

**Board members to provide more information about these and other sources to JF**

### **Web-based outputs**

We agreed that the great majority of the final outputs should be based on the web. Where reference has been made in reports and plans to e.g. DVD, video or paper reports, this should have referred to web-based material.

We agreed that we needed to be aware of the audiences for the different material and that though some material could be used for different audiences (e.g. interviews about poverty) it might require packaging in different ways.

Some of the material suggested was:

- Vox pops – short statements of commitment by key individuals and groups, e.g.VCs, Directors of procurement etc, students;
- Interviews with people impacted by procurement decisions in poor communities– showing how poverty aware procurement has benefited them
- Using e.g. Adobe Captivate – which can provide an interactive guide to web-based material

**JF needs to revise written plan to take account of this**

## **6 Role and recruitment of partners and links with others**

We discussed various aspects of PAPER AB-080826-07 dealing with the role and recruitment of partners and others.

### **Role of partners and others**

We had a discussion to clarify the respective roles of partners and others and agreed the following:

- Only universities and colleges could be project partners who would be expected to send up to two representatives to each of the five partner meetings where issues about the links between poverty and procurement would be discussed.
- Other organisations linked to the project, such as representatives from sector procurement organisations, students, organisations concerned with the poverty agenda and businesses could be called "associated organisations". Representatives of associated organisations will be invited to meetings as appropriate
- Partners and other organisations would be asked for their views on the categories and for information on procurement process and ways of changing them. These views would be collated and contribute to draft proposals which would be written up by the project manager circulated for comment and discussed by the advisory board.
- Some partners and associate organisations might wish to contribute to a specific Data sheet but this would be an additional role undertaken on ad hoc basis.

### **Recruitment of partners**

JF updated the list of partners which had been circulated previously. Of those FHE institutions in appendix 1 to the paper that were noted for follow-up, two, Ayr College and Cardinal Newman had decided to become partners; meaning that there were now three colleges and six universities signed up. Four of the follow-up institutions had decided not to become partners, leaving five Colleges and two universities to be contacted again. **JF agreed to follow these up and when he has responses from these IP would, if necessary, provide details of contacts at Blackpool and Fylde College; Lancaster and Morecombe College; Hull College and the University of Manchester. IP would also find a Northern Ireland contact. If additional contacts are needed, AMcF will mail out to his contacts in the north of England.**

## **7 Background briefing on poverty, procurement and fair trade.**

PAPER AB-080826-08 which was a draft of a briefing paper on poverty procurement and fair trade had been circulated previously. JF explained that the purpose of this paper was to introduce institutions to the underlying issues being raised by the project. It became clear in the discussion by the Board that the paper should provide a justification for the criteria used to choose categories and also provide a generic reference for the category datasheets. The Board recommended that the paper should have a clear focus on providing background information and that in this context the material after section 9 was superfluous. **JF said he**

**would produce a new draft in time to go out with papers for the first partner meeting which took account of the comments by Board members.**

## **8 Data sheet and commodities**

A draft template laying out the scope of the data sheet which would be written for each category had been circulated previously as PAPER AB-080826-10. ***This was not discussed at the meeting and members were asked to send any comments to John Forster by 8<sup>th</sup> September***

JF tabled a paper (PAPER AB-080826-14) setting out possible categories for investigation by the project. He explained that the individual categories on the list derived largely from suggestions from those with awareness of the impacts. The Board advised that clear criteria should be established for the selection of categories and that the categories should be seen to relate to recognized procurement categories in the sector. These criteria should include the total spend and or volumes of items and an estimate of reputational risk where demand is small. It was recommended that the categories chosen should be based on the Flexible Framework categories (to give a recognised and litigable framework and to avoid duplicating existing work).

Partners would need to appreciate that some categories might appeal only to colleges and some only to universities.

It was suggested that the background briefing on poverty procurement and fair trade had an important role to play in providing context to underpin the choices made.

***AB members to suggest any additional criteria and sources of information to use to underpin choices of categories.***

## **9 Legal issues for public procurement on an ethical basis**

We discussed PAPER AB-080826-09 which outlined some of the legal issues affecting ethical procurement. It became clear from the discussion that the issues relate not just to whether EU law, or UK/Scottish etc guidance enables ethically sourced materials but also to the legality of processes and wording. ***HF said she would check whether the recent Groningen coffee decision would affect the wording of government procurement guidance.***

We believed that it was not appropriate at this stage to be spending resource on getting legal advice. But we recognized that an important outcome of the project would be the development of guidance and processes that were legally robust. Consequently, the processes and wording that emerge from the project should be subjected to good legal scrutiny; this would arise later on in the project.

## **10 Evaluation strategy and baseline study arrangements**

JF introduced PAPER AB-080826-11 discussing the **Evaluation and baseline** which had been circulated. He said that DFID required an evaluation to take place and required that this should be undertaken by someone not involved with implementing the project. Consequently, an independent evaluator was needed. The main activities in the evaluation would take place near the beginning when a baseline was being established and at the end when achievements were being recorded. Along the way, individual activities will also be evaluated by gathering the views of participants. Some concern was expressed by board members that too much time might be spent investigating the minutiae of the present system when the key outcome was the development of revised processes and dissemination. There was also concern that it would not be possible to gather information about good practice until we have defined what we mean by good practice.

***JF to revise evaluation strategy to take account of these points.***

## **11 Partners' first meeting 7 October 2008 Durham**

PAPER AB-080826-12 setting out a proposed Agenda for the first partners' meeting had been circulated. In a brief discussion. The Board agreed that the meeting should include a discussion of the role and expectations of partners, and discuss the items to be tackled by the fact sheets.

***Members were asked to send any additional comments to JF by 8 September.***

## **12 Communication strategy and arrangements for launch, newsletter etc**

PAPER AB-080826-13 setting out a communication strategy had been circulated. ***The meeting didn't discuss this and members were asked to send any comments to JF by 8 September.***

## **13 Next meeting of advisory board**

We agreed that the next meeting should be held in Newcastle/Durham about five weeks after the first partner meeting and proposed dates were 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, or 20<sup>th</sup> November.

***JF to find the best dates for partners and arrange venue***