

8. Paper 15.06.12 – MAC Report (FG)

For Information

Purpose

A summary of activities with the MAC since the last Board are listed, this provides a clear link of communication between the MAC and the Board.

Latest Activity

In May we asked the MAC to provide feedback on LiFE and how they and their institution are using it (if at all). The detail of this is below for information:

“As you may know we will be asking Members who are using LiFE to send us their LiFE Spreadsheets in June so that we can understand how we can better support users. So your own insight now will give us an invaluable insight into how Members are using it and what would be useful to help them further.

Please can you respond to the following questions and either reply to the email if you wish to share your responses with the group or forward it to me direct at fgoodwin@eauc.org.uk. If you could reply by 15th May please.

Background

Learning in Future Environments (LiFE) is a planning and self assessment tool specifically for colleges and universities to improve social responsibility and environmental performance through a whole institution approach. LiFE is free to EAUC members. You can find out more at <http://www.eauc.org.uk/life/home>.

If you are not the lead person for LiFE in your institution please feel free to share this with your colleagues. We would like as much insight as possible.

Questions

1. Are you/your institution using LiFE?
2. If not, why not? (*You do not need to respond to any further questions*)
3. Are you using it across your whole institution or in specific department(s)?
4. Which Frameworks/Priority Areas are you using? Or are you using it all?
5. Did the sustainability team complete LiFE or did you ask for a lead person for each Framework/Priority Area?
6. Do you use LiFE as a management tool and share with senior managers?
7. What impact has LiFE had in your institution?
8. To know where support is needed and to anonymously review the sector, we will ask you to submit the completed tool to us annually (in June). No form filling, no extra work, just pop it in an email. We will use the combined information to guide our services over the coming year and provide the sector with some useful insight. All specific information regarding your institution will remain confidential – we will not name any institutions. Would you be willing to submit?
9. What information from other LiFE users would you like to know?
10. How could LiFE be improved?”

Summary of feedback

| Whole institution or specific depts | Who completed | Management tool? | Impact | Willing to submit | Information | Improvements |
|---|--|--|---|---|---|---|
| Whole institution – All areas | A lead has been allocated for each framework at Director level | Yes and shared with senior managers | It has provided a useful visual gap analysis and point of discussion to further progress the embedding of SSR | Yes | How they are using it and with whom. Applicability and success. | The most common issues raised are that Social Responsibility has been pasted onto what is fundamentally a sustainability index. This is not helpful when we are trying to make the two agendas work side by side. Also that it is very subjective and as such critical that the right framework owners are established. Responding in small groups rather than as an individual has also been identified as a better way to complete. |
| Partly used across whole institution - Will use/revisit again after College restructuring this summer | Lead person assigned and to deliver via SMT and governing body | Yes and Yes – but re-visit due after restructure | A useful visual gap analysis which complements existing methods | Not at this moment but following changes in college – probably towards October. | Applicability and success. | Integrated systems are used in our organisation and the tool could be developed to reflect the Corporate Health Standard in Wales and Occupational Health and Safety. A big push here to ensure that wellbeing (as part of the new Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015) is brought into integrated decision-making. |
| Yes, where applicable. Some areas (estates and facilities) are responsible for areas such as energy and water. Others are shared (Biodiversity), which is shared between Grounds Management, the Sustainability team and other interested parties. As such we have a wide ranging working group governance structure, which reports to our Sustainability Strategic Management Group and SMT. The | All frameworks are initially completed by myself before being used in discussion with the area lead and then the | It's baked into terms of reference, so it depends on the working group chair. A PVC chairs the SSMG, a Dean chairs the ESF Working | Variable. Where it's applicable and the area is ready to take on this approach, it is working well and people can see the clear benefit. However, its strength is in its simplicity, as a maturity assessment matrix, and the generic nature of the | Only when I'm ready, which means at a time when I feel that the assessments are | Nothing thank you | I think that for complex organisations the maturity assessment framework should be absolutely generic (including procurement), with associated guidance and scoring being bespoke to each area. Each organisation can then apply at whatever level is appropriate. This would then require a more flexible process for scoring assessment and the potential for aggregation, where |

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| <p>terms of reference for each working group has the LiFE index framework baked in. Learning and Teaching is currently organisation wide but it is likely that this will drop down a level and be managed at Faculty level, as our ESF mapping process linked to our strategic framework starts to take hold. Research and Partnerships are currently not being used and will need to follow the emergence of our Strategic Research Network. Because of the generic nature of the frameworks, we have a created a new one for Fairtrade and Sustainable food, which is proving to be a very helpful focus. We are using Utilities; Sustainable IT; Biodiversity; Fairtrade and Sustainable Food; Travel; Sustainable construction and renovation; Resource efficiency and Waste; Sustainable procurement; Learning & teaching; Student engagement; Leadership; Staff engagement and HR (Shortly)</p> | <p>working group.</p> | <p>Group, etc. As a whole it is not provided to SMT, since it is being used as a management tool within the governance structure.</p> | <p>frameworks. People in multiple groups just get it. However, it is important to recognise that all organisations are different, are multiple organisations and that some assessments need to be carried out at different organisational levels. So, for L&T for example, we will probably be doing 4 assessments; one for each faculty. Whilst scores could be aggregated it is probably better to allow the overall organisation to be able to see the relative performance of each faculty. This approach may also be used by a faculty to assess individual Schools.</p> | <p>sufficiently mature, and in line with our own reporting processes . June would not work, since our annual reporting cycle is September for the previous financial year.</p> | | <p>desired. I think the tool needs to be provided unlocked so that people can develop it to suit their organisations.</p> |
| <p>Limit coverage at the moment - IT Dept only at the moment as a pilot so Sustainable ICT</p> | <p>Lead person in IT has completed</p> | <p>Is going to be reported to the Environmental Management System Steering Group (Senior Management</p> | <p>Not known yet</p> | <p>I am sure we will be able to submit</p> | <p>Need to wait for feedback from the pilot</p> | <p>Need to get to grips with it first</p> |

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| | | in attendance). | | | | |

Responses from those who are not currently using LiFE

| If not, why not? | Comments |
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| This is mainly to do with the time it takes to go through the process taking time away from the 'doing' at the institution when we have limited staff time on Sustainability. It just isn't something we find useful to upload information to at this point when we have a very large list of things to be getting on with and such little time - in all areas of the institution. | We have signed up for Responsible Futures and are currently going through the auditing process so this has taken a significant amount of staffing time up. We may decide to use the life framework next year, but haven't held this discussion. |
| The College considers it not a strategic resource priority at this time as it has no impact on current student curriculum, funding requirements or OFSTED assessment. Other initiatives are related to specific targets such as energy (cost) reduction, waste recycling (cost) reduction | |
| We've looked at it in the past and we were put off by the cost but it's free now which is good. Also when we look at the effort needed to use the assessment system we queried whether the output would be sufficiently useful to warrant the effort involved. We are now in the situation yet again that our post of sustainability officer is under threat. Due to financial insecurity our Senior managers have lost interest in sustainability so initiatives such as Life that demand extra staff time will not be acceptable. I'm very discouraged by their attitude at present. Years of steady progress potentially will be lost for not real financial benefit. | Would want to know what tangible benefits other users have gained through engaging with Life. |
| We already have governance / reporting systems (including an ISO 14001 certified EMS), and communications & engagement programmes / staff networks, to manage our sustainability work internally. For external benchmarking we have the EMR and the Green League. | |
| Not directly but we have looked at it and we have adopted/adapted the four-pillar framework for our SSR strategy. If time/resource ever permits, we would look to use the tool as it clearly offers a very useful framework within which to assess a wide range of | Would want to know how much time did it take to complete? Did colleagues beyond Estates use it? How useful did others find it. |

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| sustainability impacts and activities. Lack of human resource. | |
| Not a University or College and have other mechanisms established | Yes would submit if you'd find it helpful from a different sector's point of view – could always sell into non HE/FE! Best practices. Looks greatly improved from last year, like the video introduction to set the scene. Like the other videos, perhaps could have tutorial videos throughout, it makes it greatly improved from last year because less writing to get through. Webinars of examples of how to use the software would be great. How to use the outputs generated i.e. creating of sustainability reports. These maybe in the Member Only Resources, which I can't access. Well done! I can see the improvements made. |

Response rate – 10 responses from a potential of 15 (as only relevant to Educational Members)

Actions

1. Interviews are being held with those that are using LiFE to create case studies to show how institutions are using it and the impact it is having. These will be shared with Members over the coming weeks.
2. Implement a wider survey to other Members who have accessed the tool for further feedback as it may be too early to ask for the annual submission as we need to encourage more Members to start using it.
3. Continued communications to break down barriers in using it such as time and resources

Future MAC Activities

- Seek feedback on Member Journey
- Seek feedback on the Introduction to Sustainability elearning module