



PEL Communications Meeting

Held on Thursday 15th of October 2015 at SUPC Offices, Reading

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| Present: | Dana Dzubas (DD) | LUPC |
| | James Hamilton (JH) | SUPC (secretary) |
| | Geoff Hope-Terry (GHT) | NWUPC |
| | Marion Hutchins (MH) | SUPC |
| | Maria Langham (ML) | NEUPC |
| | Kate Marson (KM) | TEC (Joined Remotely) |
| | Andy Wojciechowski (AW) | NWUPC |

Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Group reviewed actions from the last meeting. Thanks were given to Andy for sharing the Spend360 article. Maria said that the list of sector conferences from Joanne at TUCO has been sent to the group. Marion noted that the buyer's guide had been finalised and asked the group what initial feedback had been received from consortia staff and end-users. The group agreed that all feedback so far had been positive, once consortia staff familiarised themselves with the new template.

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

Consortia updates

TEC

Kate Marson – TEC has recently been busy with events including the Higher and Further Education Show, and planning workshops for November, otherwise business as usual for TEC. Kate said she would circulate the topics/dates of the upcoming workshops for promotion (if appropriate) to other consortia members. Kate mentioned that TEC will not be doing a stand-alone conference this year, but instead focussing on offering a series of targeted sessions.

Action: Kate to circulate TEC Workshop schedule

LUPC

Dana Dzubas – The LUPC system is now live, but is not quite as user friendly as expected. LUPC will report back on the benefits of the system as it is used more. LUPC have recruited for three roles: administrative assistant, data analyst and assistant director. They are also recruiting two consultants to support their procurement shared service. LUPC has been planning several events including an Estates launch, Professional Services event, and an Electronics Watch event. Dana noted that Laura Compton will be returning to LUPC on 9 November 2015, after being on maternity leave. Dana's last day will be 18 November.

NEUPC

Maria Langham – NEUPC has planned a Public Contract Regulations session day with members exploring practicalities and issues. NEUPC has also been expanding its shared services. An Estates Category Group has been set up and NEUPC will be expanding their work within Estates. NEUPC will be welcoming a new senior procurement manager and a new apprentice. Beyond that, Maria has been focusing on meeting suppliers and developing agreement briefing sheets. Maria noted that the NEUPC Conference exhibition was sold out, and that the conference content will cover collaborative procurement, working in different and aggregating demand.

NWUPC

Andy Wojciechowski – Andy noted that NWUPC was collecting Spend360 info and working on benefit statements for members. In terms of contracting, the most recent new award has been for High Value Laboratory Equipment. Andy is currently looking for venues for next year's NWUPC Conference. Andy has also been supporting the joint-consortia work on a new contracts database (to replace uniBuy). The project is making progress, but there are multiple requirements to consider.

SUPC

Marion Hutchins – Marion noted that the focus for SUPC communications over the last several months had been to deliver a successful Conference On University Purchasing (COUP). Marion noted that the initial feedback through delegate and exhibitor surveys was positive, and she extended her thanks to the group for their support. The most recent agreements awarded by SUPC were: Travel Management Services, Periodicals, and Temporary Agency Staffing Services. SUPC will be working on re-tenders for ITRAP and NSSA over the months ahead. Marion reported that SUPC had also recruited for three new positions: an assistant category manager, a data analyst and a category manager. Marion noted that SUPC was prioritising greater engagement with members and may consider hosting a conference for members in the future.

Geoff Hope-Terry noted that all consortia having an annual conference may become a burden to suppliers if they have to attend each conference.

PELAG Update (GHT)

Geoff noted that the PEL Advisory Group (PELAG) had been focussing on implementing activities to support PEL's six strategic aims. The last PEL Implementation Plan Progress Report was published in June 2015. The report outlined the progress that is being made against each action. Marion suggested that more may need to be done to communicate consortia progress against the implementation plan. Geoff suggested that much of this could be quite high-level with a focus on progress towards KPIs. Geoff reported that the PEL Board was happy with the progress being made by the PELAG and the PEL Communications Group.

Geoff provided an overview of some national strategic activity impacting procurement. He outlined the work of Procurement UK and that it may now have accomplished its initial goals of establishing a national procurement training academy (the Higher Education Procurement Association). Geoff suggested it might be useful for the PEL and HEPA to work together formally on communications. Marion noted that there is already a working relationship between members of the PEL Communications Group and HEPA, but that this could certainly be expanded if necessary.

Geoff noted that discussions around the remit of PEL are ongoing, but that the idea of unifying consortia under the tagline 'a member of PEL' had been agreed. The group reported that they had all begun using this tagline.

As a longer term goal, Geoff reported that PELAG would be looking to produce strategy documents. This would be informed by reviewing the strategies of the PEL consortia and identifying overlaps and gaps. It has been suggested that it might be a good idea to gather all the board members of PEL's constituent consortia in a single meeting; however, this comes with obvious logistical difficulties.

Geoff reported that PELAG has identified key areas in which PEL would like to be more active and coordinated: Estates, IT and other high-spend areas.

Geoff offered to attend future PEL Communications Group Meetings, if the group was interested. The group noted that the regular presence of a PELAG member at Communications Group meetings would improve the flow of communication between PELAG and the Communications Group. It also provides the Communications Group with a more holistic view of PELAG priorities.

Action plan for hard-to-reach stakeholders

Geoff requested the group's support in engaging with hard-to-reach stakeholders including: the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, Procurement UK, Universities UK, and The Leadership Foundation.

Geoff felt that easily digestible, bite-sized statements on savings would be very useful when representatives of PEL engaged with these groups. These statements should convey spend and savings figures in ways that are easily comprehensible and which highlight re-investment in the

Higher Education sector. The group outlined some areas that would be of foremost importance for hard-to-reach stakeholders: jobs, the student experience and investment in HE. Statements equating savings with the amount of new lab equipment that could be bought for an institution would be useful. The group agreed that statements outlining savings and the areas which those savings could potentially be re-invested in, would be useful.

The group noted that much of the communication around PEL focuses on reinforcing positive messages through already engaged members, and that further research will be needed to understand what kind of information is useful to these hard-to-reach members. This is an area in which Geoff may be able to provide some insight.

Marion noted that the resources required to effectively research, develop and implement a communications plan targeting hard-to-reach audiences may be beyond what the communications group can provide. She suggested considering commissioning a public affairs agency for this purpose if it is high priority for PELAG.

An initial step agreed was that Marion will start a repository of 'Good News' statements in the Comms. Group's DropBox folder. Group members will populate this with statements or pieces of good news that can be used by all consortia to demonstrate the value for money that collaborative procurement provides.

Action: Marion to set up repository on DropBox

Action: Group to populate repository with 'good news' statements

COUP Debrief

Marion thanked the group for their support of COUP, with particular thanks to Maria for coordinating the PEL stand activities.

The group discussed the benefits of the PEL stand at COUP and more broadly, the benefits of having a COUP stand at other conference. The consensus was that a PEL stand at conferences may not be the most effective way of reaching audiences; instead, it might be more useful to ensure PEL is referenced by heads of consortia and through sessions, if possible.

Maria noted that it was good to have a presence overall, but that the suppliers exhibiting were a higher priority for delegates.

PEL Communications Plan

The group reviewed its major outputs since the last meeting including the buyer's guide template, widespread use of agreement briefing sheets, and posts on the Efficiency Exchange. Marion asked for feedback on the buyer's guide from group members. The group reported that initial feedback was very positive (after a few teething problems in populating it), but that the document could be made shorter. The feedback on agreement briefing sheets has been positive. It was suggested that

a web-based version of the agreement briefing sheets might have a greater impact; this could perhaps be implemented in the new sector contract database.

The group noted that the communications action plan needs to be updated. Marion will lead on this, but will circulate to the group for input.

Action: Marion to update communications action plan

Action: Group to support

The group also discussed some post topics for the Efficiency Exchange and consortia websites. Suggested topics included: spend analytics, social value (graduate employment programmes), the consortia unified approach to sustainability, focus on SMEs, and the High Value Lab Equipment Agreement (HVLE) in the context of national collaboration.

Finally, the group discussed the need for a more coordinated approach to new agreement launches that would benefit all consortia while reducing duplication of work. Maria agreed to arrange a meeting to discuss a protocol for this. The group agreed to hold a conference call.

Action: Maria to setup a conference call to discuss agreement launch protocol

Any Other Business

The group thanked Dana for her participation and wished her the best in her future endeavours, and noted that Laura would be resuming her position at LUPC on 9 November 2015.

The date of the next meeting was tentatively set in February and a Doodle Poll will be sent to group members. Both NWUPC and NEUPC offered to host the next meeting.

Actions:

| Person | Action |
|-----------------|--|
| Kate Marson | Circulate TEC Workshop schedule to group |
| Marion Hutchins | Set up repository of 'good news' statements on PEL Comms. DropBox. |
| All | Contribute, as possible, to good news repository |
| Marion Hutchins | Update the PEL Communications action plan |
| All | Review and contribute to new PEL Communications action plan |
| Maria Langham | Set-up meeting to discuss coordinate agreement launch protocol |