



## Information for Councils on the CLGF Pacific Project

### *Frequently Asked Questions*

#### **What is the CLGF Pacific Project?**

The CLGF Pacific project works with local government and other stakeholders in the Pacific region to strengthen local democracy and improve service delivery. Working with, central governments, city and town councils in seven Pacific island countries (Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu), CLGF is promoting and encouraging regional exchange and capacity building to strengthen institutions and improve service delivery at the sub-national level.

#### **How is the CLGF Pacific Project run and funded?**

The CLGF Pacific project has an office and resource centre in Suva, Fiji, which works closely with a growing network of local government partners in the region to share information, ideas and good practice. A Technical Advisory Panel, comprising representatives of member countries and partner agencies gives policy guidance and direction to the project. The project is supported financially by the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZ Aid), the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), and other regional partners.

#### **What is the CLGF Good Practice Scheme?**

The Good Practice Scheme is a capacity building project, involving practitioner to practitioner exchange of technical skills and experience, is underway under the Commonwealth Local Government Good Practice Scheme. There are currently four partnerships between councils in Papua New Guinea and Australia beginning their second phase, and four new partnerships just starting. Scheme projects are also starting this year in Fiji, Kiribati and Vanuatu.

#### **How does the CLGF Good Practice Scheme work?**

Apart from providing technical support to a local authority in a developing country, such projects have the potential for enhancing professional local government development from a global perspective. Projects are designed to draw on the skills and expertise of councils in New Zealand and combine that with the skills of councils in the Pacific, to help them identify and develop workable and sustainable solutions to challenges being faced on the ground in the Pacific. It normally concentrates on a particular project identified by the project partners themselves.

Projects normally comprise a series of exchange/work-shadowing visits for staff and councillors, combined with joint-working, piloting new activities, and other local activities such as community workshops etc. The projects focus on building the local governance arrangements and strengthening local skills and service delivery capacity. They are not designed to fund major capital works. Funding normally covers travel, accommodation and sustenance, some materials and related costs, etc. Past projects have included waste management, development planning, corporate planning and institutional development. However other projects have a broader dimension (such as the Honiara programme - see below).

### **What is involved for New Zealand councils who take part?**

The contributions expected from participating councils normally relate to provision of professional staff time and expertise - the numbers can vary according to the project, but normally include one or two focal people and others for specific activities - it is quite flexible depending on the circumstances and the level of contribution the councils and/or individuals wish to make.

The projects normally have an initial span of three years, with possible extensions or additional phases if appropriate. They can start as soon as partners are identified and ready. The exchanges are two way so Pacific staff do come to visit New Zealand councils.

### **What are the benefits and opportunities for New Zealand councils?**

The programme has proven to have two way benefits - apart from assisting developing local authorities in Pacific Island countries, it also provides opportunities for management development from a global perspective for Australian/New Zealand council staff (and elected leaders if the programme is so focussed). The CLGF Papua New Guinea project involved Australian councils. An extract from the mid term review of this project gives an indication of the type of benefits likely to occur for New Zealand councils:

*Similarly, the Australian partners have commented that the projects have had significant benefits to the individuals involved - increased cultural awareness, and a genuine "character building" aspect of individuals applying their skills and expertise in unusual environments. The projects have often required all the partners to "get back to basics" and this has proven to be a useful learning tool for re-assessing the real value of their skills. They have all also commented on building valued and long-lasting relationships.*

A UK study identified a number both the benefits and challenges to UK councils involved in international partnerships with developing countries<sup>1</sup>. Benefits included: Sharing skills and good practice; Improving working relations; Honing interpersonal skills; Promoting Trade; Increasing awareness of cultural diversity; and Improving partnership with ethnic groups (sic) at home.

### **What are the benefits and opportunities for Pacific councils?**

The scheme enables local authorities in Pacific countries to exchange expertise, skills and knowledge to come up with innovative and sustainable solutions to a particular problem, challenge or issue being faced by the developing local authority.

### **What support is available to participate?**

The CLGF programme (also supported by other donors including NZAID) covers travel, accommodation and related costs. However it is up to the individual councils if they wish to contribute any other resources - this normally becomes apparent after the projects are developed.

CLGF can support partnerships through advice, facilitation and funding. There is guaranteed funding for the PNG project, along with funding for scoping studies in other countries this year (2006/07). There will be additional funding available for projects next year. NZAID also invests in projects in the Pacific and may be able to support Council participation in certain projects.

### **How can smaller councils, who may not have the resources of their larger counterparts, be involved?**

Experience shows that key factors for a successful partnership include: willingness and commitment to be involved, the necessary expertise within the council, and the ability to release the necessary staff at the appropriate times. Providing smaller councils can fulfil these factors then they are just as able to participate as larger councils. Smaller councils also have the option of combining together to support a Pacific Council.

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://international.lga.gov.uk/lq-alliance/resources/index.html> for the summary and full report.

### **What other projects and relationships exist in the Pacific? How does this fit with other aid work?**

There are around 30 NZ NGOs working in the Pacific currently, though few have many New Zealand staff on the ground. World Vision, Oxfam and Save the Children all have bases, while VSA works across the Pacific. Melanesian countries are the main focus for NGOs due to their greater need and deprivation. Work focuses on skills exchange, sustainability and partnerships, and key areas of demand include community development/income generation and education.

Local NGOs and aid agencies can also provide councils with grassroots community support for council involvement in the Good Practice Scheme.

### **What is NZAID's role?**

NZAID is the Government's international aid and development agency. The elimination of poverty has been central to NZAID's mission, with a regional focus on the Pacific, reflecting the Government's commitment to be a good international citizen and neighbour.

NZAID helps to eliminate poverty through development partnerships, particularly in the Pacific region, and also supports projects in Asia, Africa and Latin America. NZAID places a high priority on building strong partnerships and concentrates its development assistance on activities that contribute to poverty elimination by creating safe, just and inclusive societies, fulfilling basic needs, and achieving environmental sustainability and sustainable livelihoods.

### **How is NZAID involved in the Pacific?**

New Zealand has close links with the Pacific and the diversity of experience and wealth in the Pacific. NZAID's key areas of focus in the Pacific include governance, education, health, gender equity, children and youth. NZAID expects to place more resources and staff in the Pacific in future. Like the NGOs, NZAID also prioritises its assistance to Melanesia, and specifically PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. It also maintains core programs in Kiribati, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu and special relationships with Tokelau, Niue and the Cook Islands. The Government is developing a new Pacific Strategy for 2007 -2015 which reflects both the needs and interests of the Pacific community in New Zealand and the Pacific. NZAID intends to fund more long-term strategic projects in future in the Pacific.

### **What partnership opportunities currently exist?**

For more information on which councils in the Pacific are seeking partnerships, and their areas of interest, go to <http://www.lgnz.co.nz/projects/international-engagement/> and click on CLGF Pacific project workshop July 2nd 2007, CLGF Presentation - Developing a Partnership.

### **What is the process involved in forming a partnership?**

CLGF's approach to developing partnerships is that every one is different. They find it best to let the partners develop the relationship themselves, based on some general principles, and for CLGF take a facilitation role. It is important to manage expectations on all sides from the start. This is why a scoping visit normally takes place first, under some broad parameters with no obligations, and the relationship grows from there.

1. **Investigations** to identify potential partner's and their interests
2. **In principle commitment** from both parties
3. **Scoping visit** to the Pacific (senior political & management representation). A briefing of all partners will be held with CLGF. This provides an opportunity for the parties to meet, identify issues and priorities, and assess whether they wish to continue.
4. **Careful negotiation** to assess the scale of involvement, and develop clear and understood objectives)
5. Identification of and **agreement on activities**, etc.
6. **Proposal and budget**. The parties develop a proposal for the projects they would like to focus on for the duration of the programme and a joint project proposal goes to CLGF for funding/approval. (CLGF will work with both Councils to develop this).
6. **Memorandum** of Understanding or Cooperation Agreement developed
7. **Implementation** - planning, liaison, operations, staff availability, financial management & audit, reporting
8. **A partnership** of equals - values based relationships

### **What are the responsibilities of partners?**

New Zealand Councils are responsible for:

- Project management
- Preparatory work, investigations & planning
- Liaison with partners, stakeholders
- Avail qualified staff at agreed times
- Local transport, logistics, etc
- Materials & operational costs as decided
- Activity & financial reports

Pacific Councils are responsible for:

- Project management
- Preparatory work, investigation, planning
- Avail appropriate staff and counterparts at agreed times
- Local transport, logistics, etc
- Materials and operational costs as decided
- Inputs to progress reports

CLGF is responsible for:

- Support to investigations, planning, etc
- Costs of travel, accommodation, sustenance, related logistics - 3 year funding window
- Possible operational and material cost support
- Information dissemination, M&E
- Liaison with partners, donors
- Reports to donors, partners
- Backstopping, support as required

### **How can councils gain community support to participate?**

Councils can highlight the importance of regional stability to New Zealand's economy and lifestyle, the importance of contributing to our neighbours, the benefits for involve the council and staff involved, and the support from other agencies. Councils can also get the wider community involved in the project, for example local NGOs, rotary, health groups etc may like to be involved.

#### **A Project Example - Rebuilding Honiara City Council**

The CLGF Pacific Office is working with Honiara City Council in the Solomon Islands to strengthen the council's governance structures and enhance its capacity to deliver services to improve the quality of life for its citizens.

The three-year project will see a return to democratic local elections, preparation of a local planning scheme, improved performance management and policy development, and improvements to services such as road maintenance and waste management and disposal. It will also include councillor training, staff training, and procurement of essential equipment. Practitioner support will be an important part of the project.

Key partners are the Papua New Guinea Urban Level Local Government Association, Local Government New Zealand, Maryborough City Council in Australia and UN-Habitat. Kapiti Coast District Council have been a part of the project for two years.

## Next steps

If you are interested in being involved in being part of the Pacific Good Practice Scheme, please contact:

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Ph 04 924 1221 or 029 924 1221

## Useful websites and contacts

<http://www.clgf.org.uk/> provides you with information on the Commonwealth Local Government Forum's work to strengthen local government and share good practice.

<http://pacific.clgf.org.uk/> has more on the CLGF Pacific Project, or contact Terry Parker, CLGF Project Office, Suva, [clgfsuva@connect.com.fj](mailto:clgfsuva@connect.com.fj) Tel +679 3300257, Fax +679 3302729.

<http://www.lgnz.co.nz/projects/international-engagement/> has more about opportunities for New Zealand councils to be involved in partnering with councils in the Pacific. This site includes materials from the recent workshop held in Wellington on July 2<sup>nd</sup> and an example of an MOU between a New Zealand and Pacific Council.

<http://www.nzaid.govt.nz/> provides information on the New Zealand Agency for International Development.

<http://www.cid.org.nz/> has more about local NGOs working in the Pacific

<http://international.lga.gov.uk/lg-alliance/resources/index.html> "Why Should UK Local Authorities Work Overseas?". This provides some good information about potential benefits and challenges for partners involved in these type of projects.