

Advanced Materials 2: Project Management Board Minutes and Actions

3 pm – 5 pm Tuesday 20th January 2010

Room 130, Department of Chemical Engineering, University of Birmingham

In Attendance

Members:

Jon Preece - PI, UoB (Chair)

Mike Adams - PI, UoB

Dave Haddleton - PI, UoW

Julie Macpherson - PI, UoW

Advisors:

Zoe Lethbridge - AM2 Project Manager

Invited Attendees:

James Bowen – Facilities Manager, School of Chemical Engineering, UoB

Karl West – AM2 Business Engagement Manager

Apologies

Stuart Arkless – Facilities Manager, School of Chemistry, UoB

Massimo Peruffo – Facilities Manager, UoW

1. AM2 - Financial Position

a. Refurbishment under spend strategy

Birmingham estates are under spent on both Chemistry and Chemical Engineering refurbishments. This issue was raised with AWM in November 2009 and it was agreed that a proposal would be submitted to use the funds for additional equipment where this would benefit the existing apparatus, and security access and new flooring in Chemistry. The approximate totals available are £25,000 in Chemistry and £76,000 in Chemical Engineering.

Actions: ***Zoe Lethbridge** to circulate final totals available for expenditure and forms to justify equipment purchases*
***James Bowen, Mike Adams, Stuart Arkless and Jon Preece** to complete justifications*

2. Audits

- a. ERDF Certifying Authority visit to AWM
- b. Communities and Local Government Article 16 Audit

An update on audit issues was provided: An ERDF Certifying authority visit to AWM (January 27th and 28th) requires copies of documentation for two items of expenditure (one each from April and May 2009). These were both from Warwick, and documents have been sent to AWM.

The Article 16 Audit is a much more in-depth look at all items in a number of claims. The auditors will probably want to visit both sites and potentially view some of the equipment. AM1 are also subject to this audit.

Actions: ***Zoe Lethbridge** is co-ordinating this and it is unlikely to require any input from the PMB*

3. FEC and Accounting

- a. Procedure for costing external work
- b. Internal charging

The process for costing external work is currently being confirmed and a flowchart summarising this process will be circulated.

Internal charging can be done using the small facilities rates once approved (UoB staff and UoW TRAC team). From 1st February onwards the small facilities rates at UoB should be added to Research Council proposals, so that costs can be recovered from users. Mike Adams asked how costs should be incorporated into other funders' proposals (e.g. EU or TSB). It was also asked how we ensure the project captures funding that has been successfully granted.

It was suggested that useful documents such as the FEC rates could be uploaded to a project website so they could be easily located. This could be an additional page on the Warwick pages which would be password protected to limit availability of documents to key project members.

Actions: ***Zoe Lethbridge** and **Karl West** to circulate document for external charging procedure*
***Zoe Lethbridge** to confirm approval of FEC rates with TRAC steering group (traceable accounting) at Warwick and with custodians in Birmingham*
***Zoe Lethbridge** to investigate incorporation of costs into grant proposals*
***Zoe Lethbridge** to develop website and upload documents by 5th February*

4. Events and Marketing

a. Marketing Materials

Karl West and Zoe Lethbridge had a preliminary meeting with David Cooper (Marketing Birmingham) on the production of marketing materials for the project, and are meeting again with the aim of finalising designs on 27th January 2010.

Materials from the Energy Efficiency project, together with drafts for Advanced Materials, were shown. There will be a cardboard folder and a two page insert which will be common to both AM1 and AM2, and ~4 inserts (single pages) that are AM2 specific. Karl West is composing some text for the inserts which will require input from the Academic Leads. Suggestions for photographs were also requested as the project can ask for another visit by the photographers who took the existing images if we can justify the need. The Maxxis mass spectrometry set-up, GPCs and NMR were thought to be possible subjects. Other images (*e.g.* from microscopes) that could be incorporated were requested.

Following from the combined marketing strategy of AM1 and AM2 it was felt that it would be useful for the projects to know more about each other.

The subject of the Science City website was raised; there was little progress to report but this should be followed up with David Cooper. A workshop on the website took place on 15th December 2009 which was attended by Debbie Girdlestone as a representative of the projects (Debbie is BEM on TM1) ; it was reported that a website at birminghamsciencecity.co.uk should be launched in March 2010.

Actions:

- Karl West** to circulate mock-ups of AM2 inserts
- All** to send comments to Karl on text, potential equipment for photographing and images obtained from kit such as microscopes by 26th January to enable feedback to be given to David Cooper
- Zoe Lethbridge** to contact Pam Thomas and Mark Humphries about communication between AM projects and how to improve this

b. Plaques

AWM have responded to Emma Melia's query about plaques: 'official plaques will be required where refurbishment has been undertaken however where there are several rooms close to each other that have been refurbished one is sufficient for all – or perhaps at a common entrance.'

It was decided that small plaques on entrances to laboratories in Chemistry at both UoB and UoW where the equipment is housed over several floors would be appropriate. In Chemical Engineering (UoB) one larger plaque is required on the entrance to the refurbished laboratories. An example of a plaque for the Clinical Trials Unit which is part of the TM project, and a draft of design for Chemical Engineering were examined. It was decided that 'Science City' should feature prominently as this is the colloquial description in departments where equipment is housed. Further drafts of the plaques will be circulated; AWM will be required to approve the final design.

*Actions: **Zoe Lethbridge and Karl West** to circulate plaque designs*

c. Away day – Nanomaterials: Health and Environment

Nanomaterials: Health and Environment has been identified as a theme for the next away day for the project. The aim of the day is to encourage collaborations and bring together researchers in this area. It was seen as important not to be exclusive so invitations will be circulated widely and worded appropriately. Some topics or categories for discussion are required. It was suggested that the format of identifying a problem and discussing strategies for solution could be a useful one. Matt Gibson, SCIRA fellow, will be asked to help co-ordinate the day as the theme is relevant to his research.

The importance of maintaining momentum and following up on the event was raised, and this should be structured in to the day.

In addition to UoB and UoW academics, other possible delegates were suggested such as a representatives from EPSRC priority areas, the Euro nano-medicine network. Staff from other regional HEIs could be included; Paul Topham at Aston was recommended.

The ideal timing was thought to be in the Easter holiday, but this may be subject to payment timings.

*Actions: **Jon Preece** to circulate list of categories/research areas to be included
Zoe Lethbridge to discuss the event with Matt Gibson and investigate suggest possible dates*

d. 'Launch' event

A stakeholder open day for the project was discussed. This would include representatives from AWM and other interested parties but not industry. It was asked whether AM1 have had a similar event, as this may inform the planning. It was agreed that an afternoon event at UoW which could include some tour/demonstration of equipment could be hosted. It is important that the marketing materials are ready for this event.

Actions: Zoe Lethbridge to investigate dates and locations

e. Request from Pam Thomas for Public Engagement grant

Pam Thomas is making a case to EPSRC for a small amount of funding (£20K is the upper limit) to do a Starter Grant in Public Engagement around the Science City themes, particularly the work in the EPSRC domain. They will know if this has been successful in April. She would like to say that she will find ~£5K from Science City projects in cash in addition for the money in kind (she is not asking for any salary costs). She would like to ask for ~£1250 each from several projects (AM1, AM2 and EE that I am aware of) from next year's marketing budget.

The proposal is to fund a schools' competition for Years 5 and 6 based around photographic images generated through Science City research. Firstly researchers will be asked to enter images for a competition; the shortlisted images will be discussed with school pupils and displayed in conjunction with the BA Science Festival in Birmingham in September 2010; the SCIRA fellows would be involved in this. School pupils will be asked to produce some artwork in response to the images, and a lesson plan will be constructed around this. There will be a competition for the pupils at this stage, and it is proposed that a calendar would be produced. Follow up school visits by liaison staff to schools are planned.

The total marketing budget for AM2 in FY 2010/2011 is £30,000. The board were happy to support the request.

Actions: Zoe Lethbridge to inform Pam Thomas of this

5. AOB

a. Science City visit to USA

A delegation from the Science City Research Alliance are visiting Boston and Chicago in March and April 2010. Jon Preece has volunteered to attend.

b. Travel budget

Jon Preece requested assistance from the project's travel budget to attend a conference in Florida in May 2010. It was agreed that the project would contribute £350 towards this. As there is travel money remaining in the budget it may be possible to cover some other conference expenses that have already been incurred.

Actions: Zoe Lethbridge to circulate available funds in travel budget

c. Business Assists

Jon Preece had identified a piece of work that may be countable as a Business Assist, as the project is currently behind its target of 2 for this financial year.

Actions: Zoe Lethbridge and Karl West to follow this up

d. Charging for equipment access by other Universities

James Bowen asked what rates should be charged if members of other Universities use the project's equipment. It has been agreed that other West Midlands HEIs should be able to access the equipment at the same rates as UoW and UoB can, i.e. the small facilities charge. It was not known what the intention is regarding institutions outwith the West Midlands; this will be followed up.

Actions: Zoe Lethbridge to investigate charging rates for non-West Midlands HEIs