

## ***Draft Note: Peer Review Group\* feedback on the Independent Evaluation of the Commission for a Sustainable London 2012***

The *Peer Review Group* (PRG) has been asked to review and comment on the *Independent Evaluation of the Commission for a Sustainable London 2012* (CSL), prepared by CAG Consultants. The two questions PRG members have been asked to address are (1) to determine whether the review has been carried out in accordance with the project brief; and (2) to identify any issues which have been missed or left as outstanding by the consultants review, the steering group or CSL.

This note has been prepared based on attendance at a project steering group meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> February, a meeting of the peer review group held on 14 February 2013 and a review of a draft report prepared by CAG consultants and comments on this draft report submitted by CSL and the review steering group.

The PRG notes the very limited resources and timescale available for completion of the review. Against this background, the overall view of the PRG is that, whilst the review has been completed broadly in line with the project brief, the evaluation could have been more comprehensive, both in the interviews conducted and data gathered and in the scope of the issues addressed in the report (particularly the role that CSL has and could have played during the Legacy phase of the Games) and in the observations provided on lessons for future 'strategic' assurance activities. The report may not therefore fully capture the value provided by CSL in performing its assurance role. The PRG also feels that there is further scope to explore and disseminate the findings of the review as part of the legacy of the CSL and the London Games.

It should be noted that the PRG's comments are not necessarily a criticism of the work completed by the consultants but relate to the overall scoping, process, resources and timescale to complete the independent evaluation.

This remainder of this document briefly sets out the PRG's key observations on the draft evaluation report.

### **1. A wider evidence base could have been used to support the evaluation's conclusions**

- Have the right stakeholder groups been approached? Have the consultants reached out to all stakeholders that could provide a good account of the functioning of the CSL and the value added. For example, should the review have included input from more senior people/Board members/ministers involved during the delivery of the games? Furthermore, within each stakeholder group covered by the interviews, have the right individuals in these organisations been identified? In addition, the review has only had input from a relatively limited group of assurance providers.
- The evidence used in the draft report is drawn heavily from stakeholder opinions and it is not easy to understand how representative these opinions are. The PRG believes it may have been possible to gather more factual evidence and data to demonstrate the value of CSL and its assurance work (eg data on positive and negative press coverage of Sustainability issues during the games in comparison with previous games; a quantitative survey of key stakeholders on the areas of 'value add' provided by CSL). We note that the consultants are planning to address this issue to some extent in preparing their final report.

### **2. The review could be enriched by addressing additional dimensions**

- The PRG feels the evaluation could have considered in more detail the evolving role and supporting activities of CSL over the period of the games, from planning through to legacy. This was one of the key features of CSL's approach which could offer significant opportunity for knowledge sharing.
- In particular the report could comment more on the role of CSL during the Legacy phase of the Games, accepting that CSL is about to cease its activities, as in many ways this could be argued to be the key

part of the Games cycle where independent assurance of legacy outcomes is most important for stakeholders.

- The review could also benefit from additional insight/comments on the institutional and organisational environment that CSL has operated in and lessons for the future.

### **3. Insufficient attention has been paid to outlining lessons learnt from CSL's experience**

These lessons learnt could focus on:

- How to set up a similar Commission for other events? The evaluation could have distilled critical success factors for future replication.
- More detailed and informed reflection on the concept of strategic assurance, pioneered through the CSL, and implications for application to, for example, other major events, infrastructure projects, public and private sector investment programmes and private sector sustainability reporting and assurance.
- How lessons learnt can be disseminated and shared with other stakeholders (e.g. with the corporate and academic world) and internationally?

### **4. The review lacks a forward-looking analysis of how to best preserve the Legacy of the CSL**

- The evaluation could have reflected more on the handover of CSL's responsibilities and the data/information held by CSL to enable the experience of the CSL to contribute to similar initiatives beyond 2013. This is of particular relevance as the CSL will be discontinued a year earlier than initially planned.
- The PRG feels such analysis forms an important part of the evaluation for two reasons. Firstly, the Legacy of the CSL is an important dimension of the *overall Legacy of London 2012 Olympics*. Secondly, the CSL is the *first such Commission* ever created and benefits of sharing its experience extend beyond the 2012 Olympic Games and UK.

\* The Peer Review Group (PRG) consists of:

- Darryl Newport, Director Sustainability Research Institute, UEL
- Geoff Lane, Partner Sustainability and Climate Change, PwC
- Penny Shepherd, Chief Executive, UK Sustainable Investment and Finance Association