the Bristol Method:
how to prepare a winning bid for the EGCA
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Winning the European Green Capital Award

It took three attempts for Bristol to win the European Capital Award which means the city has acquired plenty of knowledge about how to do it, what works and what doesn’t. This module has been written in order to share that knowledge with other cities who may be preparing to bid.

Bristol first applied to win the 2010 European Green Capital Award. After a pause for the 2012 and 2013 award applications, they bid again for 2014 before winning the 2015 title.

Applying for the EGCA is a potentially onerous task: there is a huge amount of work needed to collate information, and present it coherently. The first bid was entirely created by staff at Bristol City Council. The second and third bids were created by a larger team, supported with local authority project managers, reflecting a gathering momentum within and outside the council. The latter processes were significantly easier with support from organisations across the city.

There was no budget for the technical application. With robust project management and forward planning it was possible to enable municipality officers to put time into the project management and technical-work of the bid whilst managing their existing workstreams.

Bristol’s 2010 bid report (the city’s first attempt) was prepared by technical officers within the municipality (10/12 indicators) and the water companies (2/12 indicators). It was not subjected to any significant external review. While factually accurate, it did not provide a particularly exciting or positive perspective on the city. This was changed for the 2014 bid where there was significant exchange between technical officers and input from leading representatives of the wider business and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) community.

Arguably, however, the pendulum had swung too far the other way and considerable time was consumed in conducting reviews, some of which contradicted each other or lacked appropriate technical knowledge. In some cases, original text was edited out then later reinstated.

In the third bid, we got the balance just right: the case for a good narrative had been made, an understanding that making the story as positive as possible did not mean spin, and the technical authors produced a refined and updated version of 2014’s application.

The 2015 bid was able to draw on further external contributions, reflect significant improvements and detail proposed investment levels to enhance the city’s performance.

By combining strengths, focusing on successes and willing to be ambitious for the future, Bristol’s written applications and presentations showed significant improvement. It was also considerably easier to respond to critics of the value or cost of the application when the team could point to the breadth of support and input across the city and beyond. They were also able to respond to critics who said that the city did not deserve the title: we knew our strengths and vulnerabilities and were able to show we were addressing our weaknesses.

Bristol performed well in all three application rounds despite being up against some extremely strong opposition. For the 2010 bid, we were proud to be shortlisted alongside cities like Copenhagen, Stockholm, Amsterdam and Hamburg.

“Over the course of three separate applications, we learned the most effective way of pulling a bid together. Getting the right balance between different types of contributor is crucial. We had great facts from our technical people and great copywriters, but a critical role is that of balancer, getting contributors to discuss and agree the text – and so producing a stronger bid, a better representation of the facts about Bristol for the judges.”

Mark Leach, Bristol City Council
Why did Bristol apply?

Bristol has long held a reputation as one of the UK’s greenest cities but applying for the EGC Award was an opportunity to see how it stands when compared to leading cities across the rest of Europe.

There were many reasons why Bristol decided to apply for the European Green Capital award. Here are the main ones:

We wanted to benchmark our performance and to exchange ideas with likeminded cities across Europe – just as we’re looking forward now to what Ljubljana and Essen have to offer!

We wanted to build the city’s profile on the world stage, and saw the award as a route to increasing awareness, as well as attracting inward investment.

We wanted to use the award to ensure “green” was for everyone – so many of the city’s great projects emerged in deprived areas of the city, and we hope every area will benefit from the award.

But most of all we wanted to go further. We realised the EGC award is not for perfect cities and Utopias; it’s for recognising progress and ambition. Even as Bristol is justly proud of being European Green Capital it, along with all winners, has much further to go.

The final reason is to do with shared aspirations. The many members of the Bristol Green Capital Partnership saw the bid process as a way to push the city still further. Over the 5 years of bidding, those technical officers and senior managers who shared this aspiration got increasingly involved. And of course politicians from across the spectrum were pushing from the top since the motion to adopt the target of reducing Bristol’s carbon emissions by 40% by 2020 (from a 2005 baseline) received unanimous support from the elected representatives of the municipality (this was before it became a UK target.)

Winning the European Capital Award meant a great deal to many people; it also meant different things to different people. For the grassroots activists, it is a reason to encourage the city to go further; for the municipality’s politicians and officers, it is a chance to evaluate decades of hard work and look for ways to be more ambitious; and for Bristol’s citizens, it is a source of pride that their much-loved city is getting its moment in the spotlight.
What makes Bristol special?

Every European city has a unique history that makes it what it is, and aspects that its citizens are particularly proud of. Bristol is no different and here we share some of the drivers that put the city on its course to be 2015’s European Green Capital.

It is generally recognised in the UK that Bristol is a leading green city. There is a complex system of serial cause and effects at play in cities and Bristol’s journey is beautifully documented in the book “Bristol’s Green Roots” by Emmelie Brownlee (Schumacher Institute Ltd, 2011).

The growth of the environmental movement in the city dates back to the 1960s and 70s when pioneers started a number of projects. Bristol’s innate open and welcoming and entrepreneurial culture helped its regeneration in the 1990s, and this in turn attracted large numbers of creative, socially minded entrepreneurs to the city.

The city is naturally attractive with a larger proportion of historic buildings, the docks, the Avon Gorge and surrounding countryside unusually close to and accessible from the city.

The city is home to two large and successful universities, the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England (more often known as UWE). Graduate retention rates are high suggesting that visiting students fall in love with Bristol and choose to stay, swelling the city’s intellectual capital further.

Bristol is also an ideal size: large enough to hold its weight culturally – it is viewed as the second city of the South – but small enough to affect meaningful change quickly, when the will is there.

From a socio-economic perspective, Bristol is one of the most divided cities in the UK. ‘Green’ is sometimes portrayed as a middle class niche but in fact many of the city’s green projects arose in its most deprived areas, including one of the oldest community growing, gardening and health projects, an innovative furniture recycling, green jobs and skills project – all in areas that are in the bottom ten percent in the country in terms of deprivation. We believe this was attractive to the judges because the projects help improve quality of life and economic prospects for disadvantaged areas and demonstrate that people from all walks of life in Bristol “think green”.

During the economic and cultural boom times from mid-1990s to mid-2000s, a critical change occurred: businesses started to acknowledge their social and environmental responsibilities and to manage their impacts and to agitate for change. A new generation of enterprises, both social and for profit, with different motives and modus operandi were born and an interest in independence emerged, particularly in the retail sector. Whilst this pattern might be seen right across Europe and beyond, it was particularly strong in Bristol.

It’s useful for applicant cities to consider their own history and story and how to present these in the bid: on the one hand this will get harder as more cities have won, but on the other it will be possible to look back at previous bids and learn from those.
Working in partnership

Bristol’s applications for the EGCA are a good example of public, private and third sector organisations working together and building on the unique strengths of each.

Bristol City Council (BCC) was the organisation which started the bid process and wrote ten of the 12 chapters for all three Technical Bids. However, while the process of applying for the 2010 award was done entirely by BCC, the 2014 and 2015 bids were a partnership between the Bristol Green Capital Partnership (BGCP), its membership, and the council – and were stronger for it.

BCC wanted to canvass opinion of key stakeholders in deciding whether to apply a third time – there was overwhelming support, so we did! The work since 2007 building up a forum through which to canvass opinion like this was again proved worthwhile.

Working in partnership was not always easy; there were inevitable clashes and tensions. It’s important to have people on the team to compliment the technical experts and communications professionals - people with tonnes of common sense, mediation skills, and the sense of humour required to periodically knock egos together.

Most of the people working on the bid for the municipality had also worked in the business sector and sometimes voluntary sector too. This helps working across sectors.

The bids improved iteratively; the second application built on the first, and the third refined the second. Each time it got a little easier as the right people to write the chapters had already been identified and had already collated the content before.

The role of the water companies:

In Bristol, as in most of the UK but unlike most of the EU, the supply of drinking water and the management of waste water services are privatised. Bristol Water supplies drinking water and Wessex Water is responsible for waste water treatment. Just as they do in municipalities in Europe, UK water companies collect data, invest to meet EU directives and maintain assets so it was straightforward to request their help in preparing the bid documents.

The municipality and the water companies had already established links and joint working in a number of areas. In addition, both Water Companies were involved in the Bristol Green Capital Partnership. In writing the relevant sections of the technical bid, the authors from each company were able to demonstrate good progress. Wessex Water shared its leading edge practice at the city’s waste water treatment plant while justifying the use of secondary rather than tertiary waste water treatment as the discharge was into an estuary with lower natural water quality. Similarly Bristol Water was able to explain the best-practice approach it takes on managing mains water leakage in the most sustainable way for a modern city.

“Utilities completely understand the need for close stakeholder working – there isn’t a big wall between the private and public sector in our arena – and the EUGC bid was an example of that.”

Dan Green, Wessex Water
Who do you need on the team?

The process of applying for the European Green Capital Award is significantly easier where support for the application comes from organisations across the city, not just from within the municipality. Below are the various groups and organisations that helped Bristol win the bid, listed here to indicate the breadth of support that a winning bid requires.

A cross-sector partnership

The Bristol Green Capital Partnership was formed in 2007 before the award was launched. The purpose of the Partnership was to make the city a green city, not to win the award. Applying for and winning the award helps us to achieve that bigger objective. Of course, other cities could do this the other way round – a Partnership formed to help the city win the award could then look around and ask “What next?”

The Partnership structure enabled it to provide broad brush strategic advice and encouragement as well as a small, focused group to support the process.

As well as reviewers, we were fortunate that the Partnership Manager brought a wealth of project management experience and techniques to complement those already in the municipality and project managed the macro project plan and the input of the partnership as well as the post shortlisting phase (see Preparing for a jury presentation)

Municipality technical level

Bristol’s bids required nine lead authors, plus one or more other technical officers providing information from related areas of expertise for each indicator from BCC, together with input from the technical managers at each of the Water Companies.

The Coordinator Role

Collating the technical bid required project management experience, with responsibility for identifying authors; handling liaison and relationship management with authors; the relationship with external peer reviewers; editing the work of dispersed technical authors; managing an issues log; and keeping the project on track. Key skills here are diplomacy, diplomacy and diplomacy.

International officer

Bristol Municipality’s European and International team advised on the wider European context of the European Green Capital Award. Their role involved liaising with the European Commission in order to obtain a good understanding of the Commission’s requirements for the bid and informing the bid team of relevant European policy and legislation. They also built relationships with former European Green Capital cities and finalists to learn from their experiences and identify how to work together on ensuring the legacy of the award.
...and to support that team:

You can have the best team but without the right organisational and city context, they won’t get far...

**City politicians**

Bristol’s politicians from all parties were supportive of the applications and whilst not involved in the day-to-day work on the bid, political leads for the different subject areas read the relevant indicators and made constructive amendments.

**Municipality Management**

Having commitment from the most senior level down through the management is essential to enable technical authors to create the space in their work schedules – which are already full. Ultimately, in a municipality like Bristol there is no spare capacity so making time to write the document for each indicator meant carefully considering what other work could be re-scheduled.

**Public relations and communications**

This is an easy role to overlook at the early stages. There was much media interest. Bristol City Council’s press and media relations team assigned an officer with a professional and personal interest in environmental issues. The result was a series of three special pull-outs with the main local print paper. There was lots of coverage in other media outlets too – not all positive of course, but because of the close working by a dedicated officers, compared to some other issues it was relatively well-informed. Local business media followed the story of the application process closely.

**The general public**

City wide support from citizens was unprecedented, and this is another area the Partnership played an important role, with its members reaching out to people across the city.

"Our applications were part of a wider learning process. We learnt from our failures and were able to identify areas in our applications and presentations where we could improve. We also confirmed where the city and community had to improve. As a result we did improve, change and win."

Professor Martin Bigg

Chair of the Bristol Green Capital Partnership during 2014 & 2015 applications.
Step-by-step: preparing a technical bid

Getting the technical bid right is what gets a city shortlisted. It comprises a report on each of the 12 specified indicators. As well as factual, descriptive text, it includes graphs, tables and data. Each indicator is divided into past activity and performance (historic plans), present activity and performance, and planned future activity with budgets to support and level of commitment indicated.

Below is Bristol’s advice – the city didn’t get all of this right first time but the process improved with each successive attempt.

Before you apply, you can enhance your chances by doing the following:

1. Co-create, nurture or initiate a cross-sector partnership like the Bristol Green Capital Partnership;
2. Adopt ambitious targets on all 12 Indicators, as well as action plans to deliver those targets;
3. Wherever possible, help your city’s grassroots organisations to grow;
4. Be part of EU projects and bids, applying to calls for proposals, be internationally engaged
5. Seek support from political leaders of all political colours from the outset;
6. Get an externally verified environmental management system such as EMAS
7. Work with neighbouring authorities on cross-boundary issues;

If you need to do all these, you might want to take a year or two before applying, unless you feel you can start repeated applications as Bristol and Ljubljana did.

Use the process to drive change in your city

- Bristol’s applications were over a 4-5 year period, with a 2 year break in the middle. Over this time, we increased investment in energy efficiency and renewables exponentially and doubled cycling rates.

When you are preparing an application, these are the recommended steps:

1. Develop a project plan setting out scope, aim, key milestones, governance, project team roles & responsibilities, resources required including additional staff and estimated budget.
2. Create a steering group from a broad range of organisations, municipality departments, expertise, sectors etc.
3. Identify and brief a senior owner who is responsible for each of indicators (‘owners’).
4. Work with them to brief technical authors for each of the indicators – set out very clear timescales, realistic of other work commitments (‘authors’).
5. Within the municipality, communicate widely to raise awareness of the planned activity and the importance of the bid. This ensures senior people are willing to support the project and remove obstacles.
6. Steering group work with authors and owners to create the overall story arc for each indicator.

Ongoing activity:

7. Project manager to create individual project plans and or issue logs for each chapter.
8. Set out a clear support programme for authors – you need to have the resource to respond quickly when they submit drafts. Clarify for authors exactly what is needed, and by when.
9. Hold regular (but not-too-frequent) one-to-one progress meetings with authors.
10. Schedule regular meetings for the working team, as well as opportunities to update and consult the steering group.
11. Iterate (edit/re-write/edit/re-write), grinding down to permitted word count.

Finalising and reviewing:

12. Identify quality external reviewers, particularly from your city’s academic institutions.
13. Arrange meetings with owners and authors to review the bid together and agree priorities.
14. Submit your application with plenty of time for technical problems – don’t leave until he last minute.
15. Respond to clarifications.
16. If successful at this round, begin work on Jury presentation.
Technical bid: Advice for others

Having been through the process of bidding for the EGCA three times, the project team have picked up a number of tips which they share below:

Tell a story as well as presenting the facts

- You can’t change the facts but you can make a world of difference in how they sound when you present them. It’s like a job application: every fact, figure and assertion must be 100% accurate but remember that the technical judges will be reading many applications so yours needs to be memorable and interesting. The difference between our first drafts and final submission was transformative.
- Show progress: be clear about where you have made progress and what is planned next.
- Look at where performance isn’t right at the top and reflect on it – is there a good reason for this? In some instances there is a valid obstacle and the judges need to know about this. In others, there isn’t – in which case we admitted this and explained it.
- Getting an external expert review is really important here as it helps to have an objective view on where more information is required, and where the data provokes questions.
- Be thorough: being successful requires relentless rigour in seeking out more case studies, examples and breadth in evidencing our progress against the indicators.
- It’s also about having the discipline NOT to include evidence. We have great stories to tell on topics such as climate adaptation, sustainable food, managing resource depletion and community and partnership development. But in the tricky balancing of word count and drilling into what precisely the judges are seeking, some beautifully constructed arguments and well developed evidence had to be discarded – this is a harsh process so be harsh from the outset – don’t be tempted by a fantastic project, outcome or story and include it if it doesn’t fit with the questions!
- The focus of the application questions means that it is inevitable that the local municipality will lead the collation of the technical bid but make sure you invite outside contributions too. Ten of the 12 technical chapters about Bristol were written by people inside Bristol City Council but we tried to get as much in the bid about the wealth of work done by those alongside the municipality.
- Sometimes the most important role a municipality plays in making a city more sustainable is just to get out of other people’s way! It’s hard to tell the story sometimes but by removing obstacles for grassroots groups to develop their ideas, we’ve allowed great projects to flourish.

Leadership and collaboration

- With bids being prepared three years in advance it is quite possible that there could be a new municipal administration by the time your city is actually celebrating its Green Capital year. Although there was a general consensus that entering and winning would be good for the city, there could be no guarantee that the bid would be delivered as promised.
- Current mayor, George Ferguson, was personally very committed to the title of Green Capital. When he came to power he immediately expressed his desire to take progress further and acknowledged the important contributions made by previous administrations.
- For the earlier bids, the officer team worked hard to get cross party consensus: all parties can share credit for supporting the ambition. Had all parties not supported the first bid, when the administration changed the applications may have been abandoned. Instead, successive leaders championed both the bid process and nurtured the Green Capital Partnership – a driving force for the whole effort – and made sure resources were allocated where needed.
- The green agenda has support from all political parties in the city: before our current mayor came to the role, previous council leaders from both the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties were strong supporters, as were the Conservative party. This is an important lesson for potential applicant cities because it demonstrates what can be achieved with and by parties of all colours.

Get an EMS

- Having an environmental management system was a massive boost to our ability as an organisation to deal with the application process. The EMAS accreditation requires continuous external assessment, preceded by similar audit processes by internal assessors, and that culture of audits was a critical factor in our successful applications. EMAS had also helped build connections with other teams, speeding up the process of engaging the technical authors.
- Most – if not all – winning cities had in place an externally verified environmental management system, or were in the process of adopting one.
• ...And of course, management of the municipality is within its control, whilst managing many other indicators is much more difficult

Draw on the city’s knowledge

• Different people have different perspectives and ensuring that the bid was considered from multiple viewpoints was essential. For the 2014 and 2015 bids a cross-community steering group was created with representation from business, academia, community and other sectors, as well as the municipality. Regular meetings were scheduled along the timeline of the application process. The group was able to guide the work as well as managing the collaboration between the different parties involved with the bids.

Get the resources you need

• Making sufficient time and resource available is essential. This is a challenge when resources are tight, budgets are being cut and the municipality has other pressing priorities. Fortunately in Bristol because of the commitment of partners to the success of the bids, the city’s two universities input resource and expertise, for example The University of the West of England funded support for the bid preparation including film production.

• We also unlocked resources by using the bid application process to provide other benefits to the council and the city and service delivery. It’s an opportunity to establish baselines and performance knowledge, to promote green projects, to demonstrate the importance of environmental measures to economic profile and jobs etc. and to build an organisation-wide information gathering mechanism.

Be excellent project managers

• When there are multiple authors contributing over very short time periods, our experience indicates that a robust version control system is essential. We used a shared folder on Bristol City Council’s server which is automatically backed up by corporate IT systems but we also made sure versions were saved externally daily. No matter what happened, IT complications were not going to be the reason for any delay or last minute rush!

Pick knowledgeable writers and diplomatic editors

• So much of our success is down to the technical authors, many of whom have worked quietly on progressing sustainability within the city for years – if not decades. The bid requests information about progress over the last ten years and we were fortunate that the people authoring each indicator chapter had been in post for a long time and often implemented the very changes they were writing about.

• Technical specialists tasked with writing and contributing to a bid will inevitably wish to include detail about the range of projects they work on and are so passionate about. The editorial role, conscious of both the focus of the commission’s questions and the word count, is essential. Expect there to be many iterations between technical specialist and the editors. A good deal of diplomacy is required!

Do your homework

• If you apply more than once, the jury and judge’s comments are hugely valuable. From the Synopsis Technical Assessment Report available after we went through to the final the first time, we were able to compare and contrast our performance to the other finalists and clarify our strengths and weaknesses. We then identified how we could play to them. For example we have a serious problem with air quality in the city due to traffic. Whilst the controls available are lower than most European cities we had an unusually advanced monitoring network and used it to target actions effectively.

• If it’s your first time, feedback on other cities is very informative and the next best thing. There are now several years’ worth of Good Practice Guide – a worthwhile read whether applying or not.

• Other research we found very valuable was reviewing relevant pieces of European legislation under each of the 12 section. Bristol City Council’s International Officer produced a report on EU policy areas and corresponding council work. It allowed us to see how Bristol’s activities align to European objectives, as well as understand how we perform against European targets.

Challenge your limitations

• The purpose of the award is to spread good practice around European city municipalities, and to encourage cities across Europe to up their game. Therefore, to be genuine and meaningful the comparison has to work across different national political structures. The bid process is very good at recognising the limits of a council’s power – so for example the privatised public transport system in UK is different from many EU countries. Rather than comparing apples with pears, the European Commission’s bid process recognises this. The challenge here is to avoid making excuses and once again, employing some highly sceptical external reviewers to challenge us was extremely useful – we had to prove to the judges we were doing everything possible within that context, and prove an extremely high performance on the other issues within the indicator.
Preparing for a jury presentation

If your technical bid is successful, you will be shortlisted. The next stage is to present to a jury of judges. This stage in the process requires different skills and team members. Here we share Bristol’s experience in the hope this will help your city prepare to face the jury.

In Bristol’s bid for the 2015 title, our technical bid had ranked first or second in all 12 indicators. However, the way the award is run means that we could have lost to one of our shortlisted competitors if they were able to impress the jury with, for instance, strong plans for the year or ideas about how to engage citizens in behaviour change.

Preparing for a jury presentation takes a fair amount of work, and we knew it was necessary to have a team of people working together to get all the elements right. We formed a project management group for the 2014 bid and made careful choices to ensure we had the right individuals, as well as the right mix of people. We made sure we were clear about the group’s remit, and structured our meetings to align with existing structures and planned meetings hosted by the council and others.

We worked hard to keep the group inclusive and fluid, and resisted the temptation to do things by committee.

For the 2015 bid, we were able to build on the work that been done previously. This allowed us to pare the working team right back. This time, there were just four people involved in the preparatory stages: the Bristol Green Capital Partnership Manager; someone from a cutting-edge third sector organisation; a representative from the city’s Natural History partnership and the municipality Sustainability Manager.

The experience of making a jury presentation for 2014 allowed us to agree a different approach for the 2015 presentation, to be a little less “safe”, more creative, take few risks - thus enabling Bristol’s sense of fun to shine through!

“For the 2015 bid we knew we need to make it more “Bristol” and let the grassroots unorthodox culture of our city shine through. We wanted to make the judges smile and to get a feel for how visitors would enjoy the programme if we were to win. We wanted to distil the creativity of the whole city into a single hour”

Darren Hall, BGCP Manager 2011-13

The team were clear that it absolutely must not be creativity for its own sake. A whacky idea will not impress the jury unless it meaningfully explains the city’s approach, is authentic to its history, and conveys something real about what it will do in its year as European Green Capital.”

Mark Leach, Bristol City Council
Decide what you’re famous for

Some cities do one thing really well. If you ask Copenhagen what sustainability story people come to see, they will tell you it’s cycling. In a way that’s unfair because the Danish capital is good at so much in greening their city, but that’s what they are internationally credible and famous for. Other cities are good across the board but don’t have a reputation for one thing – like Bristol. This creates a temptation to cover everything but this must be resisted because it risks making your presentation dull, incoherent and superficial.

Link back to the strengths and weaknesses from the technical bid, to show your authenticity and reassure the jury, but don’t repeat it – build an exciting, forward looking story on the foundations of the strategies and performance data of the technical bid.

In Bristol, we took time to settle on what our ‘essence’ is. We had numerous vision and strategy documents to draw on, some of which were led by the municipality, others by partners or external organisations. But the ambitions of these forward-looking documents were already well-covered in our technical bid and we didn’t want to use precious minutes covering the same ground.

Bristol has a large number of leading green businesses and is committed to smart and digital sustainability solutions. It’s known internationally as a Smart, digital, and innovative city, for its creative industries, sustainable food community and a number of other key strengths. However, Bristol stands out is because the city has been shaped by more than 30 years of grassroots activism. We decided to use this as the central focus, which brought colour and creativity to our approach. It also brought characters! So our story to the jury was about people. Of course, we took great care to ensure that our grassroots story matched up with our technical bid.

Ideally, all work for both the technical bid and jury presentation will be useful to the city, even if you don’t make the shortlist, or win the award. For instance, the films we made could have been used to promote the city to inward investment, answer citizens’ questions about the city. Taking this approach means you can start work sooner, and be better prepared in case you get shortlisted.
Preparing to present

Bristol built a team to go to Brussels based on a broad range of experience. Some of these choices were inevitable – the mayor, for instance, was always going to lead the presentation. Others were chosen specifically because they represented voices that were often harder to hear, such as neighbourhood-based organisations. Below, we list the people who travelled to Brussels to meet the jury, with an explanation about why they were chosen:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>RATIONALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presenters</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor of Bristol</td>
<td>Figurehead and leader; person with accountability for leading the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant council director</td>
<td>Person within municipality spearheading/responsible for the initiatives detailed within the bid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A representative from a neighbourhood-based organisation</td>
<td>Organisations outside the perceived “green bubble” and in the 10% most deprived on national indices of deprivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The chair of the Bristol Green Capital Partnership</td>
<td>Able to represent other aspects of the city. For the 2015 bid this was green business networks and academia in particular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A senior academic</td>
<td>Both our universities were key to our bid – the individual also had a specialist understanding of the Smart and Digital perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A representative from a third sector organisation</td>
<td>We chose someone from a cutting edge organisation which is concerned with reframing the way cities measure their success, fortunately based in Bristol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A representative from the city’s Natural History partnership organisation</td>
<td>One of the UK’s leading partnership organisations with entrepreneurial and communications flair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristol Water company Sustainability Manager</td>
<td>We knew Water would be a key theme for technical questions and to demonstrate broad support from utilities companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEP for South West England</td>
<td>Critical in supporting the municipality’s International Team’s efforts to make council more EU facing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“On the bench”</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical manager from the municipality</td>
<td>A head full of stats and info and history from across municipality departments to help answer any technical questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bristol Green Capital Partnership Manager</td>
<td>Person responsible for project managing the presentation stage of the bid, getting citywide support from citizens and finding and persuading the city’s best minds to input into videos, stories and other creative / non-technical content.</td>
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Jury presentation: advice to others

We let the team members be dictated by the story that we were aiming to tell about the city. However, there were a number of concerns and points to consider in choosing team members, offered here as advice:

**Leaders will have a point of view**

As democratically elected leaders, political figures will have strong views on who should / should not be included and their opinion will rightly be powerful. It is therefore important to be able to explain and robustly defend all choices. Engage leaders as early as possible to make sure they understood and support the chosen direction.

**Balance the team**

We wanted a balance between the people who knew the content deeply, and the people who could inspire and engage an audience. In the end, we were fortunate that the team had plenty of both. We made the decision to put content more at the start and inspiration towards the end.

We were pleased to be able to create a team which reflected the civic, business and community aspects of the city with a good balance of gender, age and ethnicity. For both the 2014 and 2015 bids, the presenting team wore green ties or scarfs to show we were part of the same team.

**Tell a story**

We recruited an award-winning and highly creative Bristol PR Agency who were also very knowledgeable about environmental work (admittedly there is a good spread to choose from in Bristol!) They helped us develop a strong narrative that ran through all six elements. The outcome on the day was that the team visibly took the jurors with them on the journey. We took a risk and decided to take the jury on a trip through time – welcoming them to late 2015 – and talking in the past tense about what amazing year we had had.

We spent a great deal of time gathering content so we could select images and footage that linked to our Technical Bid, showed that Bristol was unique and unusual, and provided a geographically range across our chosen issues of strength.

**Practise, practise, practise!**

When working with senior people, one has to be conscious of the difficulties of securing ample time to practise. However, while they are likely to be accomplished speakers, collective practice and feedback from those with in-depth involvement in the project is essential. Accept this from the start, then create a plan to address it.

To take a fully representative team, you will likely need to invite people with less experience of public speaking. In this instance it would be useful to build in coaching sessions into the project plan. Bristol’s community representatives ended up being the stars of the show!

Various partners, such as the city’s two universities and local groups, were hugely supportive of the preparation phase, providing both rehearsal space and a critical audience. Several individual and group rehearsals were needed to improve the content and quality of the presentations. These rehearsals also allowed the team to identify each other’s strengths and weaknesses, and agree who was best to lead in each area of questioning.

**Know your audience**

It is useful to find out in advance who you will be presenting to, and what their interests are, so you can anticipate likely questions. We knew water was likely to be a hot topic, so brought an expert from Bristol Water who adeptly answered a question about how the city was saving water, providing practical examples about the provision of rainwater collection barrels. Likewise, when a question on food arose, we were ready to give a high level response and point to the details in our food policy publication which we passed on to the jury.
Consider using films

Showing a well-made film can be much more powerful than a few slides. We used slides for our 2014 bid which worked very well but decided to try something more exciting for the 2015 bid. Our technical bid was all about the numbers. Our jury presentation, however, was about people. Our film allowed us to introduce some of Bristol’s characters and tell a truly human story. We were fortunate that one of the city’s universities, The University of the West of England (UWE), was willing to support with film production.

Making a good film can require a long lead in time so you have to undertake a careful balancing act: enough creative freedom to stand out from other cities’ films; but not so much you end up having to make changes and cut scenes!

Think about what you leave behind

The creative team put together a pack that we felt was true to Bristol, enticing people to visit and reflecting the strengths of our bid. It includes a handful of things that illustrated what we might do in the year in traveller’s pack: a passport which included the highlights of a potential programme for the year, conversion rates for the Bristol Pound, bicycle hire voucher etc. It wasn’t so much a detailed events programme as a flavour or impression; it aimed to spark interest, not describe or detail – and as the year has progressed we’ve far exceeded our aspirations back on that afternoon in Brussels!
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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BRISTOL 2015

European Green Capital is a prestigious annual award designed to promote and reward the efforts of cities to improve the environment. Bristol is the first ever UK city to win the award.

European Green Capital is run by The European Commission, recognising that Europe’s urban societies face many environmental challenges – and that sustainable, low-carbon living is vital to the future of our cities and our people.

The award was first won by Stockholm in 2010. Since then, Hamburg, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Nantes and Copenhagen have carried the torch. Bristol will hand over to Ljubljana at the end of the year.

THE BRISTOL METHOD

The Bristol Method is a knowledge-transfer programme aimed at helping people in other cities understand and apply the lessons that Bristol has learned in becoming a more sustainable city, not just in 2015 but in the last decade.

Each module of the Bristol Method is presented as an easy-to-digest ‘how to’ guide on a particular topic, which use Bristol’s experiences as a case study. The modules contain generic advice and recommendations that each reader can tailor to their own circumstances.

The Bristol Method modules are published on the Bristol 2015 website at www.bristol2015.co.uk/method

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