

National Working with Business Project Business Category List - Research & Scoping

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www.workingwithbusiness.org.uk



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Abstract

The Local Government Business Category List (LGBCL) will be designed to meet the requirements of Working With Business software and used to classify businesses in order that an Economic Development Officer can determine the relevance of local government information to a particular business.

LGBCL will be modelled on the list produced by the Super Project and extended to take account of a draft list from the Small Business Service and other local government resources. It will be mapped against standard Industry Classification (SIC) codes and the Local Government Service List, also known as esd-toolkit's PID List. Published formats and version control will be in accordance with the framework for controlled lists adopted by the Local Authority Websites (LAWs) project.

Any comments or response to this document should be channelled through the esd-toolkit e-mail: standards@esd-toolkit.org.

1 Metadata

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Subject.Category	Information management	LGCL
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Subject.Category	Information management	GCL
Subject.Category	Business Sectors	GCL
Title	Local Government Business Category List – Research and Scoping	
Title.AlternativeTitle	LGBCL Research and Scoping	

2 Background and Purpose

This document defines the purpose and scope of the Business Category List, which is to be established as part of the Working With Business (WWB) National Project.

The document results from discussions with WWB project managers, Rutland Online and developers/users of other business category lists. It presents brief reviews of lists assessed prior to recommending a list suitable for WWB purposes.

The study set out to determine if an existing list could be adopted by WWB or a new list is required.

The List is assessed in the context of other controlled lists used by National Projects, including the LAWs Local Government Category List and esd-toolkit's Local Government Service Lists (also known as then PID List). Hence the WWB list will be referred to as the 'Local Government Business Category List' (LGBCL).

3 Introduction

The National Working with Business Project is one of twenty-four National Projects funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). The Working With Business (WWB) National Project will provide local authorities with a range of products, which will enable them to support local small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) far more efficiently and effectively than ever before.

3.1 Summary Of Conclusions

WWB software will support a 'single business account' whereby businesses, particularly SMEs (Small to Medium-sized Enterprises) can identify themselves as belonging to a small number of categories. Categories will be used to define relevant content – particularly static Web pages – for each business. Categories need to be subdivided by broad business sectors with a more detailed breakdown in areas where specific local authority requirements/support is applicable. Councils' Economic Development Officers (EDOs) will create content or modify existing content applicable to businesses in specific categories.

The LAWs Local Government Category List provides some subject headings, which relate to business sectors mixed with others relating to business activities and related topics. Hence it was *not* considered suitable for a 'purer' list of businesses which broken down by sector. So LGBCL will not be viewed as a sub-section of the Local Government Categories List, although its structure will be similar.

The category list produced by Norfolk County Council's Super Project (see <http://www.superuk.com/>) most closely approximates to the requirements of WWB in that it is sector-based and only has a small number (18) of categories. The Super Project seeks to support content maintained by Trading Standards and Environmental Health officers in Norfolk. It needs to be extended to cover other areas where there may be regulation from other bodies and/or an EDO may be able to offer specialist advice. Categories will also be derived from Business Link's 'Sector classification list' as this list, though less detailed, includes some broad areas not covered in Super Project's category list.

There are many lists used across local government, most reference the Office of National Statistics' Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes, but are far less detailed so as to be manageable. It is therefore recommended that LGBCL is mapped to SIC codes so that it may thereby be mapped back to other controlled lists of business categories.

WWB's 'Workpackage 1 Report' of 23 July 2003 cross-references business activity and events with specific services from esd-toolkit's PID List (aka LGSL). Some of these services are specific to particular categories of business so it is recommended that a mapping be created between LGBCL and the services list so as to facilitate identification of service specific information relevant to particular businesses.

In common with LAWs' LGCL, LGBCL will support equivalent terms (synonyms) and will be poly-hierarchical. These lists and others in the same 'family' will be issued according to common XML schemas and be subject to the same numbering and version control disciplines.

3.2 Purpose and Structure of LGBCL

The primary purpose of LGBCL is to enable Economic Development Officers to identify which content (syndicated Web pages and content created/personalised by EDOs) and actions are relevant to a business. Business categories need to be sufficiently detailed to facilitate identification of which council services and information pertain to which businesses. Categories should not be too detailed because a business should be able to quickly identify its own category/categories and should typically belong to no more than three categories.

LGBCL will be used to help Web sites support interactions with businesses. Interactions are defined by 10 BVPI 157 (Best value Performance Indicator 157) interaction types. The 'Provide Information' interaction will be supported with information from the Small Business Service (SBS), generic content for service interactions coming from the LAWs Project and content created or modified by a local EDO.

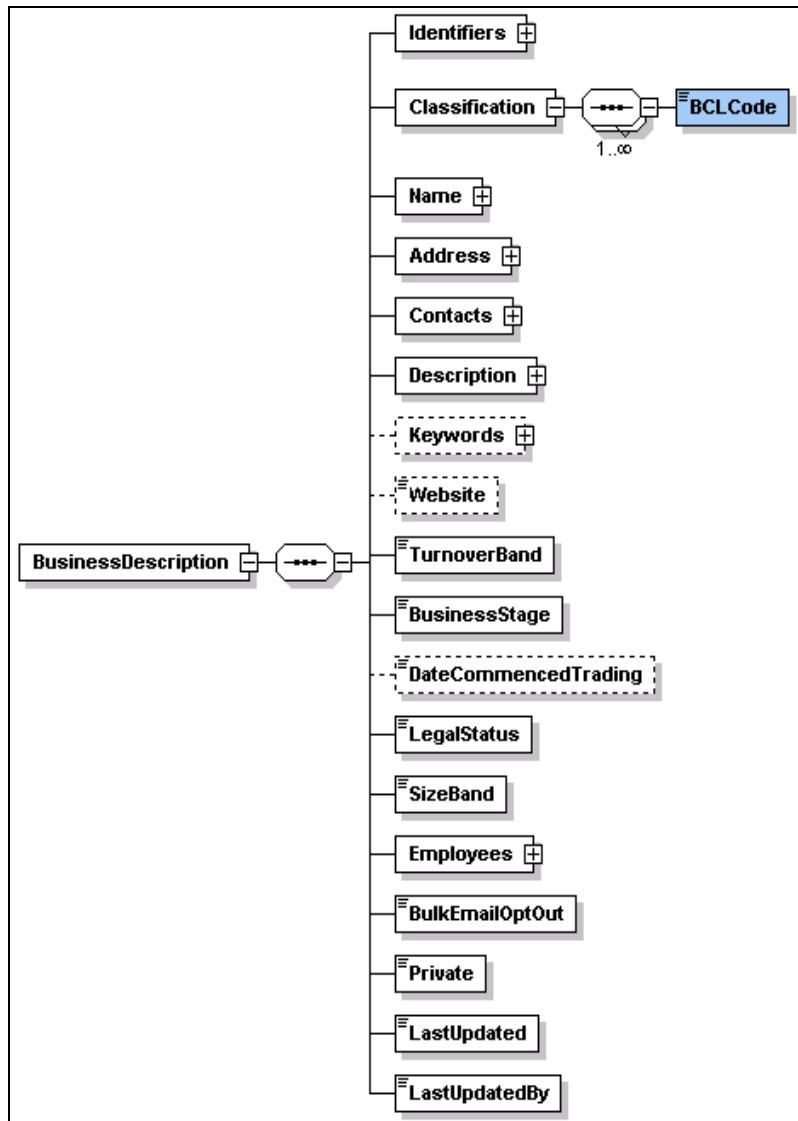
The WWB system will relate content to relevant business categories and business events (starting a business, growing a business, etc) and subject areas (finance, managing people, etc).

3.3 Referencing LGBCL in WWB Software and Separately

LGBCL will define the categories assigned to both individual businesses and to content. It will thereby help WWB software from Rutland Online marry the two. The software will use LGBCL for these functions:

- Assigning business categories on registration
- Viewing business categories
- Viewing businesses by category
- Searching for a business
- Viewing information by category

The business category will be referenced by the WWB business schema, as illustrated below.



It should be noted that this schema supports a string business reference, although the numeric business id should always be used. The formal schema for representing item references (as used by esd-toolkit and LAWs) is given at:

<http://www.esd.org.uk/standards/xmlschemas/itemreference20031215.xsd>

This uses the following syntax to reference categories (and other controlled list items):

```
<item id="nnnn">aaaaaaa</item>
```

where *nnnn* is the item id number and *aaaaaaa* is its name (eg business category).

LGBCL will be available in XML format from the URL: <http://www.esd.org.uk/standards/lgbcl/n.nn/lgbcl.xml>, where *n.nn* represents the version number.

The latest version will always be available from: <http://www.esd.org.uk/standards/lgbcl/lgbcl.xml>. It is expected that WWB software will read categories from this URL.

Links to all LGBCL resources will be available from <http://www.esd.org.uk/standards/lgbcl/>.

Although LGBCL is aimed at meeting the requirements of WWB software, its structure and technical framework (as define by schemas) should make it suitable for adoption by third party systems. Super Project (see 4.2 below) creates a lot of content specific to businesses of certain categories. It is hoped that such content can be created and categorised once and syndicated across all local authorities. Hence LGBCL needs to be a national standard.

4 Lists Reviewed

4.1 Office of National Statistics Standard Industry Classification (SIC) Codes

The UK Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (UK SIC(03)¹) is used to classify business establishments and other statistical units by the type of economic activities they are engaged in. The classification provides a framework for the collection, tabulation, presentation, and analysis of data and its use promotes uniformity. It is regarded as a convenient way of classifying industrial activities into a common structure.

However, the SIC codes go into a great amount of depth, which may not be relevant for the purpose of the WWB list. The subject categorisations are verbose and could be grouped far more succinctly for the purposes of WWB. The SIC list categorises by economic activities and sub-types as opposed to business sectors and types within each sector. For the purposes of LGBCL, the latter is preferred; however LGBCL will map to SIC codes in order to be consistent with standard UK-wide classifications. This is subject to compliance with licensing requirements and meeting copyright terms as specified by the Office Of National Statistics.

4.2 Super Project's category list

Super Project's category list was designed to enable businesses to check which business regulations relate to their business. It is used in a Web-based Content Management System. The category list is based on the SIC codes from which Super Project's categories were originally mapped. Norfolk County Council own and host the list. They have indicated that they would accept the list being extended and maintained as a national standard, subject to version control. Norfolk would then submit new categories to that standard rather than maintain a local variant.

The top-level terms of Supper Project's list are broad business sectors and the sub-sections show the related business activities or types. For each sub-section (ie each second level heading) Project Super shows information pertaining to four regulators:

- Trading Standards
- Environmental Health
- Building Control
- Planning

The structure and level of detail is appropriate to WWB requirements, although extension is needed for other regulatory bodies such as:

- Customs and Excise
- Fire

¹ The number in brackets refers to the date when SIC codes were officially revised

- Health and Safety Executive
- Financial Services Authority

and for areas where EDOs may offer specialised business advice.

4.3 Businesslink.gov.uk

Business Link is managed by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). It provides practical help and advice for business and aims to give objective information and support. It is designed to be a first point of information for those starting or running a business and seeking information regarding legal, health and safety, sales, marketing, IT and financing issues.

Business Link and the Small Business Service (SBS) have created a 'Sector classification list', currently in draft, which follows the same structure as Super Projects' list and was designed for a similar purpose, but has less detail. Information is primarily sub-divided by sector and service. Parts of this list will be used in conjunction with Super Project's list in constructing LGBCL.

4.4 Yell.com

Yell is a leading international directories business. It categorises businesses by sector and lists service areas within each sector. A further level of detail specifies various types of services and product for each service area. The list is comprehensive and terms are easily identifiable. The list also covers a broad range of business sectors. It provides a guide for areas in which the Super Project list may be extended.

4.5 Local Government Category List (LGCL)

LGCL was developed for the Local Authority Websites (LAWs) Project.

LGCL has a top level heading of business so the WWB list could be defined as terms under that heading of LGCL. This concept was rejected because LGCL includes a variety of subject headings suitable for local authority Web site content. Whilst some of these headings are business sectors, others describe business activities and services to business.

4.6 Local Government Audience List

Related to LGCL, a draft list of audience types has been issued in the same structure. The audience list extends the list published by the Office of the e-Envoy to include audience types identified for local authority Web site content.

'Businesses' is one audience type and the WWB list could be seen as a further subdivision of that list. This approach was rejected, as other parts of the audience list are not as detailed as the business category lists needs to be. A different logic of splitting business (eg by size or legal/ownership structure) is likely to be required in the audience list.

4.7 Government Category List (GCL)

The GCL (Government Category List) is a structured list of categories used to populate the 'subject.category' element/refinement of the e-GMS (electronic Government Metadata Standard). GCL categories allow for sub-division of resources across the whole of UK government by broad subject headings.

GCL is less specific to local authority work than LGCL and the same shortcomings apply when considering it for business classification.

4.8 Life Events Access Project (LEAP)

LEAP was a partnership between five metropolitan authorities. The project defined a list of citizen facing processes performed by councils known as the 'CUPID List' from which esd-toolkits list of services and references top relevant interactions was derived.

LEAP divided council activities by life events, one of which related to starting and running a business. It mapped council activity in supporting services for each service grouped by each life event. Process maps from LEAP are published within esd-toolkit.

Whilst the services list derived from LEAP work is relevant to WWB, LEAP did not publish a business categorisation.

4.9 UpMyStreet.com

UpMyStreet.com is one of the UK's multi-platform content publishers, promoted as the 'one-stop shop' for local information. UpMyStreet.com is designed to allow people access to information about their local communities.

Amongst other features, UpMyStreet acts as a directory of services for a geographic area around a specified postcode. A large proportion of these services are from businesses (of all sizes). However, sub-divisions are customer centric and hence not ideal for interfaces between an EDO and a business.

4.10 Camden Micro Business Gateway (MBG)

The Camden Micro Business Gateway Web Site at <http://www.mbgcamden.org.uk/> provides multi-lingual information on starting and running a business in Camden.

The Web site lists business specific services supported by Camden. It has links to other government agencies and it takes information of use to businesses from a feed provided by UpMyStreet.

It's own classifications are by business events related to starting, running and closing a business.

It does not offer classifications useful for WWB business categorisation.

4.11 Government Online Store

The Government Online Store is being set up by the Office of the e-Envoy to provide a single access point to services and information across all government, including business information from local government.

The Government Online Store has advised that they do not have their own classifications but they referred to the "Sector classification list" issued by Businesslink.gov.uk and the Small Business Service (see 4.3 above).

4.12 Infoshop.org.uk

Infoshop is an online decision support system being piloted across fourteen local authorities, with the aim of making life easier for people who want advice on a range of regulatory issues. It is designed to be an IT based one-stop shop, which allows local government front-line staff to answer complex queries from the public or businesses on regulations. The Infoshop system aims to enable an operator to offer full and consistent advice on a range of regulatory issues covering food safety, health and safety, and building control and planning.

The Infoshop project involves local authority departments working together with central government to ensure that the best information, advice and help, is given to business and the public across a range of services in a cost effective manner.

The Web site does not provide information based on categorisation of businesses. Information is categorised into four regulatory areas: Health & Safety, Food Safety, Building Control, and Planning.

4.13 Lasa.org.uk and CASweb (Camdenet.org.uk)

These two initiatives "help the legal and advice sector to provide information on the Internet" and "provide a gateway for advice organisations to work with each other and local authorities." The content classification schemes on these two sites provide information on advice organisations. This structure of categorisation does not lend itself to the requirements of LGBCL.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Product Definition

It is recommended that LGBCL be derived from Super Projects' category list and Business Link's 'Sector classification list'. These will be further extended to incorporate sub-divisions of business needed to match the information issued in relation to other regulatory bodies and in other business subject areas.

The two level approach adopted by both Super Project and Business Link are sufficient for most purposes, but LGBCL will be a hierarchical list whose design is not limited in depth, so that further sub-division of categories is possible where this proves necessary. Categories under the 'Other' heading in the Super Project list will be broken down under more specific headings. Additional categories will be drawn from the SBS/Businesslink.gov.uk 'Sector classification list' and new categories will be influenced by other lists described above.

5.2 Audience Categories

LGBCL will be a business sector list for use by EDOs and Trading Standards bodies and needs to be comprehensible to businesses themselves. LGBCL cannot merely be an extension of part of GCL or LGCL and LGBCL will not follow the 'audience' approach.

5.3 Multiple languages

For the purpose of WWB, LGBCL will *not* support multiple languages. It will be in English.

5.4 Preferred Terms and Equivalent

LGBCL will provide one 'preferred term' for each category and any number of equivalent (synonym) terms, acronyms, and mis-spellings to allow for different vocabularies describing the same thing. Each term (preferred or not) will have a numeric identifier.

5.5 Version Control

Both the number and wording of each term will be unique. For backwards compatibility and so as not to break the integrity of databases using LGBCL, terms will never be removed. Between versions a term may move from preferred to a non-preferred equivalent.

Version control will be via an online submissions process open to all esd-toolkit subscribing authorities. This will work in the same manner as submissions for other controlled lists, including esd-toolkits list of services.

All versions of the list will be numbered and assigned metadata in line with eGMS.

5.6 Structure

LGBCL will be poly-hierarchical; that is, each term may appear more than once in the hierarchical structure. A term will take the same meaning irrespective of its location in the hierarchy. The list will support 'related' (also known as 'associative' categories) but none may be identified.

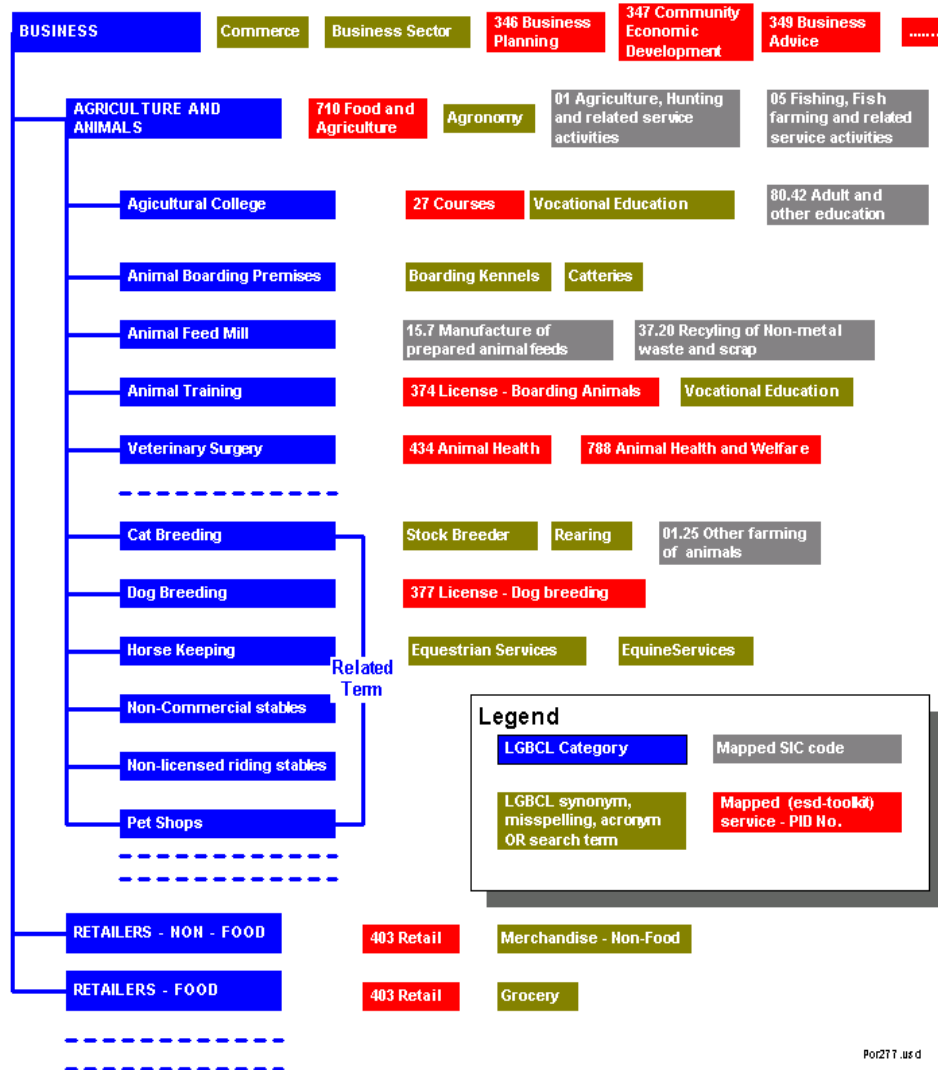
The list will support an undefined number of levels but initially extend to only three levels; level 1 being the category 'Business', level 2 being business sectors and level 3 being types of business/activity/establishment within each sector.

There will be a many-to-many relationship of LGBCL to LGSL service (PID) in some circumstances.

Capitalisation and use of punctuation and grammar will be consistent and uniform at all levels, following rules and logic used by LGCL.

A sample part of the list is illustrated below with mappings.

Local Government Business Category List and Mapped Lists



5.7 Links with other bodies

In creating LGBCL, links will be established with LACORS (the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services the organisation formerly known as LACOTS). LACORS coordinates the enforcement activities of trading standards services, and is also involved with the responsibility of coordinating food enforcement.

EDOs will be consulted to suggest and validate categorisations.

5.8 Mapping to other lists

LGBCL will map to the following lists:

- Standard Industry Classification (SIC) codes - to cross reference this detailed list to which other lists also map. Mapping is subject to any licensing constraints

- Local Government Services List (aka 'PID List') – against which much local authority information is indexed.
- Businesslink.gov.uk sector classification list, if used by LACORS or any EDOs consulted

A single top-level category of 'Business' will be defined against which LGSL services that pertain to all types of business will be mapped.

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