Three Breeder Teams . . .:

To begin with, this project is based on there being three breeding teams who will be cooperating throughout the course of the project. These teams are likely to be based in the UK, Finland and Switzerland and to be supported by the national Leonberger clubs in those countries.

Let's call them the Red, Blue and Green breeder teams.

- Each of the three teams starts with carefully chosen young Leonbergers.

- Those who have been selected to have good health, as much as possible to have a history of health in their lines, and to be of very good type themselves, including having the typical Leonberger temperament.

- There will be two female and one male Leonberger initially selected to launch this project.

- Each of these first generation Leonbergers will then be mated to selected individuals of three separate agreed upon alternative breeds / type.

- The decision of which 3 alternative sources to select will be one of the first tasks of the core team and there will be many considerations, including genetic profile and ancestral health.

- The one non-Leonberger female is a critical starting point, because there must be at least one female brought into the project early from an alternative source that carries very diverse mitochondrial genetics, as this is passed down only through the maternal line, and this is one area in which the Leonbegrer breed worldwide is really, badly depleted.

- <u>All</u> the starting dogs and bitches will have been thoroughly screened for health and conformation issues, genetic diversity and temperament. This will ensure that as much as is possible we will know what we are dealing with. It would also be prudent to know as much as possible about the health and fitness history of the lines behind them.

- We also need to consider selecting our initial females from good whelping lines, with a proven track record of fertility and with sound maternal behaviour. And they should be young – 2 to three years old at the outset – to maximise our chances of reproductive success.