

NEWS FROM THE CENTRE



Events Calendar

Member Reference
Group
22 July 2005

Management Board
27 July 2005

Bid Assessment

17 bids for funding, totalling £1.7 million from 11 authorities/organisations leading partnerships in the region have been received and sent to an independent assessor for scoring.

The bids are based on projects covering many services provided by local authorities such as care services for adults and children, highways procurement, and community meals provision. The scored bids will be reviewed at the Management Board on 27 July when decisions will be made on which projects the Centre will support.

Bids from the Centre

The Centre has also submitted bids for funding projects and studies and these will undergo the same assessment process as bids received from elsewhere.

These include:

- Regional Revenues and Benefits Study
- Open Forum on Asset Management
- Regional Study on Planning Services
- Roll out of Regional e-Marketplace solution
- Sub-Regional Procurement Partnerships Model
- Development of e-Auction Hub
- Regional Contract Database

External Funding

The Centre is continually working for the Eastern region in trying to lever in additional funding from various sources.

Commitment for additional funding has been obtained from the Office of Government Commerce who have agreed to provide £50k funding for e-auctions.

- Supplier Spend Analysis
- Legal Services - collaborative working

How to Bid

Further information on how to place a request for funding to the Centre of Excellence is available on our website at www.eastspace.net/eecpe under “Bid Evaluation”

The Centre is in discussion with HM Treasury to explore the possibility of Central Civil Government support/funding for the regional Revenues and Benefits Study.

Achievements

Sub-Regional Procurement Partnerships

Many Councils in the region have suffered through lack of capacity and expertise in procurement, thereby missing out on the best deals available. The Centre is addressing this issue through the establishment of Procurement Partnerships covering all authorities in the region.

The Centre will be providing assistance to all groups in the production of a 24 month business plan/roadmap of activity.

The Centre is also facilitating workshops on the National Procurement Strategy in both Norfolk and Bedfordshire and is offering to do the same for all the other groups if required.

A sustainable procurement architecture is being formulated by the Centre in the County areas through to an equally sustainable regional group. This architecture will complement any agreed National procurement architecture being agreed through the work of the National Commodities Steering Group which is led by the Centre in the East.

E-Market Place

E-Marketplaces enable access to key deals through a wide range of suppliers on line. Accessing an e-Marketplace not only addresses e-Government targets but also ensures good deals for a wide range of commonly bought goods. Marketplaces also help to eradicate rogue purchasing and provide good information about procurement performance.

The Centre is promoting the use of E-Marketplaces by District Councils in the region by offering to pay the 1st year's licence fee. In Essex, 9 districts are already on board with 2 more stating their intention to do so. Suffolk have 3 districts on board with 1 intention. Norfolk has 1 on board with all other making an evaluation. Hertfordshire have submitted a bid covering 9 out of the 10 districts, with the 10th saying they would be interested at a later stage and Bedfordshire have 2 districts on board. This is a significant success for the Centre.

E-Auctions

E-Auctions enable suppliers to bid against each other in real time for contracts from buyers. The lowest bidder wins the auction. By bringing together the demand for a wide range of commonly purchased items, suppliers will be keen to bid for the business. The Centre intends to set up an e-Auction Hub at East of England House. The Centre has negotiated with ESPO (Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation) and CBC Central Buying Consortium) the two major buying consortia in the region to aggregate volumes for e-auctions. A 12 month programme of auctions is being scheduled and details will be available in August 2005. The first e-auction will be for bottled water (estimated value of £1 million) and will take place in August.

Evidence to date shows savings of well in excess of 30% achieved by using e-Auctions to seal the deal!

Revenues and Benefits Study

An impressive 46 out of a possible 48 District and Unitary Councils have formally committed to work, through partnership principles, to explore efficiency gain from collaborative working/shared services. A Chief Executive Champion has been identified and a Steering Group is in place. Competitive bids to carry out the research have been received from private sector "change management" specialists and these are currently being evaluated. This project, which is the biggest Revenues and Benefits project in England, has great potential for national roll out as an Exemplar Project.

The aim of the study is to provide authorities in the region with choices based on a solid business case which will both improve performance and drive out substantial efficiency.

Asset Management Event Planned

The Centre plans to lead an "Open Forum" in September this year to brainstorm options for innovative service improvements and efficiency gains in the strategic management of LA owned assets, leading to the creation of "financial headroom". Key links to Gershon "Relocation and rationalisation of property assets" and "whole life costs" strands, office accommodation strategies and the need to make LA owned assets "sweat".

Ongoing Talks

- The Centre is involved in high-level initial discussions with H M Treasury exploring improvements in local authority strategic financial planning as part of a "pan-public sector" approach by Central Civil Government. This would build on major work being undertaken by the Treasury together with the Department of Health and NHS Trusts which includes high impact financial modelling, activity based finance and resource allocation alongside e-Pay solutions for routine financial processes. There is a potential for the East to lead a regional/national local authority pilot funded by the Treasury.
- The Centre is also engaged in exploratory discussions with HM Treasury with reference to a Central Government Efficiency Unit initiative to develop web-enabled ICT architecture, seeking options and opportunities for convergence of public sector demand matched with private sector ability to provide.

Pipped at the Post?

OGC Buying Solutions in collaboration with OGC and a number of Government Departments are leading a project to provide a suite of Postal Services frameworks in the lead-up to full market deregulation of the UK letters market on 1 January 2006

Frameworks will be awarded on a pan-government basis and initial research has demonstrated that savings ranging from 9% to 30% can be achieved depending upon the types of services used and the volume profile of business.

Free Postal Efficiency Audit

OGC are offering a very limited number of free postal efficiency audits to local authorities.

These audits, conducted by Royal Mail, will review product selection, mail strategy, data and operations and will

Whilst OGC will offer these frameworks as part of their current s-cat portfolio, it is envisaged that other buying agencies and, if desired, regional procurement consortia will be able to self-brand the frameworks for local use.

Interim postal services contracts have already been awarded by the Cabinet Office to TNT and UK Mail to enable Central Civil Government and the Wider Public Sector to take advantage of the partially deregulated bulk letters market on a pilot basis pending full market deregulation on 1 January 2006.

These services will shortly be available from OGC Buying Solutions. See our website for more information: www.eastspace.net/eecpe/

typically be conducted over an elapsed 8-week period.

If you feel that your authority could benefit from a free Royal Mail audit, please contact Steve Holland at the Centre of Excellence 01603 704014 or steve.holland@norfolk.gov.uk

Document Delivery

The Centre in the East is in discussion with an ODPM supported private sector organisation exploring potential for a regional pilot. Initial indications suggest there is potential for 20%+ efficiency savings through innovative/collaborative working in particular with regard to high volume documents including council tax demands etc

Did you see us there?



The 9 Regional Centres of Excellence throughout England got together in order to have a joint stand at the recently held GC2005 EXPO at Earls Court. This was a very successful event, the stand was busy for the whole 2 days and many useful contacts were made.

Member News

The LGA held a seminar for Member Efficiency and Procurement Champions on 13 June. Notes from the three workshops and a summary of Sir Jeremy Beecham's speech are now available on our website (www.eastspace.net/eecpe/) - look under "Member Reference Group" on the right hand side. All other speaker presentations are available on the LGA website. Another seminar is planned for November.

The next CoE East Member Reference Group meeting is taking place in Cambridge on 22 July. Full details of the make-up of the Group are available on our website (www.eastspace.net/eecpe/) - under "Member Reference Group" on the right hand side.

The Team

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