



## In the pilot seat for e-tendering

ACCORDING TO many authorities with experience of e-tendering solutions, incremental implementation is important to long-term success.

It is for this reason that, prior to tendering for an organisation-wide implementation, authorities tend to pilot procurement projects. Pilots are performed in collaboration with a technology vendor and are used to develop a full requirement specification for the longer-term solution through the experience gained.

BiP Solutions' Vault system can be purchased as a Pilot Tenderbox exercise allowing authorities to test its functionality without any risk.

Supported by a helpdesk, this service records all milestone events and correspondence associated with the implementation for use within the review process.

Capturing lessons learnt throughout the pilot is key, and can help ensure that improvements are made in future versions. Pilot projects not only trial and develop the technical solution but also allow authorities to identify changes required within, for example, the full tendering process in an e-tendering system, or to highlight the technical infrastructure required.

A pilot costs from just £250 – to discuss the Vault pilot process or to book a Pilot Tenderbox exercise, call BiP's Public Sector Sales Team on **0845 270 7090** or email [sales@delta-ets.com](mailto:sales@delta-ets.com) for assistance with the end to end process.

## OGC launches Alcatel consultation

THE OFFICE of Government Commerce (OGC) has launched a six-week consultation on amendments to regulations to give effect to the European Court of Justice judgments in the 'Alcatel' case.

The amendments will introduce a mandatory ten-day standstill period between the notification of award decision and the date of contract conclusion for all procurements that are subject to the full scope of the EU Public Procurement Directives.

Although the regulations will not be amended until after the consultation period, OGC has advised contracting authorities to introduce this standstill period now.

The Alcatel consultation is separate from OGC's consultation on the draft regulations implementing the new procurement Directives. This is because the Alcatel changes must be made to the existing procurement regulations as soon as possible. The provisions will also be adopted into the regulations implementing the new Directives, though these new regulations will not be implemented until January 2006. The closing date for responses is 10 October 2005.

The consultation can be found at [www.ogc.gov.uk](http://www.ogc.gov.uk)

## Councils expected to beat efficiency targets



THE OFFICE of the Deputy Prime Minister has published detailed evidence showing that councils are on course to exceed the efficiency target set by the Government.

Councils' Backward Look Annual Efficiency Statements show actual efficiency gains of more than £750 million in 2004-05.

All the indications are that, combined with what they expect to achieve during this year, councils will exceed the 2005-06 target of £1 billion, with total efficiency gains of £1.9 billion.

These figures encompass efficiencies from all areas of local services, excluding schools, fire and police, which are subject to separate monitoring arrangements.

BiP Solutions provides a number of e-tendering services which can help public

authorities realise greater efficiencies, as well as helping them stay compliant with public procurement legislation.

The Crown Prosecution Service saved £10,000 in 2004-05, and a medium-sized authority could expect to save over £12,000 a year using BiP's range of e-procurement solutions.

Moreover, further indirect savings of at least £10,000 can be made through using BiP's e-tendering solutions. These can be realised, for example, through wider advertising, smarter specifications and increased competition. BiP's e-auction service alone can help authorities make a large dent in their efficiency targets.

Further information on Delta, the complete public sector tendering solution, can be found at [www.bipsolutions.com/delta](http://www.bipsolutions.com/delta) or by emailing [sales@delta-ets.com](mailto:sales@delta-ets.com)

## One a minute wonders

BiP SOLUTIONS is renowned for the volume of contract opportunities it publishes across services such as Tracker, Contrax Weekly and Defense Contracts International. Our Contracts Management Team has a dedicated research function which constantly adds new sources of public sector contracts information to our list – all of which yields more opportunities for suppliers to view and respond to. Combined with the volume of notices that flow through our Project contract notice creation, transmission and management tool, and a range of other sources, BiP has

unrivalled coverage of low and high value notices in the UK, Europe and further afield. Great news for suppliers and a real boost to competition in the public sector marketplace.

In July, BiP published the equivalent of a new opportunity for every minute of every hour of every working day (in case you're wondering, that's over 35,000 opportunities published).

In typical BiP style we are not resting on our laurels – more research is planned to ensure our contract information services continue to be the most comprehensive available.

## DVLA secures BiP's Vault service



THE DRIVER and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has further strengthened its ties with BiP Solutions through the use of the Vault Invitation to Tender (ITT) document lodgement service.

DVLA currently runs a buyer profile ([dvla.g2b.info](mailto:dvla.g2b.info)) hosted by BiP as well as using Project and Select to create its contract notices for the OJEU, and to manage its suppliers at the Expressions of Interest and Pre-Qualification Questionnaire stages.

To further centralise and increase efficiency and effectiveness, the DVLA has opted to utilise the electronic tenderbox functionality of Vault, which not only controls secure ITT documents and responses, but also provides a complete audit trail for buyers.

To discuss Vault or any of BiP's e-tendering services contact [sales@bipsolutions.com](mailto:sales@bipsolutions.com) or call 0845 270 7090.

# In search of the best

THIS YEAR'S delegates to the Society of Procurement Officers in Local Government (SOPO)'s annual conference and exhibition will be seeking to tackle the seven central issues within public procurement today.

Titled *In search of the 7 e's* the conference will cover everything from e-procurement to the environment.

The title reflects the growing demand being placed on SOPO members to contribute to the objectives set by their organisations in the quest to improve quality of service delivery and provide increased community benefits.

This year sees an exciting programme of seminars and presentations, with speakers including Phil Woolas, Minister for Local Government, the Scottish Executive's efficiency-finder John McClelland, and Tim Byles, Chief Executive of Norfolk County Council.

This event will also host the annual SOPO Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Procurement. The Awards, which have run since 2002, celebrate the contributions made by procurement teams throughout the UK. 2005 has proved another successful year for the Awards and SOPO would like to thank all those who submitted and to wish them the best of luck. For all those who did not submit, we would actively encourage you to promote your department through the 2006 Awards.

This prestigious event is being held on 15-16 November at the Royal Lancaster Hotel, Hyde Park, London. In addition to SOPO members and their guests, the conference

welcomes delegates from companies supplying, or seeking to supply, to local government. It also welcomes other colleagues from the wider public sector with an interest in delivering better public procurement, including directors of procurement, purchasing managers, chief executives, heads of legal services, tendering managers, heads of e-government, contract managers, and heads of change management.

For further information, or to register for this event, visit <http://www.bipsolutions.com/events/sopo-awards2005/index.htm>



## GO get it

WITH THE public sector struggling under the weight of so many new

regulatory burdens there has never been a more pressing need for timely and accurate information to help lift the load.



*Government Opportunities (GO)* magazine covers all the issues that buyers and suppliers should be aware of. Every month, *GO* provides insightful analysis and commentary on the government marketplace, as well as all the most up-to-date information on the big contracts hitting the headlines.

More timely than an Invitation to Tender, *GO* arms both buyers and suppliers with all the information they need to confidently go forth and engage in the public sector procurement process.

The *GO* editorial team is keen to see best practice spread to every corner of the UK, and is inviting *NPS* readers who don't currently receive the magazine to apply for a sample copy. Requests, including your name, position and address, should be made to [bip@govopps.co.uk](mailto:bip@govopps.co.uk) with the words 'sample copy' in the subject field of your email.

*NPS* readers can also be part of *GO*'s success and the collegial spirit of sharing best practice by contributing features and stories to the publication. Proposed feature ideas should be sent to [bip@govopps.co.uk](mailto:bip@govopps.co.uk) with the words 'proposed feature' as the title.

*GO* has recently had its circulation accredited by the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) – the leading authority on magazine distribution in the UK. For the period January-July 2005 *GO*'s average monthly circulation was 7786 – a figure that is expected to increase over the coming months.

## September's Top Tip: Update your Procurement Manual

WITH ONLY four months to go until the introduction of the Consolidated EU Public Procurement Directive (2004/18/EC) it is essential that public bodies consider just how up-to-date their Procurement Manuals are.

Unless you are really on the ball, the chances are that your existing Procurement Manual is already out of date.

Many public authorities are already finding that they have insufficient guidance available, in terms of procurement, when dealing with the Freedom of Information Act.

At local government level many bodies still have no clear procurement guidance which reflects the National Procurement Strategy, and in central government many organisations are unclear as to how they will present their environmental purchasing policy, come December. Issues such as these can have a long-term impact on public procurement.

Organisations must ensure that they have robust guidelines in place to deal with the latest initiatives as they arise. This requires time and dedication to maintaining an up-to-date and robust Procurement Manual, ensuring compliance with current and future initiatives, such as gateway reviews, project management, risk allocation, small and medium-sized enterprises and intellectual property rights.

It is vitally important that organisations ensure their Procurement Manual is compliant with the latest legislation.

Waiting until initiatives become policy and then playing catch-up will not guarantee an organisation is delivering value for money within the public sector.

For assistance in updating your organisation's Procurement Manual, email [pass@bipsolutions.com](mailto:pass@bipsolutions.com) or visit <http://www.bipsolutions.com/pass/public.php>

# Health comes with wisdom



WITH AGE comes wisdom, which makes the Health Care Supplies Association's 35th Annual Conference the smartest yet for purchasing and supply professionals involved in the support of healthcare.

As in previous years, the Association's 2005 conference provides a unique opportunity to explore key issues, all of which affect the provision and performance of healthcare purchasing and supply services. The theme of this year's conference will relate to the changes that are constantly taking place within the Health Service and how these influence healthcare purchasing and supply services. The conference programme will help delegates explore new opportunities, approaches and alternative ways of working which will assist them in

achieving their goals. With high-profile speakers such as Dimitrios Hatzis, Director of Strategy and Planning, Commercial Directorate at the Department of Health and Duncan Eaton, Chief Executive of the NHS Purchasing & Supply Agency, this is an event not to be missed.

Attendance is open to members and non-members working in the field of healthcare purchasing and supply, to other healthcare professionals and to representatives of companies who supply to the healthcare sector.

This event, in London for the first time, will take place on 3-4 November at the Britannia International Hotel, Canary Wharf.

For further information, or to register for this event, visit [www.bipsolutions.com/events/healthcare-2005/index.htm](http://www.bipsolutions.com/events/healthcare-2005/index.htm)



## attracts over 400 authorities

FROM ITS inception in 1997 the Society of Procurement Officers in Local Government (SOPO) has gone from strength to strength – not only has the organisation attracted over 2000 members but it can count these in over 460 different local authorities across the UK.

SOPO engages in a range of activities to promote strategic purchasing, contracting and supply chain management to local authorities throughout the UK. Through membership of SOPO, procurement officers join together to share best practice and influence the national agenda on how 'Best Value' is to be achieved.

SOPO is open to all local government officers who have an interest in procurement, and more recently opened its doors to Elected Members with an interest in local government procurement, particularly those who have Portfolio and Scrutiny responsibility for the activity. Furthermore, corporate membership allows private sector companies to reap the benefits of SOPO membership.

Corporate members have a unique opportunity to communicate with the existing 2000 local authority members through the organisation's publications, website and events.

Further information on membership categories and how to apply can be found at [www.sopo.org.uk](http://www.sopo.org.uk)

# Call for sustainable timber

A NEW helpline, set up by the Central Point of Expertise on Timber (CPET), is to give advice to public sector bodies and their suppliers on how to purchase legal and sustainable timber.

The free helpline service will provide government, and companies supplying government, with information on how to specify the purchase of legal and sustainable timber and how to ensure they are getting what they ask for.

The CPET helpline is operated by ProForest, a company with worldwide

experience in responsible timber purchasing. ProForest has begun promoting the service across the UK public sector.

As part of the service, CPET will offer training workshops and publish guidance and case studies. CPET will continue the process of assessing forest certification schemes and will also devise a methodology for assessing alternative forms of evidence. In time, it will monitor how successfully government departments are implementing the timber procurement

policy and how effectively CPET assists the process.

In July 2000, the Government made a commitment that its central departments and their executive agencies would seek to purchase their timber and timber products from legal and sustainable sources.

While CPET is primarily focused on the Government's timber procurement policy, it will also offer advice on implementing the policies of other public bodies aimed at purchasing legal and sustainable timber.

## NPS EVENTS GUIDE

Conferences, exhibitions and seminars aimed at procurement professionals.

### SEPTEMBER 2005

#### SOPO ROADSHOWS 2005

5 Sep	London	19 Sep	South East, South
14 Sep	West Midlands	21 Sep	East Midlands

### SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 2005

#### HOW TO COMPLETE THE NEW OJEU CONTRACT NOTICE PROFORMAS FOR EU DIRECTIVE

13 Sep	London	22 Nov	London
20 Sep	Manchester	28 Nov	Leeds
1 Nov	Bristol	1 Dec	Glasgow

### SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 2005

#### WINNING TENDERS 2005

13 Sep	London	2 Nov	Manchester
1 Nov	London	6 Dec	London

### 14 SEPTEMBER 2005

#### ABC ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Hampden Park, Glasgow

### SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2005

#### HOW TO LET COMPLIANT PUBLIC CONTRACTS

14 Sep	London	20 Oct	Birmingham
21 Sep	Glasgow	9 Nov	London
5 Oct	Manchester	17 Nov	Leeds
13 Oct	London		

### SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 2005

#### PREPARING PERFECT TENDERS

14 Sep	London	11 Oct	London
21 Sep	Manchester	8 Nov	Leeds
29 Sep	Bristol	7 Dec	London
6 Oct	Birmingham		

### SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2005

#### HOW TO PROTECT YOUR COMMERCIAL INTERESTS WHEN TENDERING

15 Sep	London	3 Nov	Manchester
4 Oct	Birmingham	23 Nov	London

### SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2005

#### THE NEW EU PROCUREMENT DIRECTIVE 2004/18/EC PROCEDURES

15 Sep	Manchester	3 Nov	London
21 Sep	London	9 Nov	Leeds
28 Sep	Bristol	30 Nov	Glasgow
5 Oct	Birmingham		

### SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2005

#### GET READY FOR CHANGE

20 Sep	London	18 Oct	Birmingham
22 Sep	Glasgow	2 Nov	London
27 Sep	Bristol	23 Nov	London
4 Oct	Manchester	30 Nov	Leeds

### SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 2005

#### LESSONS LEARNT – PUBLIC SECTOR CONTRACTING & FOIA

22 Sep	London	10 Nov	London
19 Oct	Birmingham	8 Dec	London

### 19 OCTOBER 2005

#### SELLING TO DEFENCE CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION 2005

The Brewery Conference Centre, London

### 3-4 NOVEMBER 2005

#### HEALTH CARE SUPPLIES ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION 2005

Britannia International Docklands, London

### 15-16 NOVEMBER 2005

#### SOPO ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION 2005

The Royal Lancaster Hotel, Hyde Park, London

BiP Solutions hosts a wide range of events to aid the public procurement community. Visit [www.bipsolutions.com/events](http://www.bipsolutions.com/events) to view the full list.

To book visit [www.bipsolutions.com/events](http://www.bipsolutions.com/events) or for further information on advertising your event in this newsletter, contact our **Events Team** at BiP on **0845 270 7095** or email [events@bipsolutions.com](mailto:events@bipsolutions.com)

## Environmental purchasing policy – are you ready?



ALL GOVERNMENT departments and their executive agencies are required to improve their environmental performance through the achievement of a number of environmental objectives and targets.

As from 1 December 2005, all of these contracting authorities are also required to have in place a robust environmental purchasing policy. This should include environmental principles within which the organisation will conduct its purchasing activity, both externally and internally.

Each department and agency should have drawn up a sustainable procurement strategy, or reviewed that which is already in place.

The environmental purchasing policy established should set the parameters within which all budget holders must operate, and should include the mandate for purchasing managers to seek out the most environmentally preferable solution, subject to the normal public expenditure tests of need, affordability and cost-effectiveness.

The contracting authority should integrate the requirements of its environmental purchasing policy into operational procurement processes, documents and guidance, and establish training and development and awareness-raising programmes for all staff involved in procurement activities.

For help with developing an environmental sustainable policy call the Procurement Advice and Support Service (PASS) consultancy team on **0845 270 7055**, or email [pass@bipsolutions.com](mailto:pass@bipsolutions.com)

## Record savings for OGCbs



THE TRADING arm of the Office of Government Commerce, OGCbuying.solutions, has reported having delivered procurement savings for government of £321 million.

The OGCbuying.solutions annual report has shown that the organisation has helped the public sector make £80 million more savings in 2004-05 than in the previous financial year.

Hugh Barrett, OGCbuying.solutions' Chief Executive, said: "I am delighted to announce that it has been another successful year for the agency, all ministerial targets having been met. By offering innovative new deals and negotiating better prices on existing frameworks, we have managed over £2 billion worth of public sector spend during 2004-05, and we have delivered in excess of £321 million of value for money savings."

Some of the organisation's achievements over the last financial year include reducing mobile phone tariffs by a further 20% and the launch of an e-sourcing service and retail trade framework.

The organisation aims to help deliver a further £400 million in savings for public sector clients in this financial year.

## IN OCTOBER'S ...



### GOVERNMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- **Dr Edgar Whitley**, Reader in Information Systems at the London School of Economics, examines the cost of the UK's ID card scheme.
- **Andy Wood** from the Society of IT Management highlights how local authorities are wasting money on IT security because purchasers are failing to understand the technology.
- **Dr Vasilis Zervos** from the University of Nottingham argues that the policy of 'fair return' is eroding value for money and could jeopardise the cost-effectiveness of a future European satellite navigation system.

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