



BiP pioneers cost-effective e-auctions

BiP SOLUTIONS is pioneering a new and more cost-effective form of electronic reverse auction for framework agreements that can deliver greater value for money for buyers.

As many in the public sector are aware, the rules on purchasing from a framework agreement will change with the introduction of the new EU Consolidated Procurement Directive. Also, buyers will no longer be allowed to decide whom they wish to procure goods or services from, and must either take a single quote based on indicative price, or invite all qualified suppliers to renegotiate their prices. This could lead to a long and frustrating paper trail for all parties involved.

Lately, there is evidence to suggest that the use of e-auction tools has declined because of resistance from suppliers and the cost of the process, which can at times outweigh the potential savings. With the new Directive and the Office of Government Commerce supporting the use of auctions, concern has been growing on how to benefit from this process.

BiP Solutions, however, now provides an e-auction facility for new Directive framework contracts through its Vault service for as little as £1000 for each procurement from a framework agreement.

The reason BiP's e-auction facility is so cost-effective is that the customer only pays for the use of the software, and not the support, consultancy and other related services, whereas a regular auction includes these as part of the costs.

Electronic auctions can provide a quick and easy solution allowing multiple suppliers to negotiate a price in a centralised, auditable environment every time an authority wishes to use a framework for its procurement.

For further information on this type of auction, or to arrange a purchase or demonstration, please call the Public Sector Solutions team on **0845 270 7090** or email sales@delta-ets.com

PASS in demand



IN THE last few months BiP Solutions' Procurement Advice and Support Service (PASS) has seen a dramatic increase in the demand for its advice and training services to help meet the requirements of the new EU Consolidated Procurement Directive.

The UK MoD's Defence Logistics Organisation, the Land Registry and West Midlands Police are just some of the authorities that have recently called

upon PASS to help address the implications of how they conduct their procurements in advance of the new Directive coming into force.

In addition to holding a number of events throughout the UK, PASS offers in-house training on areas such as the use of new purchasing techniques, how to use the new OJEU proformas and the purchasing implications of the Freedom of Information Act.

In-house training can be a cost-effective and productive alternative to distance or seminar based learning. The content can be customised to the audience and can allow large bodies of staff to be briefed and trained at the same time, thereby increasing the impact and value of the course.

Further information on PASS events can be found at www.bipsolutions.com/events/

Further information on tailored in-house training packages and PASS consultancy services can be obtained by emailing pass@bipsolutions.com or calling **0845 270 7055**.

University of Bath PASS with flying colours

THE UNIVERSITY of Bath has joined numerous public authorities that have drawn upon the expertise of BiP Solutions' Procurement Advice and Support Service for the development of its procurement strategy.

The University is the latest authority to obtain the PASS public procurement manual and strategy guidance, which helps realise standard processes and practices involved with compliant procurement. It has begun the simple integration process to ensure that the best practice and model processes are mirrored throughout the organisation.

Now is the time to update your organisation's procurement manual. Unless you're really on the ball, the chances are that with all the changes in public procurement your existing documentation is out of date.

The manual costs £5000 for an off-the-shelf version, but will immediately show a substantial return on investment based on the time, effort and administration costs required to develop one from scratch. PASS estimate over 3000 hours of staff time

were required to develop, interpret, validate and design the manual.

To check if your manual is compliant, ask yourself if it addresses:

- The Freedom of Information Act and its impact upon public procurement
- The new EU Consolidated Procurement Directive
- The latest guidance on the operation of framework agreements, e-tendering, e-auctions and e-procurement
- The EU's guidance on environmental and social issues in procurement
- Government initiatives which have an impact upon public procurement, such as Best Value, Wider Markets and Partnering
- The latest guidance on gateway reviews, project management, risk allocation, small and medium-sized enterprises and intellectual property rights

For further information, and to obtain a sample of the Manual, please email pass@bipsolutions.com or call **0845 270 7055**.

As successful as abc



GLASGOW HAS played host to one of the most successful consortia events in this year's procurement calendar.

The authorities buying consortium (**abc**) held its annual conference and exhibition – Positive Practices in Procurement – at Hampden Park on 14 September, and the positive response of over 250 delegates was testament to the event's success.

Hosted by BiP Solutions, the conference provided delegates with information on a range of issues facing public procurement and offered some ideas as to the future direction of the profession in the 21st century.

The keynote address was delivered by Colin Mair, Chief Executive of the Improvement Service for Scottish Local Government, while Tony Wiltshire from the Yorkshire & Humberside Centre of Excellence outlined how organisations such as his will be making a real difference south of the border.

In another speech, Chief Executive of the Society of Procurement Officers in Local Government (SOPOL) Peter Howarth discussed the emerging issues concerning the modernisation of procurement.

For further information on how BiP Solutions can manage your organisation's events, contact the Events team on **0845 270 7095**.

NAO calls for more sustainable procurement

THE NATIONAL Audit Office (NAO) has called upon the public sector to bring sustainability more into mainstream procurement practices.

Government departments and their executive agencies spend approximately £15 billion every year on the procurement of goods and services. The NAO says that this buying power could be better used to support the Government's target of becoming the European leader in sustainable procurement by 2009.

The NAO report *Sustainable Procurement in Central Government* recommends that the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) amend the Gateway Review process to clarify how sustainability should be addressed at every stage of the procurement process.

Departments should also increase the uptake of training on sustainable procurement, the NAO recommends. As many as 12 government departments have failed to plan or

deliver training programmes on sustainable procurement to staff, according to the report.

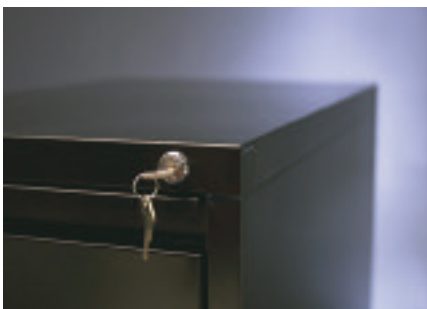
BiP Solutions' Procurement Advice and Support Service (PASS) offers tailored in-house training events on how to make your procurement more sustainable while complying with EU procurement rules and the Freedom of Information Act.

BiP is also running a special event to help procurement personnel deliver sustainability-friendly contracts. The event will be held in Birmingham on 6 October and London on 8 November.

Further information on the 'Delivering Social, Environmental and Sustainable Public Procurement' event can be found at www.bipsolutions.com/events/dsespp05/

Further information on tailored in-house training packages for all aspects of public procurement can be obtained by emailing pass@bipsolutions.com or calling **0845 270 7055**.

Companies exploiting FOI



PRIVATE SECTOR companies have been exploiting the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act to gain information on health contracts, according to hospital trusts.

Since the legislation came into force in January this year, companies have been using it to obtain information relating to hospital contracts, says the NHS Confederation which canvassed NHS trusts for their experiences of FOI requests. In one trust 90% of the requests it has received have come from companies

trying to find out what services it uses from outside providers and how much they spend on them.

Given the complexity of their nature, the requests are placing extra strain on hospital staff. A spokesman from another trust commented that "requests of this nature have proved to be the most time-consuming in terms of sourcing the information and taking a decision on what is exempt".

BiP Solutions' aXcess service, however, can help public authorities, such as hospital trusts, reduce the number of requests they receive by proactively publishing contract information.

Using aXcess, buyers can easily publish their procurement contacts, policies and other procurement-related information online. At the heart of aXcess is the Project e-notice service which ensures that all contract information submitted is published on an open website, placing the minimum of demands on public sector resources that could be struggling with a torrent of information requests. In addition Project provides a search mechanism to seek out particular contract information that may be requested, including locating past contract information.

Prices for this service start at £2500 for the standard template service, which can be further customised to your requirements.

To view some existing Buyer Profiles please visit:

www.procurementportal.odpm.gov.uk

<http://dft.g2b.info>

<http://esc.g2b.info>

<http://edinburghac.g2b.info>

<http://richmond.g2b.info>

If you would like to discuss your organisation's requirements then please contact axcess@bipsolutions.com or phone **0845 270 7050** (lo-call).

Share the wisdom

ARE YOU ever frustrated with the public procurement process or have you discovered a way to improve efficiency? Have you ever developed best practice, or undertaken cutting-edge research that you would like to share with your peers? If so, *Government Opportunities (GO)* wants to hear from you!

GO magazine is always on the look-out for news, analysis and commentary from the people who are at the front line of delivering effective procurement for the public sector. As the premier publication in the UK dedicated to the demanding discipline of public procurement, *GO* is the place to find and contribute to the best in government business intelligence.

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@govops.co.uk with the words 'proposed feature' in the subject field of your email.

Your country needs you



BiP SOLUTIONS' Procurement Advice and Support Service (PASS) consultancy team is currently developing its plans for the 2006 calendar.

We are currently looking to enhance the team with additional consultants with public sector procurement experience.

If you have extensive public sector procurement experience in any of the following areas:

- change management

- business process re-engineering
- due diligence
- risk management
- recovery planning
- contingency planning
- HR issues
- ICT capabilities

then BiP wants to talk to you about how together we can make a difference.

If you believe that you have the ability and skill to help build the PASS consultancy service, please send your profile to eddie.regan@bipsolutions.com or call Eddie on **0141 270 7305** to discuss this opportunity to join our highly respected public sector consultancy team.

Pocket a GO



NOBODY COULD ever accuse the public procurement process of simplicity – policy, legislation and best practice is always changing and it can be difficult for some to keep up.

This is why *Government Opportunities (GO)* magazine provides buyers and suppliers with all the information that they 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.

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

Settling disputes

THERE ARE few problems more time-consuming, expensive and damaging than contractual disputes.

Even the most solid client/supplier relationships developed over many years can be destroyed by such disagreements over contractual obligations.

This is why Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is so important. ADR techniques can, for example, help contracting authorities avoid costly litigation. The Treasury Solicitor's Department alone has estimated that it has saved £2.5 million to date in legal costs through the use of ADR.

BiP Solutions' Procurement Advice and Support Service (PASS), in conjunction with DRS-CI Arb, a division of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, is hosting a unique event on ADR techniques. Perfect for procurement professionals, contract managers and supply chain professionals, the event is also tailored to the needs of project managers and legal advisors and covers techniques such as binding and non-binding arbitration, conciliation, neutral evaluation, expert determination and mediation.

The 'Effective Contract Dispute Management and Resolution' event will be held on 30 November 2005 at the Copthorne Tara Hotel, London. Attending could help your organisation save time and money on costly disputes.

For further information or to book online visit www.bipsolutions.com/events/ecdmr_2005/ or call the Events team on **0845 270 7095**.

A night for winners

THIS YEAR'S Gala Dinner for the Society of Procurement Officers in Local Government (SOPO)'s annual conference and exhibition is set to unveil not only the shortlisted entrants to the Society's Awards, but also the final winners.

In a change to previous years' schedules the SOPO Awards ceremony will be held on one night, rather than over the two days of the conference.

The Awards celebrate the contributions made by procurement teams throughout the UK and the volume of submissions has grown consistently year on year.

This year's conference also promises to be the most engaging yet with speakers ranging from Phil Woolas, Minister for Local Government and the Scottish Executive's efficiency-finder, John McClelland to Tim Byles, Chief Executive of Norfolk County Council and the local government procurement champion.

This year's prestigious event is being held from 15 to 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, please visit <http://www.bipsolutions.com/events/sopo-awards2005/index.htm>

NPS EVENTS GUIDE

Conferences, exhibitions and seminars aimed at procurement professionals.

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2005

PREPARING PERFECT TENDERS

11 Oct London 7 Dec London
8 Nov Leeds

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2005

SELLING TO GOVERNMENT

12 Oct Heathrow 17 Nov London

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2005

SOPO – SELLING TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT

12 Oct Manchester 12 Dec London

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2005

HOW TO LET COMPLIANT PUBLIC CONTRACTS

13 Oct London 9 Nov London
20 Oct Birmingham 17 Nov Leeds

17 OCTOBER 2005

SOPO ROADSHOW 2005

Edinburgh City Council Business Centre

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2005

GET READY FOR CHANGE

18 Oct Birmingham 23 Nov London
2 Nov London 30 Nov Leeds

19 OCTOBER 2005

SELLING TO DEFENCE CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION 2005

The Brewery Conference Centre, London

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2005

LESSONS LEARNT – PUBLIC SECTOR CONTRACTING & FOIA

19 Oct Birmingham 8 Dec London
10 Nov London

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2005

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW OJEU CONTRACT NOTICE PROFORMAS FOR EU DIRECTIVE 2004/18

1 Nov Bristol 28 Nov Leeds
22 Nov London 1 Dec Glasgow

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2005

WINNING TENDERS 2005

1 Nov London 6 Dec London
2 Nov Manchester

NOVEMBER 2005

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR COMMERCIAL INTERESTS WHEN TENDERING

3 Nov Manchester 22 Nov London

NOVEMBER 2005

IMPLEMENTING THE NEW EC PROCUREMENT DIRECTIVE PROCEDURES

3 Nov London 30 Nov Glasgow
9 Nov Leeds

3-4 NOVEMBER 2005

HEALTH CARE SUPPLIES ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION 2005

Britannia International Docklands, London

15-16 NOVEMBER 2005

SOPO ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION 2005

The Royal Lancaster Hotel, Hyde Park, London

17 NOVEMBER 2005

SELLING TO GOVERNMENT

London Bonnington Bloomsbury

22 NOVEMBER 2005

SELLING TO THE NHS

London Bonnington Bloomsbury

To book visit www.bipsolutions.com/events or for further information on advertising your event, contact our **Events Team** at BiP on **0845 270 7095** or email events@bipsolutions.com

Small businesses benefit public sector

A NEW study has revealed that small businesses can deliver value for money and innovative solutions for central and local government. It also shows that they can play a significant role in improving social enterprise and the employment opportunities of disadvantaged communities.

The study, *Benefits of Public Sector Procurement from Small Businesses*, provides evidence of the cost savings and other benefits small businesses can bring to the public sector market. It highlights the benefits that the public sector can gain from using small firms through better levels of service, innovative solutions and increased competitiveness in the longer term.

The report also provides strong evidence of the willingness of small firms to 'go the extra mile' in terms of commitment and service delivery.

The findings of the report will be incorporated into the updated document *Smaller Supplier, Better Value*, published jointly by the Small Business Service and the Office of Government Commerce. Its purpose is to raise awareness within the public sector of the value for money that small businesses can offer and the issues that can make it difficult for them to win public sector business.

To help you identify ways of assisting small businesses with winning public contracts BiP Solutions' Procurement Advice and Support Service (PASS) is hosting a special training event: *PASS – Helping SMEs* on 29 November 2005 and 28 February 2006 in London.

For further information or to book online visit www.bipsolutions.com/events/ or call the Events team on **0845 270 7095**.

October's Top Tip: Wider benefits



THE WIDER government policy objectives for public procurement embrace better value for money, efficiency and effectiveness. There is no doubt that public procurement can, if used wisely, be a key mechanism through which wider social benefits can be achieved.

The European Commission recognises this and has incorporated it into the new Public Procurement Directive 2004/18, giving greater freedom to take into consideration social and environmental issues in any procurement exercise.

The Olympic Development Authority also recognises procurement's role in achieving sustainable development, social inclusion and economic growth. It has issued a procurement strategy that places at its core the achievement of these objectives.

No matter what size of sector your organisation services, your procurement strategy can be aligned to achieve these same goals. So isn't it time that you did?

IN NOVEMBER'S . . .



GOVERNMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Barry Mellor, Chief Executive of the NHS Logistics Authority, explains how managing supplier relationships can bring huge returns for authorities' logistics capacity.
- Richard Ellithorne, Logistics Policy Manager at the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (UK), argues that the logistical challenge facing local authorities in meeting stringent Government 'green' targets highlights the fine balance between the environmental and economic arguments for recycling.
- George Cook from Charity Logistics explains how the new Civil Contingencies Act will change the way public services manage logistics in the face of emergencies.

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