

NPS



BiP's NEWSLETTER FOR THE PROCUREMENT SERVICE

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Select Accredited

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Pre-Qualification



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BiP – Best of British for XML



BiP SOLUTIONS has maintained its position as one of the largest e-senders of contract notices to the European Union, according to the latest figures released by the Official Publications Office of the European Union (OPOCE).

BiP's Project service – part of the Delta electronic tendering suite – enables public bodies to send their notices to the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) electronically, via an XML gateway. A key advantage of this is that notices sent via a recognised XML gateway can be validated and published by the OJEU within two to three working days, so reducing the timescales for a tendering exercise.

During 2006, 59% of all contract notices received by OPOCE were sent electronically. This compares with 36.5% during 2005 (an increase of 62%). Of all notices published by OPOCE, nearly 20% were sent in an XML format.

BiP remains second only to the French government in sending the most notices to the OPOCE in XML. While the number of XML notices sent by the French government decreased slightly in the second half of 2006, the number sent by BiP increased. In fact, during 2006 the volume of notices sent by BiP using XML outstripped that of every other European government and organisation, and was more than all other UK-based e-senders combined.

For more information on how your organisation can benefit from the Project service, visit www.bipsolutions.com/Delta/delta.html, contact the Public Sector Solutions team on **0845 270 7090** or email psst@bipsolutions.com

FSB endorses Supply2.gov.uk

LEADING BUSINESS organisation the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) has said that local authorities should be obliged to use the lower-value contracts portal Supply2.gov.uk in order to aid better government buying.

The FSB, which has over 200,000 members, endorsed the Supply2.gov.uk service as part of a recent call to all levels of government on behalf of small businesses to remember that smarter buying will also save money for the taxpayer.

The organisation claims that applying measures such as the use of Supply2.gov.uk to advertise contracts will help small firms compete and provide buyers with wider competition for their contracts.

Clive Davenport, FSB Trade and Industry Chairman, said: "The FSB has been calling for a web portal for public sector contracts, including lower-value contracts (typically under £100,000), for some time. Supply2.gov.uk should produce healthy competition, better value for money and a fairer deal for businesses that do not have the time and resources to cope with expensive and complicated tendering processes. We therefore welcome the introduction of this initiative and we encourage local authorities and small businesses to get fully behind it."

BiP Solutions is the service provider for Supply2.gov.uk, which is owned by the Department of Trade and Industry's Small Business Service. The service allows public sector organisations to publicise their lower-value contracts at no cost, and businesses can view such contracts in the area of their choice free of charge.

Deadline set for GO Awards

NATIONAL PUBLIC Procurement Practitioners Day (N3PD) 2007 is less than five months away; however, an even more pressing deadline is that for the *Government Opportunities (GO) Excellence in Public Procurement Awards*, which will be presented at N3PD on 6 June. The deadline for entries into the GO Awards is 31 March, which in the hectic world of public procurement is really just around the corner.

Every year the GO Awards grow in stature, and this is your opportunity to join an expanding list of high-achieving individuals and organisations whose imagination, innovation and commitment to the procurement cause has been recognised. While there are many award initiatives across the public sector, only the GO Awards cover so many areas of public procurement. There are eight categories to



supply2.gov.uk
supplier route to government

Since it launched in June 2006, Supply2.gov.uk has become a valuable business tool for thousands of buyers and suppliers. Over 26,000 contracts have been advertised on the portal, while the number of registered suppliers is now in excess of 35,000.

Gordon McRury, brand manager for Supply2.gov.uk, said: "Supply2.gov.uk consolidates access to lower-value contracts from across the whole of the UK public sector. By registering with Supply2.gov.uk as a means of potentially generating business, smaller firms can raise their profile within the government procurement community and collate valuable business intelligence."

To register as a buyer, and enjoy the benefits of advertising lower-value contracts for free, go to www.supply2.gov.uk



choose from (though you can enter as many as you wish) and the process for submission is extremely simple. To view the categories, judging criteria and previous GO Awards winners, and to request an entry form, go to www.n3pd.com

At the N3PD website you can also keep up to date with the latest news on the event itself, including details of speakers and new supporters.

Project proving popular



BiP SOLUTIONS' Project service is well established as the smartest way to create, manage and transmit contract notices to the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU), but high demand for the service shows that many buyers can still benefit from the features it offers.

Forty more public sector organisations signed up to Project in December 2006, meaning that there are now over 550 such bodies using the service in the UK. Why is Project so popular? The answer is because it helps to take the pressure out of procurement – helping buyers to complete contract notices quickly, accurately and, most importantly, compliantly.

Project enables contracts to be created and managed in a fully secure, managed and audited environment. Notices are validated against the EU Procurement Directives, so reducing the risk of non-compliance, and BiP's expert support team are available to talk users through any issues they may have. Notices sent to the Official Publications Office of the European Union via Project's XML gateway are published in the OJEU within two to three working days, so reducing tendering timescales. However, Project can be used to create contract notices of all values, including those to be published on the www.supply2.gov.uk lower-value contracts portal, for which BiP is the service provider.

Project is part of the Delta-ets e-tendering suite of services, which can be used by public sector buyers to handle the full life cycle of the tendering process. Delta-ets includes Select for pre-qualification questionnaires, aXcess for the creation of buyer profiles, Vault for a secure document exchange, and Vault eAuction.

To see how your organisation can join hundreds of others enjoying the benefits of Delta-ets, please contact the Public Sector Solutions team on **0845 270 7090**, visit www.delta-ets.com or email psst@bipsolutions.com

Head start for Havering

THE LONDON Borough of Havering has become the first local authority in the UK to sign up to BiP Solutions' new national pre-qualification accreditation service, BiP Select.

BiP Select was launched in November 2006 and offers a simple and structured approach to pre-qualification via supplier assessment across common criteria, delivering better value for money to both buyers and suppliers. The service is open to all.

Havering has been at the forefront of innovation in its procurement techniques and has long sought to make efficiency savings. By adopting BiP Select, the borough has moved even further forward in addressing the efficiency agenda.

BiP Select gives suppliers recognition through pre-qualification and access to thousands of public sector buyers. Suppliers can choose to apply for either Select Certify or Select Accredited status. For Select Certify status, suppliers need only complete an online self-certification questionnaire, while for Select Accredited status, suppliers require to be fully assessed by a third party.

For buyers, BiP Select offers access to a diverse database of approved suppliers and a single, transparent selection process. The service helps public sector organisations deliver improvements in efficiency and streamline their procurement processes, supporting a 'do it once' ethos. The service also minimises the financial and administrative burden on buyers and suppliers through removing duplication of effort.

Public bodies signing up to BiP Select will benefit from the service's full compliance with



the EC Treaty, EU Public Procurement Directives and UK Regulations. BiP Select is the only cross-public sector accreditation service delivered to the same exacting standards set for the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)'s Constructionline accreditation service – itself the only government-supported UK accreditation service.

BiP has appointed Capita – which administers the Constructionline service on behalf of the DTI – as the vetting process service provider for BiP Select. Capita's specialist software enables Constructionline and BiP Select supplier information to be hosted in a shared environment, further reducing duplication.

The Society of Procurement Officers in Local Government (SOPO), the leading procurement organisation for local government buyers with over 2500 members across the UK, has endorsed BiP Select.

Buyers can use the service free of charge, so in order to benefit from what it can offer your organisation, visit www.bipselect.com or call **0845 270 7094**.

Love me tender

MANAGING TENDER documentation can be problematic, with issues of security and compliance with EU procurement legislation – just two concerns to be considered. Fortunately, BiP Solutions' Vault service offers a low-cost solution to this problem, with a range of other benefits also available.

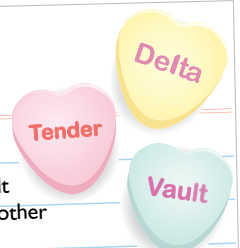
Vault provides a completely secure means of storing and transmitting Invitation to Tender (ITT) documentation, and then receiving, managing and logging responses. It can be used to facilitate all procurement procedures for every value of contract, helps to reduce the administration costs associated with tendering, and is accessed via the internet.

Vault's success isn't just limited to the UK. The tourism agency VisitBritain recently used Vault for a tendering exercise on behalf of one of its branches in New York. Fourteen suppliers responded to the ITT, nine of whom were based in the USA. Vault enabled the management of the tender documentation to be carried out without a hitch, even when large files were uploaded by suppliers – a testament to Vault's stability.

Hazel Burden, Financial Policy Accountant for VisitBritain, said: "Vault proved to be an invaluable service to us during this tendering exercise; helping us to manage all of the tender documentation efficiently and simplifying the process both for us and those submitting tenders. Having an audit trail and access to previous tender documents was really useful, especially as a learning resource for staff creating a tender for the first time. The knowledge that BiP's support staff have of the entire tendering process is also really helpful."

VisitBritain is just one of a growing number of organisations to benefit from the Vault service. December 2006 saw 30 tenderboxes closed, with documentation made available to, and received from, over 400 suppliers.

To find out more about how Vault can ease your tendering process, go to www.bipsolutions.com/Delta/vault.html, contact the Public Sector Solutions team on **0845 270 7090** or email psst@bipsolutions.com



Sharing knowledge

SHARED SERVICES is a hot topic across the public sector right now, so it's entirely fitting that one of the UK's leading purchasing consortia should dedicate the theme of its annual conference to this area.

The Central Buying Consortium (CBC) is the largest local authority purchasing consortium in the UK. Formed in 1991 with six local authority members, it now has 17 representing the Midlands and south east England outside of London. The CBC annual conference takes place on 15 March at the Institution of Civil Engineers at One Great George Street in London, and the programme is one that you will not want to miss.

With estimates that government could save up to £40 billion over the next ten years by sharing services across HR and finance alone, it is easy to see why so much focus will be on this area. But what are the implications for local authorities, suppliers and most importantly the end-users of services?

How does the concept of shared services fit with the numerous other initiatives facing public sector buyers, and how should you plan to take account of it? What are the real-life experiences of those organisations which are already engaging in this activity?

To get the answers to these and other key questions, you need to attend this event. By doing so you will not only hear current thinking first hand, but also have the opportunity to question the experts and network with colleagues facing the same challenges as yourself.

Government Opportunities (GO) magazine is the media partner for the event, which is sponsored by Canon and Constructionline, and supported by the lower-value contracts portal www.supply2.gov.uk. Shared services is also the theme for the March edition of *GO*, while April's issue of the publication will include a review of the CBC conference.

To find out more about the event, go to www.bipsolutions.com/events/cbc_07

GO ahead

GOVERNMENT OPPORTUNITIES (GO) magazine is the UK's leading publication for all matters related to public procurement. In a sector as fast moving, diverse and complex as this, it pays to have access to the latest thinking and awareness of the issues affecting buyers and suppliers both now and in the future. If you do not currently receive *GO* but would like to, please email 'GO request' to bip@govopps.co.uk



GO is pleased to receive editorial contributions from those at the cutting edge of public procurement. If you have an initiative that you want to share, or an issue to raise, *GO* is the ideal place to do it. The magazine is read by around 30,000 buyers and suppliers each month and contributions on any procurement-related subject are welcomed, as are those on particular themes.

Themed issues of *GO* for 2007 are:

Mar	Shared Services
Apr	Security and Consortia Supplement
May	Olympics and LCSG Overview
Jun	eProcurement and Procurement Solutions Preview
Jul	Collaborative Purchasing
Aug	Public Sector Property Management
Sep	Climate Change and Renewable Energy
Oct	Outsourced Services
Nov	ICT
Dec 07 / Jan 08	OGC and Beyond

Please contact morven.macneil@bipsolutions.com for further information on how to contribute to *GO*.

New Year, new SOPO Yearbook

THE BIBLE of the local government procurement community, the Society of Procurement Officers in Local Government (SOPO) Yearbook, is set to be even more useful in 2007.



The publication is packed full of valuable information and contains the contact details of every SOPO member whose information was available at the time of printing. It also contains articles by prominent procurement practitioners, including OGC Chief Executive John Oughton, Firebuy Chief Executive Terry Brewer, and the CEO of BiP Solutions, Ron Burges.

This year sees the Yearbook step up a gear with a new classified advertising section. This provides buyers with a more accessible list of suppliers servicing the public sector, and for suppliers it provides a cost-effective, long-term and high-impact marketing platform giving them the opportunity to promote their capabilities to the key decision makers in local government.

SOPO is the single largest representative body of procurement officers in local government in the UK. The 2007 Yearbook contains over 2500 contact details for members, with names, telephone numbers and email addresses included.

The cost of the Yearbook for non-members starts from £195 plus VAT (members can look forward to receiving their copies imminently). To order a copy visit www.sopo.org/yearbook, or call the BiP sales team on 0845 270 7096.

Gore turns up heat on environment

CLIMATE CHANGE was top of the agenda when former US Vice President Al Gore addressed an audience of hundreds of prominent figures from the Scottish business and public sector communities at a recent conference in Glasgow.

Mr Gore was speaking alongside Hans Blix, Chairman of the International Commission on Weapons of Mass Destruction, at a conference organised in association with BiP Solutions.

Mr Gore commended Scotland on the steps the country was taking to minimise future damage to the environment. He said: "I congratulate Scotland on taking a leadership role in tackling climate change and reducing carbon emissions – this is not a political issue, it is an ethical issue, a moral issue."

Ron Burges, CEO of BiP Solutions, said he was proud to associate the company with speakers of such international acclaim: "The expertise and depth of knowledge of speakers such as Mr Gore and Herr Blix can serve as valuable tools and empower community leaders to shape the future of the corporate and social environment of the twenty-first century and beyond."

PASSport to success

BiP SOLUTIONS' Procurement Advice and Support Service (PASS) consultants will be on the road throughout 2007, delivering valuable training and guidance on a range of procurement issues. The 2007 PASS events programme includes, amongst others, Effective Legal Compliance in Public Procurement, Mastering the Art of Supplier Negotiation, and Preparing Perfect Tenders. To ensure as many procurement professionals as possible can benefit from the PASS seminars, they are held not just in London, but also in Birmingham, Manchester and Glasgow.

Best of all, attending a PASS event will not

only broaden your understanding of public procurement legislation and techniques, it will also earn you Continuing Personal/Professional Development (CPD) points towards your, or your organisation's Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) CPD scheme.

BiP, through its PASS events programme, is dedicated to assisting the public sector in its professional development. For guidance on the CIPS scheme email cpd@cips.org

For detailed information on all PASS events email pass@bipsolutions.com or visit www.bipsolutions.com/events

NPS EVENTS GUIDE www.bipsolutions.com/events

Conferences, exhibitions and seminars aimed at procurement professionals.

FEBRUARY – MARCH

Understanding EU Procurement – A Scottish Perspective

15 Feb Stirling Management Centre
27 Feb Easterbrook Hall, Dumfries
13 Mar Teacher Building, Glasgow
14 Mar Aberdeen University

28 FEBRUARY

How to Win Tenders

Renaissance, Heathrow

MARCH – JUNE

Preparing Perfect Tenders

1 Mar London
28 Mar Heathrow
7 Jun Manchester

MARCH – JUNE

How to Protect Your Commercial Interests When Tendering

6 Mar Birmingham
29 Mar Heathrow
14 Jun London

MARCH – JUNE

Winning Contracts – Understanding Electronic Tendering Techniques

7 Mar Birmingham
18 Apr Heathrow
19 Jun London

8 MARCH

SOPO Scottish Conference and Exhibition

EICC, Edinburgh

MARCH – JUNE

Delivering Social, Environmental and Sustainable Public Procurement

13 Mar London
26 Apr Birmingham
26 Jun London

MARCH – MAY

Perfecting Compliant Evaluation Processes

14 Mar London
2 May London

15 MARCH

CBC Conference & Exhibition 2007: Shared Services – The Value to Procurement

One Great George Street, London

MARCH – JUNE

Applying Best Practice Contract and Performance Management

20 Mar Manchester
3 May London
27 Jun London

21 MARCH

Shaping the Future of NHS Procurement

ICO, London

MARCH – JUNE

Introducing Effective Supply Chain Management

21 Mar Glasgow
8 May London
28 Jun London

22 MARCH

Selling to Defence

Marriott Maida Vale, London

MARCH – MAY

Mastering the Art of Supplier Negotiation

22 Mar Birmingham
19 Apr London
15 May London

MARCH – MAY

Understanding the OJEU Proforma Requirements

27 Mar London
17 May Birmingham

MARCH – MAY

An Introduction to New Purchasing Techniques

27 Mar London
17 May Birmingham

APRIL – JUNE

How to Sell to the Public Sector

17 Apr Heathrow
6 Jun Heathrow

APRIL – JUNE

A Guide to Understanding UK and EU Regulations

24 Apr Manchester
9 May London
20 Jun London

APRIL – JUNE

Effective Legal Compliance in Public Procurement

25 Apr Manchester
22 May London
21 Jun London

10 MAY

Selling to Defence

Renaissance, Heathrow

24 MAY

LCSG Conference

Marriott Grosvenor Square, London

6 JUNE

National Public Procurement Practitioners Day (N3PD) 2007

One Great George Street, London

13 JUNE

Selling to the NHS

Renaissance, Heathrow

27 JUNE

SOPO/OGC Conference and Exhibition

Marriott Regent's Park, London

Best defence

EVERY YEAR the UK MoD spends more than £18 billion on a wide range of products and services, making it British industry's single largest customer with a supply base of more than 32,000 companies. The MoD's objective is to obtain the best long-term value for money in its contracts and it has around 1800 buyers committed to purchasing high-quality goods at the best value-for-money terms.

The introduction of the Defence Industrial Strategy and measures such as Smart Acquisition have emphasised the need for more intelligent procurement and supply within the defence community: more than ever suppliers and buyers need to ensure that they are aware of key opportunities within defence.

Recognising the need for this crucial intelligence, the Defence Suppliers Service Yearbook has been produced in association with BiP Solutions, publisher of *MoD Defence Contracts Bulletin (MoD DCB)*. The Yearbook has been compiled as a business tool for both suppliers and buyers, and features a host of informative and topical articles, full listings of project teams within the MoD and other useful resources.

A limited number of Yearbooks are available to NPS readers on a complimentary basis – please contact rhona.sweeting@bipsolutions.com to reserve your copy.

IN MARCH'S ...



GOVERNMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- **GO Interview – Dr Vincent Cable**, Liberal Democrat Shadow Chancellor, discusses his party's future plans
- **Keith Luck**, former Director of Resources at the Metropolitan Police Service, gives an insight into the various changes implemented during his term
- **Paul Ryder**, Managing Director of Smart Public, explains how a shift in focus to recruitment budgets may well be one answer to the savings organisations need to make

(Contents subject to change)

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