

NPS



BiP's NEWSLETTER FOR THE PROCUREMENT SERVICE

ISSUE 50 APRIL/MAY 2007

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BiP – delivering in the UAE



AT THE recent IDEX 2007 conference in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Armed Forces announced the imminent launch of their new e-tendering portal. BiP Solutions, along with local partner ITQAN Solutions, is delivering the portal to UAE Armed Forces General Headquarters.

The portal will provide high-quality information and services to the Armed Forces' Purchasing Directorate, which is aiming to modernise its purchasing and supply processes and reduce its paper trail. The portal will also be used by the Directorate to disseminate important information to its suppliers.

His Excellency Brigadier General Obeid Al Ketbi said: "This initiative of the UAE Armed Forces is in line with the national trend of using electronic technology to enhance efficiency and performance."

Feras Al Jabi, General Manager of ITQAN, said the regional market is hungry for rightly packaged e-tendering solutions in both the public and private sectors. "The ITQAN-BiP partnership will provide much needed solutions to the public and private organisations within the Gulf Cooperation Council which are eager to implement modern supplier sourcing and tender management programmes," he added.

Scott Smith, Commercial Director of BiP, said: "The e-tendering portal will provide a common face to the Armed Forces' supply base and will help make the process of RFQ (request for quotation) and tendering more effective and efficient for both the procurement teams and their suppliers."

BiP's products and services are already well known in the UK, Europe and beyond, and the UAE adds to the growing list of countries benefiting from the company's e-tendering expertise.

Countdown to N3PD

NATIONAL PUBLIC Procurement Practitioners Day (N3PD) 2007 is shaping up to be the procurement event of the year, and there's only two months to go until the big day.

N3PD, organised by BiP Solutions, celebrates the achievements, dedication and innovation of the UK's procurement professionals – those who are at the cutting edge of ensuring public services offer both quality and value for money. The event takes place on 6 June at the Institution of Civil Engineers, One Great George Street, London.

This is the fourth N3PD, and once again the event has attracted some of public procurement's leading figures to speak. The event will be co-hosted and addressed by Sir Michael Lyons, and the other keynote speakers are Dr Vincent Cable, Liberal Democrat Deputy Leader and Shadow Chancellor and Dr Neil Bentley, Director of the Public Services Directorate at the Confederation of British Industry.

Of course, core to N3PD are the *Government Opportunities (GO)* magazine Excellence in Public Procurement Awards. The Awards have become the most coveted

and respected in public procurement, not least because the standard of entries is so high. The GO Editorial Advisory Team, comprising many leading figures from within public procurement, will be judging the Awards.

The good news for those who have not yet submitted an entry is that the closing date has now been extended to 13 April. Entering is simple; just go to the GO Awards section of the N3PD website (www.n3pd.com), decide which category or categories you wish to enter, and request a nomination form. The forms are quick and easy to complete, so there is no reason not to ensure that you and your team or organisation receive the recognition they deserve.

Finalists in the GO Awards will receive a number of complimentary invitations to the event and the opportunity to purchase additional tickets at a discounted rate. For all others attending, the ticket price is £65. Again, please go to the N3PD website for further information on attending the event.



COI signs up to BiP

THE CENTRAL Office of Information (COI) has become the latest government department to enjoy the benefits of BiP Solutions' procurement expertise by signing up for an aXcess buyer profile and the BiP Select service.

aXcess helps buyers reduce their tendering timescales by providing a fully managed and supported real-time online contract information service for suppliers. Contracts are populated via BiP's Project e-notice service, which also sends notices to the OJEU.

An aXcess buyer profile helps buyers reduce their tendering costs, since it is priced on the basis of an annual licence fee rather than the number of contracts placed – unlike newspapers and trade journals. The service fully conforms to the requirements of the EU Consolidated Procurement Directive.

The COI joins an expanding list of public sector organisations with aXcess buyer profiles – others include the Audit Commission, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, the Authorities Buying Consortium and the Department for Communities and Local Government.

BiP's Select service provides a simple and structured approach to supplier



pre-qualification. Two levels are available – Certify and Accredit. For Certify, suppliers simply complete an online self-certification questionnaire, whereas for Accredit status suppliers are assessed by a third party to achieve full accreditation. Select gives suppliers increased recognition and visibility through pre-qualification, and provides buyers with a substantial database of approved suppliers and a single, transparent selection process.

COI Head of Procurement Bob Ager said: "We are very pleased to have an aXcess buyer profile in place and also to have signed up to BiP's Select accreditation service. Both will be important tools as the COI continues to strive for effective and efficient procurement, in line with established best practice in this area."

To find out more about aXcess, contact the Public Sector Solutions team on 0845 270 7090, go to: www.bipsolutions.com/delta or email: psst@bipsolutions.com. For Select, visit: www.bipselect.com or call 0845 270 7094.

Making it PAE



THE PROCUREMENT Agency for Essex (PAE) has selected BiP Solutions as the provider of its new web portal. After completing a competitive tender exercise BiP was awarded a three-year contract which will see the existing PAE website and related content incorporated into a new web portal, which features a range of services for both buyers and suppliers.

The PAE, established in April 2004, represents 15 member authorities in the county of Essex and acts as a voice for Essex procurement on a regional and national scale. It also provides training and procurement-related commercial support for its members and acts as a best practice resource, encouraging the use of collaborative projects.

Peter Quinn, Director of the PAE, said: "We completed a detailed market survey of possible providers and the solution proposed by BiP best fitted the needs of the PAE and its members. We look forward to delivering a service that will play a pivotal role in helping the PAE to transform collaborative procurement in Essex. The solution will be responsive to the needs of both our membership and their supply base."

The portal may also be used as a regional pilot by the Regional Centre for Excellence (Eastern Region).

Included in the new PAE web portal will be a number of services for both buyers and suppliers. Along with the incorporation of the Agency's current website, each PAE member authority will now have its own branded buyer profile linked to the central PAE portal.

BiP's new **Select** accreditation service is an important component of the new portal. Select is a national pre-qualification accreditation service that is fully compliant with the EC Treaty, EU Public Procurement Directives and UK Regulations, and has been endorsed by the Society of Procurement Officers in Local Government (SOPO). PAE members will have full access to this supplier database and its supplier management tools.

Scott Smith, Commercial Director of BiP, said: "We are delighted to be chosen as service providers for the new PAE web portal. We believe this will help deliver efficiency savings for the public sector and improve knowledge transfer and best practice across both the public and private sectors."

The new portal will be launched in phases, giving PAE the ability to incorporate feedback from all users as the service progresses. Phase one is planned for launch within the next three months.

contrax hits the spot – again

BiP SOLUTIONS has long been the leader in providing the most comprehensive coverage of UK public sector contract opportunities, and the latest independent research on BiP's **Contrax Weekly** publication underlines this still further.

In an eight-week period at the beginning of 2007, *Contrax Weekly* published on average an impressive 181% more contracts than the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). In the same period, its sister publication, **Contrax Weekly Ireland**, published a massive 669% more contracts than the OJEU. Both figures are increases on the same period in 2006, demonstrating BiP's commitment to continually improving and developing its services.

BiP's contracts bureau service is responsible for sourcing and processing the contract notices that appear not only in **Contrax**, but also in services such as **Tracker** and **Defense Contracts International**. Each working day the team reviews hundreds of websites, newspapers and magazines to find public sector contract opportunities not just from the UK, but worldwide.

For suppliers, *Contrax Weekly* and *Contrax Weekly Ireland* – both of which are also available online and via a new email alert service under the **Contrax** brand – offer unrivalled coverage of the UK and Irish

markets and the potential to build businesses. For public sector buyers, publication of notices in these services ensures coverage across a broad range of suppliers, many of which are small to medium-sized businesses keen to work with government and offering innovative and cost-effective services.

Subscribers to **Contrax** services benefit from the most comprehensive listing of UK contract notices available, including above-EU threshold notices sent by public authorities to the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). There are now around 600 such bodies using BiP's e-notice system **Project** to create, manage and transmit their notices to the OJEU, and in doing so ensuring their publication in BiP's contract services. **Project** also enables buyers to create lower-value notices for publication in BiP services, as well as the Government's lower-value contracts portal **Supply2.gov.uk**.

BiP is currently offering a free **Project** licence to public bodies not already using the service, and a free additional licence for existing users. To take advantage of this great offer contact the Public Sector Solutions team on **0845 270 7090**, visit: www.delta.ets.com or email: psst@bipsolutions.com

For more information on **Contrax**, *Contrax Weekly* and *Contrax Weekly Ireland*, visit: www.contraxonline.com

Procurement for a good cause

FOLLOWING THE success of its National Procurement Conference in October 2006, the Procurement Directorate at the Scottish Executive has made a donation from proceeds of the event to the Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice (PPWH) in Glasgow. The conference was organised by BiP Solutions, who joined members of the Directorate to present the cheque, for £10,000.

Pictured from left to right are: Nicholas Bowd, Director of the Scottish Procurement Directorate; Tom McCabe, Scottish Executive Minister for Finance and Public Service Reform; Wilma Dobbin, ward sister at the PPWH; Simon Burges, Marketing Director of



BiP Solutions; and Jo Parker-Morgan, corporate fundraiser for the PPWH.

For further information on the work of the PPWH, go to: www.ppwh.org.uk

The next Scottish National Procurement Conference will take place on 31 October 2007.

SOPO Scotland a success

THE FIRST Scottish conference of the Society of Procurement Officers in Local Government (SOPO) was held in March, and the response from all involved has been extremely positive.

The event was titled 'Procurement: A Key Driver of Reform in Scottish Public Services', and was organised by BiP Solutions on behalf of SOPO. Over 300 delegates attended and received a thought-provoking update on the key issues affecting public procurement in the region from speakers including Ronnie McLean, former director, Authorities Buying Consortium (abc); Dorothy Cowie, Director, abc; David Pointon, Chairman of SOPO; Nicholas Bowd, Director of the Scottish Procurement Directorate; and

John McClelland CBE, author of the Review of Public Procurement in Scotland.

SOPO is one of a number of high-profile organisations to benefit from BiP's expertise in creating, marketing and managing successful events and conferences. To find out what BiP can do for you, contact **0845 270 7095**.

The SOPO National Conference and Awards, also organised by BiP, take place on 7-8 November 2007.

Further information on SOPO can be found at: www.sopo.org.uk

A full review of the SOPO Scotland event can be found in the April edition of *Government Opportunities* magazine.

Log on and learn

EVERYONE KNOWS that learning and development are critical to individual effectiveness, but finding the time and budget to attend training can sometimes be an issue – particularly for those working in smaller teams or organisations.

In the fast-moving world of public procurement, being unaware of the latest legislation, guidelines or best practice is no defence for when things don't go to plan – whether you are a buyer or supplier. Fortunately, BiP Solutions has an answer for those who are knowledge-hungry but time-starved, and that is its new Procurement Advice and Support Service (PASS) e-Learning Zone.

The e-Learning Zone delivers the benefits



and quality that thousands of procurement staff have come to expect from BiP's other PASS services, but without the need to leave your desk to benefit from them. The service has also been endorsed by the Society of Procurement Officers in Local Government (SOPO).

Four training presentations are currently available, covering key areas for buyers and suppliers including 'A Beginner's Guide to Public Sector Contracting' and 'Playing to Win'.

No plug-ins or additional software are required to access the presentations – simply log onto the e-Learning website, select the presentation required, register and view. Current presentations last from 30 to 40 minutes, and are available for up to five days from the point of registration.

Expanding your knowledge has never been easier. Go to the e-Learning Zone at: www.pass-elearning.com to find out more about the presentations and to experience online learning at its best.

To find out more about other PASS events, go to: www.bipsolutions.com/pass/index.php or email: pass@bipsolutions.com

More success for Supply2.gov.uk

ONE YEAR on from its initial roll-out, the Supply2.gov.uk lower-value contracts portal has proven extremely popular with buyers and suppliers alike.

Supply2.gov.uk, which is managed by BiP Solutions on behalf of the Department of Trade and Industry's Small Business Service, aims to increase the visibility of lower-value contracting opportunities, which typically have a value of below £100,000. While the service is available to all sizes of business, it is particularly useful for small to medium-sized enterprises wanting to increase their share of public sector work.

Since March 2006, over 37,000 contract opportunities of all values have been published on Supply2.gov.uk, while in the same period over 41,000 suppliers and 3300 buyers have signed up to the service.

Part of Supply2.gov.uk's appeal is that it is free for buyers to publish lower-value notices on the service, and also free for suppliers to view notices in the area of their choice.

supply2.gov.uk
supplier route to government

This, combined with email alerts that match contract notices to areas of business interest, helps save companies time and money in their bid to win government contracts.

From the buyer perspective, publishing lower-value notices on Supply2.gov.uk not only increases the visibility of tenders, thereby improving competition and value for taxpayers, but also ensures compliance with European Commission (EC) guidelines in this area. In fact, the EC has uniquely recognised Supply2.gov.uk as a best practice means of advertising lower-value contracts.

So, Supply2.gov.uk is successful, free, convenient and compliance-friendly – what else could buyers and suppliers want? Visit: www.supply2.gov.uk to find out more, and to register your organisation.

BiP's e-auctions save £1000s

STUDENT LOANS COMPANY LIMITED

THE STUDENT Loans Company recently used BiP Solutions' Vault reverse e-auction tool as part of its tendering exercise for the provision of consumer debt collection and tracing services.

Vault is part of BiP's Delta electronic tendering suite. By using Vault to deliver five reverse e-auctions, the company was able to negotiate all costs involved in its tender, enabling it to deliver huge savings in a fully secure and transparent manner.

The company invited 14 suppliers to participate in its invitation to tender through Vault. After the initial evaluation period, it then requested that all of the suppliers take part in each of the reverse auctions. More than half did so, and as a result Student Loans says savings in the region of 20-25% have been achieved.

The Vault e-auction service is much more than an IT solution – the service is fully supported by BiP's expert staff, who are there to ensure you receive maximum benefit from its deployment. Communication throughout the e-auction process is important, and having BiP on hand will help you drive greater efficiencies and savings.

Michael Mullen, Procurement Manager for The Student Loans Company, said: "I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to everyone involved at BiP Solutions. I have no doubt that this will be the first of several future e-auctions and look forward to continuing to work with BiP."

To find out more about Vault e-auctions, go to: www.bipsolutions.com/Delta/vault.html, contact the Public Sector Solutions team on 0845 270 7090 or email: psst@bipsolutions.com

Sharing pays dividends

DELEGATES AT the Central Buying Consortium (CBC) Annual Conference, held in London in March, heard that shared services are the way forward for effective and efficient public procurement.

The CBC conference, entitled 'Shared Services: the Value of Procurement', attracted over 250 delegates – demonstrating the power of the CBC and the interest in this area of procurement expertise. The CBC is the largest local authority consortium in the UK, with 17 local authority members.

BiP Solutions organised the event, and delegates heard from speakers including Ros Aird, Chair of CBC and Head of Hertfordshire Business Services; David Wright, Director of the North East Centre of Excellence; and Darron Cox, Director and Deputy Commercial Director at the DfES Centre for Procurement Performance. A number of speakers from the private sector also contributed to a useful and stimulating debate.

**Central
Buying
Consortium**

In her address, Ros underlined the changes that the procurement sector had experienced recently, and argued that the concept of shared services would not have been possible in 1991, when the CBC was formed. She said: "CBC would not have survived if it had not been able to flex and respond to challenges and the way in which the procurement landscape has changed. At its heart, CBC is about sharing and collaboration, therefore we are well equipped to deal with this agenda."

Further information on CBC can be found at: www.cbconline.org.uk

A full review of the CBC Annual Conference can be found in the April edition of *Government Opportunities* magazine.

NPS EVENTS GUIDE www.bipsolutions.com/events

APRIL-JUNE

How to Sell to the Public Sector

17 Apr Heathrow 6 Jun Heathrow

APRIL-JUNE

Winning Contracts – Understanding Electronic Tendering Techniques

18 Apr Heathrow 19 Jun London

APRIL-MAY

Mastering the Art of Supplier Negotiation

19 Apr London 15 May London

APRIL-JUNE

A Guide to the New EU Public Procurement Regulations and Transposing UK 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

APRIL-JUNE

Delivering Social, Environmental and Sustainable Public Procurement

26 Apr Birmingham 26 Jun London

MAY-JUNE

SOPO – Selling to Local Government Roadshow 2007

1 May London 17 May Leeds 20 Jun Bristol

2 MAY

Perfecting Compliant Evaluation Processes

Marriott Maida Vale, London

MAY-JUNE

Applying Best Practice Contract and Performance Management

3 May London 27 Jun London

8 MAY

Introducing Effective Supply Chain Management

Marriott Maida Vale, London

10 MAY

How to Win Tenders

Renaissance, Heathrow

17 MAY

Understanding the OJEU Proforma Requirements

Cophorne, Birmingham

17 MAY

An Introduction to New Purchasing Techniques

Cophorne, Birmingham

24 MAY

LCSG Annual Conference and Exhibition 2007

Marriott Grosvenor Square, London

6 JUNE

National Public Procurement Practitioners Day (N3PD) 2007

One Great George Street, London

JUNE

Preparing Perfect Tenders

7 Jun Manchester 14 Jun London

13 JUNE

Selling to the NHS

Renaissance, Heathrow

27 JUNE

SOPO/OGC Conference and Exhibition

Marriott Regent's Park, London

17 OCTOBER

MoD – Enabling the Future

City Centre Marriott, Bristol

31 OCTOBER

Scottish Executive Public Procurement Conference 2007

SECC, Glasgow

1-2 NOVEMBER

Health Care Supply Association Annual Conference and Exhibition

Holiday Inn, Stratford Upon Avon

7-8 NOVEMBER

SOPO Annual Conference and Exhibition 2007

Novotel West, London

For further information on advertising your event contact the Events Team at BiP on **0845 270 7095** or email: events@bipsolutions.com

Building confidence

EVER BEEN sat behind a builder's van in a traffic jam, and wondered what the green and blue hexagonal logo on the back door is all about? The answer is that it belongs to **Constructionline**, the UK register of pre-qualified local and national construction and construction-related suppliers.

Constructionline is a bespoke service for the construction industry, and is owned by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). Its database contains over 12,800 suppliers and 1700 buying organisations including local authorities, housing associations and NHS Trusts. For suppliers, registering with Constructionline saves time and effort completing separate Pre-Qualification Questionnaires (PQQs), and helps to ensure that they meet the standards required by public sector buyers. It is also a powerful marketing tool for increasing awareness of suppliers amongst the public sector.

Constructionline fits perfectly with the new **Select Accredited** service from BiP Solutions. Select Accredited is a national database of third party accredited suppliers across all sectors. The third party is Capita, which manages Constructionline on behalf of the DTI – so ensuring a consistent and integrated approach between the two services.

Suppliers registered with Constructionline are also visible to buyers registered with Select Accredited. This has benefits for both – for buyers it reduces duplication of effort in searching separate databases for pre-qualified suppliers and helps them manage their supplier lists; and for suppliers it increases their visibility with buyers who may have a diverse range of requirements. Suppliers in Select Accredited are accredited

Get GO

Government Opportunities

(GO) is the UK's leading guide to public procurement. Published monthly by BiP Solutions, it is the ultimate authority on the news, views, issues, legislation and challenges facing all who buy on behalf of, or supply to, the public sector.

Regular readers of GO will have noticed a reader request form appearing in recent editions. To ensure you continue to receive your free copy, please take two minutes to complete the form and return it in the Freepost envelope provided. This will help us maintain our circulation list, and will guarantee you keep informed on the issues you need to know about.

If you do not currently receive GO but would like to do so, please email 'GO request' to: bip@govops.co.uk



Supplier Accreditation Service



to the same standard as those in Constructionline, and the Select Accredited service is available to buyers free of charge as part of BiP's Delta e-tendering system.

Between them, Constructionline and Select Accredited provide buyers and suppliers with a powerful and coordinated approach to pre-qualification – all of which helps to drive efficient, effective and compliant public procurement.

Buyers and suppliers interested in Select Accredited can find out more at: www.bipselect.com, or by calling **0845 270 7094**.

For construction and construction-related suppliers, registering with Constructionline is also simple – just go to: www.constructionline.co.uk or call **0870 240 0152** for further details.

IN MAY'S ...



GOVERNMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- **GO Interview** – **Alison Littley**, Chief Executive of OGCbuying.solutions
- **Colin Whitehouse**, Chair of the National Process Improvement Project and **Nicky Jackman**, sponsor of the Project explain how local councils can continually and successfully deliver services in the way that customers really value
- **Darron Cox**, Deputy Commercial Director at the Department for Education and Skills, describes how DfES plans to save up to £150m by using a new e-procurement system
(Contents subject to change)

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