

NPS



BiP's NEWSLETTER FOR THE PROCUREMENT SERVICE

ISSUE 48 DEC 06/JAN 07

A library of knowledge at your fingertips helping you deliver Best Practice Procurement



For further details on the PASS Manual email: pass@bipsolutions.com

GO wins BSA accolade



GOVERNMENT OPPORTUNITIES (GO) magazine collected one of the top accolades at the recent Business Services Association (BSA) Annual Dinner and Awards.

GO, published by BiP Solutions, was voted Best Specialist Journal in recognition of its extensive coverage of public procurement and improved design.

It is the fourth time that GO has been recognised by the BSA for its achievements. The magazine previously collected the BSA Chairman's Award in 2002 and 2003, and its former assistant editor was named as the BSA Journalist of the Year in 2005. The BSA Awards, now in their sixth year, aim to recognise the best reporting and analysis of issues affecting the business services and outsourced services sector, and are highly prized by those working in the field.

Grahame Steed, Managing Editor of GO, said he was delighted that the magazine had been recognised for its contribution to the procurement community: "GO aims to keep all those working within public procurement, on both the buyer and supplier sides, up to speed with the latest thinking, developments and initiatives in this important area. We are delighted to win this Award, from such a respected organisation as the BSA."

This is the second piece of good news for GO. The magazine's new Audit Bureau of Circulations average net circulation figure for the period July 2005 to June 2006 has increased to 8223. Given the pass-on rate common for business magazines, readership is now in excess of 30,000 each month.

If you would like to be assured of receiving your own copy of GO, please email: biip@govops.co.uk quoting 'GO request'.

Similarly, if you would like to contribute to the magazine, please contact us at the same email address.

BiP – making compliance easy

COMPLIANCE IS an essential part of the work of procurement staff, but with so much legislation governing public procurement, and so many changes taking place, how can you be sure that you and your organisation are procuring in a fair, transparent and compliant way?

The answer is by using BiP Solutions' extensive range of e-tendering and accreditation services, all of which are designed to ensure buyers stay compliant while providing suppliers with an equal opportunity to compete for public sector contracts.

Increasing the adoption of electronic procurement by public bodies is a priority for the European Commission. BiP's Delta e-tendering suite (Delta-ets) is the fastest route to success in this area. It can be used for handling the full lifecycle of the tendering process for the public sector and its suppliers, from creating, managing and transmitting contract notices through to establishing a Buyer Profile or running an eAuction.

Delta-ets comprises the Project, Select, aXcess and Vault services. Project enables buyers to create, manage and transmit contract notices to the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). The use of an electronic form not only reduces paperwork and administration time, but also ensures notices are created in a compliant manner, through the completion of mandatory fields. Since notices are transmitted to the OJEU via an XML gateway, they will be published faster by the OJEU – thereby reducing timescales in the tendering process.

The Project service also features a competitive contract notice form, for notices that are not required to be sent to the OJEU (such as lower-value contracts). Use of this form ensures that notices can be published in BiP's contract information services such as Contract and Tracker, as well as on the Supply2.gov.uk website – for which BiP is the service provider to the Small Business Service.

A recent official Interpretative Communication published by the European Commission (EC) uniquely recognised Supply2.gov.uk as a best practice means for public authorities to advertise lower-value contracts to businesses. Such contracts must be openly advertised to a degree adequate to ensure sufficient competition, thus delivering greater value for the taxpayer. BiP has published a PASS Guidance on the subject of lower-value contracts, using the EC Communication as its basis but also offering advice on how to implement the recommended approach. This Guidance is available free of



charge by emailing: pass@bipsolutions.com, and quoting 'PASS Lower Value Contracts Guide'.

Buyers can significantly reduce their tendering timescales by publishing contract notices on a Buyer Profile. BiP's aXcess service enables your organisation to provide a fully managed, real-time online contract information service for suppliers, and by doing so enables compliance by ensuring that lower-value contracts are advertised.

Public sector organisations which provide an online Buyer Profile and use electronic methods to create and transmit their contract notices can reduce their tendering timescales by up to 12 days. Since aXcess incorporates the Project service for publishing contract notices, this is another area covered.

aXcess allows your organisation's identity to be applied to the Buyer Profile and is easy to manage. Better still, all aXcess Buyer Profiles are fully supported by BiP's expert staff. You can view current users of the aXcess service by visiting: www.bipsolutions.com/Delta/axcess.htm

BiP is committed to helping public bodies conduct their tendering activities in a compliant way. The modular approach of the Delta-ets suite allows buyers to select components based on their current requirements and budget, secure in the knowledge that should these change further elements can easily be added.

Further information on the Delta-ets suite, including the Vault secure document exchange and Vault eAuction, can be found at: www.bipsolutions.com/Delta/delta.html Alternatively, contact the Public Sector Solutions team on 0845 270 7090 or email: psst@bipsolutions.com



Contrax renewed

COMPANIES LOOKING for public sector contract opportunities now have even more choice, with the launch of BiP Solutions' new Contrax service.



Contrax Weekly has long been established as the foremost print source of contract opportunities. However, it has now been joined by an all-new online service and email alert, under the Contrax brand. This is great news for public sector buyers and suppliers. By publishing their lower-value contract notices in Contrax, buyers can be assured that they are reaching a diverse range of businesses across the UK, and particularly small to medium-sized businesses which can offer high levels of innovation and customer service. The new online and alert services will make it even easier than before for suppliers to find contract opportunities appropriate to them.

Contrax Weekly and its sister publication Contrax Weekly Ireland provide suppliers with hundreds of opportunities of all values each week. In fact, independent research commissioned by BiP has shown that on average Contrax Weekly provides up to 120% more contracts, and Contrax Weekly Ireland up to 400% more contracts, than the OJEU. The new Contrax services offer similar benefits.

Buyers wishing to submit their notices for publication in Contrax can do so by using BiP's Project content notice creation service.

Visit www.delta.ets.com for further details. The Contrax service can be found at www.contraxonline.com

Conference calls



OCTOBER AND November were two of the busiest months in the 2006 procurement events calendar, with BiP Solutions organising conferences for the Scottish Executive, the Health Care Supply Association and the Society of Procurement Officers in Local Government (SOPO).

The Scottish Executive Procurement Directorate National Conference and Exhibition, held on 31 October, attracted some of the leading figures within Scottish public procurement, as well as over 600 delegates and a large number of exhibitors. Public Service Reform Minister Tom McCabe told the audience that real progress was being made in reforming procurement in Scotland, while John McClelland, who has carried out an extensive review of this area, said he was encouraged by the way the Scottish Executive had responded to his recommendations.

The Health Care Supply Association Annual Conference, which was held in Stratford Upon Avon on 2-3 November, was themed 'Rewriting the Script', to reflect the many changes currently happening within the health sector. Delegates heard from a number of high-profile speakers, including Andrew Taylor, Director – Healthcare Policy at the Association of British Healthcare Industries and Duncan Eaton, former Chief Executive of the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency. The conference also saw the adoption of a new name for the organisation, with

'Supplies' changing to 'Supply' to reflect the changing nature of its members' work.

The SOPO Annual Conference, which was held in Hammersmith, London on 7-8 November, brought together members of one of the UK's largest procurement organisations, with a core theme of 'Sustaining the Procurement Challenge'. As ever, the SOPO Gala Dinner and Awards, held at the end of the first day of conference, proved to be an excellent networking opportunity, as well as a chance to recognise the success of those presented with the 2006 SOPO Awards.

These were:

- County Council Category: Hertfordshire County Council
- Single Tier Authority Category: London Borough of Southwark
- District Council Category: St Edmundsbury Borough Council – Procurement DR-IVE
- Other Category: South Yorkshire Decent Homes Efficiency Consortium

Summing up the event, SOPO Chairman David Pointon said: "This year's conference was an outstanding success, once again emphasising the role SOPO has to play in public procurement."

A full review of each of the conferences can be found in the December 2006/January 2007 edition of *Government Opportunities (GO)* magazine.

Accredit where it's due

ONE AREA of focus for buyers and suppliers recently has been accreditation services. Increasingly, public sector organisations need assurance that potential suppliers are suitable to tender for public contract opportunities, in terms of their legal, financial and technical capacity. Having a formalised mechanism for assessment for pre-qualification is an integral part of the public sector tendering exercise.

In November 2006, BiP Solutions launched a new, national pre-qualification service, with the aim of helping public sector buyers ensure compliance with the EC Treaty, EC Public Procurement Directives and UK procurement regulations in this area.

Select Accredited, which is endorsed by the Society of Procurement Officers in Local Government, helps deliver better value for money for both buyers and suppliers by providing a global approach to pre-qualification via supplier assessment across a common range of requirements.

BiP has appointed Capita as its vetting



Supplier Accreditation Service

process service provider for Select Accredited. Capita administers Constructionline – the only government-supported UK accreditation service – on behalf of the Department of Trade and Industry. A key benefit of Select Accredited is that suppliers will be accredited to the same exacting standards used for Constructionline, ensuring consistency and compliance with a respected government standard. Select Accredited also supports the 'do it once' ethos, since suppliers are only asked to seek accreditation once, annually, by those public sector organi-

sations which use the service.

In addition, because Select Accredited is provided free to buyers within the Delta-ets suite, suppliers will also benefit from having their details viewed by a wide range of buyers across the UK with a diverse range of requirements.

BiP's Select service already has over 8000 buyers registered to view such information, and 60,000 suppliers have already registered to the free online supplier information database.

Select Accredited is designed to be SME-friendly, with charges as low as £70 plus VAT for annual accreditation and registration. Pricing is dependent on turnover, so is proportional to a company's ability to pay.

A reprint of the recent *Government Opportunities* magazine feature on Select Accredited is inside this edition of NPS. Buyers can register for Select Accredited at: www.bipselect.com Alternatively, telephone 0845 270 7094 for further information.

30,000 suppliers say yes to Supply2.gov.uk

SUPPLY2.GOV.UK – the Government-owned portal promoting lower-value public sector contract opportunities – has continued to enjoy a rapid take-up by suppliers keen to increase their chances of securing public sector contracts.

Over 30,000 suppliers have registered for Supply2.gov.uk – for which BiP Solutions is the service provider on behalf of the Small Business Service – since it launched in June 2006. They have benefited from access to thousands of lower-value contracts published by a broad range of public sector buyers, from central and local government, health and education amongst others.

A series of regional roadshows, aimed at explaining the benefits of Supply2.gov.uk and gathering feedback from buyers and suppliers, was conducted in autumn 2006. The regional roadshows were so successful that a further series is planned for 2007.

Gordon McRury, Brand Manager for Supply2.gov.uk, said: "The success of Supply2.gov.uk can be seen by the number of suppliers registering for access to the service. To achieve this level of registration in less than six months since the service was launched suggests



that the demand for public sector business, particularly amongst small and medium-sized enterprises, is huge."

The Supply2.gov.uk service has been recognised by the European Commission as a best practice means of public sector organisations advertising lower-value contracts to businesses. Supply2.gov.uk helps ensure your compliance with the principles of the EC Treaty in this area, and, best of all, it is free for buyers to use. If you have not yet registered for access to the service, go to: www.supply2.gov.uk.

Getting ready for success



NATIONAL PUBLIC Procurement Practitioners Day (N3PD), organised by BiP Solutions, is now firmly established as one of the most important events in the public procurement market. Celebrating the work of those who strive for excellence and achievement within public procurement has become even more important, as the demands in this area continue to increase.

N3PD 2006 was a huge success, with a strong speaker line-up including European Commissioner Charlie McCreevy, and then Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry, Sir Digby Jones.

N3PD 2007 promises to be another fantastic event. The date has been confirmed as 6 June 2007, and the venue will be the Institution of Civil Engineers at One Great George Street in London.

A number of major procurement organisations have already confirmed their support, and the first speaker to be confirmed is Sir

Michael Lyons, Professor of Public Policy at Birmingham University. Sir Michael is probably best known for his current review of local government finance and structures.

The *Government Opportunities (GO)* magazine Excellence in Public Procurement Awards will also be presented at N3PD 2007. The GO Awards are becoming the most coveted awards within public procurement, and every year the number and quality of entries increases.

Further information on N3PD 2007, and the GO Awards, is available from the N3PD website at: www.n3pd.com We look forward to seeing you on 6 June 2007.

Seeing the future

FOLLOWING THE success of the Bill Clinton address at the Royal Albert Hall in London in September, BiP Solutions is now bringing another two political heavyweights to the UK.

Al Gore, the 45th Vice President of the United States of America, and Hans Blix, Chairman of the International Commission on Weapons of Mass Destruction, will be addressing delegates at a business networking lunch and debate, to be held at the Hilton Hotel in Glasgow on 16 January 2007.

The theme of the discussion and debate is 'What our future holds – major issues affecting our world'. Given the insight, experience and knowledge of the speakers, this is sure to be a

Top Tip

AVOIDING LITIGATION



Procurement Dispute Resolution Service

CONTRACT DISPUTES can be time-consuming, expensive and damaging to relationships.

Indeed the Courts recognise that full legal action should be a last, not first, resort and will often insist that the parties have first tried to settle a dispute using Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods. The most informal and inexpensive ADR method is usually mediation.

Mediation is quick, cheap and informal and the outcome still allows the parties to proceed to a more formal ADR process such as arbitration or to initiate court proceedings.

The European Union is pressing public authorities to adopt mediation as a preferred route for contract dispute resolution and has now included in its contract notice proformas fields for organisations to notify suppliers of their mediation process.

By adopting the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators' Procurement Dispute Resolution mediation service (PDRS), buyers can stipulate in their contract notices and contract terms that suppliers must first seek to settle disputes through PDRS. The adoption of this service will save the parties time and costs and be far less damaging to their business relationship than instigating court action.

For full details on PDRS visit: www.bipsolutions.com/pdrs or email: pass@bipsolutions.com Project users can, by using the global fields function, specify in their contract notices that PDRS will be used to settle disputes. There is no fee for registering to use this service.

thought-provoking and memorable event. The addresses will be followed by a question and answer session with both speakers.

Mr Gore, who served in President Clinton's administration from 1993 to 2001, has also become highly regarded for his stance on environmental issues, while Mr Blix, who was head of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission from 2000 to 2003, is best known for his role in the search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Tables for the event are still available. For further information telephone **041 429 3066** or visit: www.bipsolutions.com/events/whatourfutureholds/

BiP SOLUTIONS 2007 EVENTS LISTINGS

BiP's events calendar for 2007 promises to cover an even broader range of subjects than ever before, with a number of new events added. To find out more, or to book your place at one of these events, visit: www.bipsolutions.com/events

16 JANUARY

WHAT OUR FUTURE HOLDS

Hilton Hotel, Glasgow

JANUARY – MARCH

UNDERSTANDING EU PROCUREMENT – A SCOTTISH PERSPECTIVE

30 Jan Council Chambers, Inverness
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

London

MARCH – JUNE

PREPARING PERFECT TENDERS

1 Mar London 7 Jun Manchester
28 Mar Heathrow

MARCH – JUNE

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR COMMERCIAL INTERESTS WHEN TENDERING

6 Mar Birmingham 14 Jun London
29 Mar Heathrow

MARCH – JUNE

WINNING CONTRACTS – UNDERSTANDING ELECTRONIC TENDERING TECHNIQUES

7 Mar Birmingham 19 Jun London
18 Apr Heathrow

8 MARCH

SOPO SCOTLAND EVENT

EICC, Edinburgh

MARCH – JUNE

DELIVERING SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

13 Mar London 26 Jun London
26 Apr Birmingham

MARCH – MAY

PERFECTING COMPLIANT EVALUATION PROCESSES

14 Mar London 2 May London

15 MARCH

CBC CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION 2007: PROCUREMENT AND SHARED SERVICES

One Great George Street, London

MARCH – JUNE

APPLYING BEST PRACTICE CONTRACT AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

20 Mar Manchester 27 Jun London
3 May London

21 MARCH

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF NHS PROCUREMENT

ICO, London

MARCH – JUNE

INTRODUCING EFFECTIVE SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

21 Mar Glasgow 28 Jun London
8 May London

22 MARCH

SELLING TO DEFENCE

London

MARCH – MAY

MASTERING THE ART OF SUPPLIER NEGOTIATION

22 Mar Birmingham 15 May London
19 Apr 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 London 6 Jun London

APRIL – JUNE

SUPPLY2.GOV.UK ROADSHOW

19 Apr TBC 5 Jun TBC
9 May TBC 13 Jun TBC

APRIL – JUNE

A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING UK AND EU REGULATIONS

24 Apr Manchester 20 Jun London
9 May London

APRIL – JUNE

EFFECTIVE LEGAL COMPLIANCE IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

25 Apr Manchester 21 Jun London
22 May London

10 MAY

SELLING TO DEFENCE

Heathrow

MAY – JUNE

DISPUTE MANAGEMENT ROADSHOW

16 May TBC 12 Jun TBC
23 May TBC

24 MAY

LCSG CONFERENCE

Marriott Grosvenor Square, London

6 JUNE

NATIONAL PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PRACTITIONERS DAY 2007

One Great George Street, London

13 JUNE

SELLING TO THE NHS

Heathrow

26/27 JUNE

B2B LONDON

Earls Court, London



Season's greetings

BiP SOLUTIONS would like to wish all of its customers a happy festive period and a prosperous 2007, and to thank you for your custom during 2006.

During this period our office will close after 22 December and re-open on 27 December. For the New Year period, our office will close after 29 December and re-open on 2 January.

Should you have any queries, please contact our Customer Support Team at: support@bipsolutions.com



IN FEBRUARY'S ...



GOVERNMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- **GO Interview** – Sir Michael Lyons discusses the findings of his Lyons Inquiry Report
- **Garth Goddard**, North West Centre of Excellence Transport Programme Director, tells GO how local authorities could make individual savings of up to £1 million a year by changing the way they run their public transport operations
- **Jennifer Davis**, Divisional Manager, Public Sector at vehicle management specialist Automotive Leasing, explains how local authorities can make their fleet services more eco-friendly

NPS CONTACTS

Publisher



BiP Solutions Ltd

Park House, 300 Glasgow Road
Shawfield, Glasgow G73 1SQ

Tel: 0141 332 8247

Fax: 0141 331 2652/2792

Email: bip@bipsolutions.com

Website: www.bipsolutions.com

Editorial

media@bipsolutions.com

Marketing

marketing@bipsolutions.com

Customer Support

support@bipsolutions.com

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