

# Common Minimum Standards for the procurement of built environments

## OGC Information Note 7/2005

This Information Note is to draw attention to the electronic publication on the OGC Website of the Common Minimum Standards (CMS) for the procurement of built environments in the public sector, which are mandatory\* across the public sector (see background below).

### Action

Where a business case for a new programme or project includes a construction element, departments should ensure that this is undertaken with full reference to the CMS. Project team members including Investment Decision Makers, Senior Responsible Owners, Project Sponsors and Project Managers should take steps to understand and implement the CMS.

### Background

Ministers are committed to obtaining value for money through improvements to the procurement of built environments that provide facilities for the public sector. They are conscious that public sector procurers are subjected to a range of policy initiatives of differing levels of importance and considered it was essential to adopt a consistent benchmark to delivering value for money and to provide a coherent approach to the market.

To this end, OGC was asked to establish a group of cross-government senior policy officials (SOPG). The SOPG's objective was to identify and promulgate a set of key minimum procurement standards, which would improve the coherence and integration between the different policy agenda impacting in this area.

Ministers have now agreed the key minimum procurement standards, which are mandatory across central government, including departments, executive agencies and the non-departmental public bodies for which they are responsible. \*They will apply to any procurement of a built environment carried out in England for a public sector client, whether through a capital procurement, a private developer scheme or a Public Private Partnership/Private Finance Initiative (These standards will not apply to the

devolved authorities, nor to projects carried out overseas). Departments will be expected to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the standards are also adopted throughout the wider public sector, where responsibility for the expenditure of public funds has been devolved – such as to local authorities, health trusts and the police. OGC and ODPM will produce a specific version of these standards to reflect local authority practice and language.

These standards are not new and some are already mandatory.

It should be noted that the standards do not cover legislative requirements, which are in any event mandatory.

Compliance with these standards is considered to represent cost effectiveness, however their practical application by individual procurers should be considered on a project specific basis, within the context of practicality, achievability and value for money, defined as the optimum combination of whole life cost and quality to meet user requirements. Procurers will be expected to comply with these standards unless it can be clearly demonstrated that one or more of them fall outside the above criteria.

The standards have been assessed by policy making departments, key departments delivering programmes and projects with a significant construction phase, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister with the local government sector in mind and by industry-body representatives. Their comments have been taken into account. The consensus of the consultation confirmed that the standards are comprehensive, practical and achievable, as well as cost effective.

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Web links within the Standards allow simple reference to supporting detail and implementation guidance.

The first and 'General' Standard refers to adherence the OGC Achieving Excellence in Construction (AEC) initiative, which encompasses all the CMS within its best practice principles for managing and delivering construction projects. A direct link to the AEC guidance is available at: [www.ogc.gov.uk/sdtoolkit/reference/achieving/index.html](http://www.ogc.gov.uk/sdtoolkit/reference/achieving/index.html)

### Further Information

Access to the Common Minimum Standards for the procurement of built environments in the public sector is

available via the OGC Website at [www.ogc.gov.uk/embedded\\_object.asp?docid=1004283](http://www.ogc.gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?docid=1004283)

Any queries or requests for further information about the CMS should be directed in the first instance to the OGC Service Desk by telephoning 0845 000 4999 or by e-mail at [ServiceDesk@ogc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ServiceDesk@ogc.gsi.gov.uk)

### Departmental Policy

Recipients of this Information Note should also consult adequately within their departments to ensure that any action taken is at the appropriate delegation level and complies with their own departmental policy and procedures.