

Skills Stay at the Top of the Agenda

It seems that the language of procurement, once the preserve of the under-valued purchaser, has become the darling of the public sector. Speeches, papers, publications – everywhere you turn, it's value for money, risk management, fit for purpose and supply chains. Much of this recent visibility is down to the commitment and enthusiasm of Sir Andrew Turnbull. It has been an extraordinary advantage to have had such a champion of skills and professionalism at the highest level and this has really put procurement on the map. What cushions our regret as we say goodbye to him is the energy his successor brings to the same cause. Sir Gus O'Donnell has already stated his commitment to a professional Civil Service and has also emphasised his determination to inject even more pace and passion into the reform programme. So hold on to your hats!

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Stand and Be Counted

The *Alcatel* case has been familiar to public sector purchasers for far too long. However, the uncertainty caused throughout its long history of consultations and protracted negotiations, has now been finally resolved.

With immediate effect, all procurements subject to the EU Directives must include a standstill period of at least 10 days between informing the tenderers about the award decision and concluding the contract. Procurements which do not introduce this measure could be challenged in Court (there have been a few challenges already).

Procurement Policy Action note 02/05 of 3 June 2005, *Application of the Alcatel mandatory standstill period in the UK*, explains that the standstill period gives unsuccessful tenderers a reasonable opportunity to object to the award decision. If successful, the objection could lead to the award decision being overturned. Formal introduction into UK law will follow a public consultation on the new rules. This exercise is expected shortly. For the full text of the note and any further enquiries, contact: Stephane Reynolds on 020 7271 1469 or stephane.reynolds@ogc.gsi.gov.uk

[For a summary of the main points click here](#)

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Carry On Measuring

OGC is asking departments to continue to provide construction procurement performance data.

In January 2003, Ministers accepted that departments would monitor progress of construction projects performance against the Achieving Excellence in Construction Strategic Targets. OGC will report on departments' progress later this year, but early indications of improvements have already been revealed in the recent NAO Report *Improving Public Services through better construction*. OGC is considering how to enhance the construction project performance measures so that they will:

- demonstrate the effect of embedded good practice
- identify continuous improvement
- highlight exemplars of best practice
- enable procurers to benchmark their relative performance
- enable departments to identify strengths and weaknesses, and to develop improvement/change programmes.

Meanwhile, to consolidate the current improvements and to maintain momentum, OGC is asking departments to continue to provide construction procurement performance data on a six-monthly basis until the enhancements are developed. This will enable organisations to continue to benchmark against government-wide performance, as well as construction procurers to monitor whether progress is being maintained. OGC will continue to use the key project performance indicators from OGC Information Note 3/2004:

http://www.ogc.gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?docid=1001712.



Key Project Performance Indicators

- project delivery to time, within budget, to exceed customer and stakeholder expectations, and defect free
- improvements in procurement time periods
- Supplier Safety performance measurement requirements.

Construction Project Sponsors and Project Managers are asked to note this requirement to continue submitting performance data. Information should be sent to OGC through Centres of Excellence by 30 November 2005 and 31 May 2006 to cover the six-month periods ending 30 September and 31 March respectively. As the NAO report has demonstrated, this data will provide evidence of improvement that can then be extrapolated to show the level of savings across government. An OGC Information Note will be published shortly.

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Upwards and Onwards - Gateway Reviews break the 1000 barrier

Something of a landmark was passed recently when the 1000th OGC Gateway Review was completed.

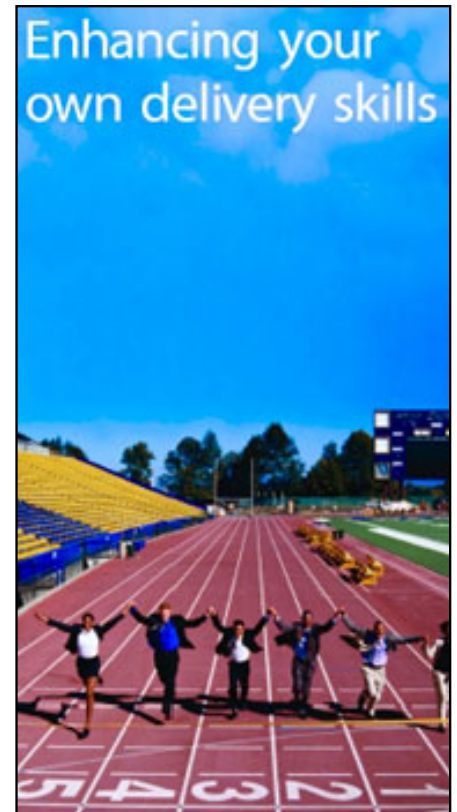
The Warwickshire Criminal Justice Centre was the latest in a long line of beneficiaries of one of OGC's most successful products. This unique new Justice Centre in Nuneaton will be the first of its type in the country, and will integrate the region's criminal justice functions in a new "joined-up" working environment. It is a joint initiative between the Home Office and a large number of agencies and organisations including the voluntary sector. In particular, it is a good example of a project that has been through the entire Gateway process from Gate 0 to Gate 4.

To celebrate this achievement, together with the Departmental Gateway Co-ordinators from across central government, Ian Glenday organised a lunch at Trevelyan House for all those involved in the Gateway process. John Oughton made a speech of congratulation and stressed how important the Gateway process was to departments, and there was even a 'Gateway 1000' cake that was ceremonially cut by Sheina Donaldson, one of the founder members of the Gateway success...and then unceremonially demolished!

For those still in the dark about the Gateway process, it is a tool used to examine a programme or project at critical stages in its lifecycle to provide assurance that it can progress successfully to the next stage. Let's hope that the Gateway brand can progress similarly and that we are celebrating 2000 Gateway Reviews in only a few years time!

For further information visit <http://www.ogc.gov.uk/index.asp?id=377>.

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New deal with Microsoft

The savings generated by the groundbreaking deal made with Microsoft three years ago, are set to continue.

One million licences and £84m savings later, a new agreement will continue, for another three years, the arrangement whereby Microsoft desktop software is discounted to the public sector. There will also be significant additional savings for the taxpayer through staff efficiency and productivity gains. The OGC agreement with Microsoft applies to all public sector purchases of Microsoft desktop software, regardless of procurement route.

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In-Depth

Small but eEffective

Tough decisions have had to be made in the light of the extended remit of OGC. As a small organisation, with no additional resources, reorganisation of its activities has been essential. The eProcurement area has been no exception. Paul Howard, Head of the newly-named Cross Sector eProcurement Team (CSePT), talks to *GCforum* about the recent changes in responsibilities.



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Benchmarking – Old Word, New Importance

Despite never having a particularly high profile in the UK, benchmarking is now set to form a significant part of the public sector landscape, as its principles go to the very heart of the efficiency agenda. Philip Cunliffe spoke to Ken Watling, Head of the Public Sector Benchmarking Service, to chart the history and success of the PSBS and to assess the impact it will make over the coming months and years.

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People and Events

National Public Procurement Practitioners Day

It is not often that the successes of those working within procurement are publicly recognised. The **Government Opportunities (GO) Excellence in Public Procurement Awards** certainly fill this gap.

Presented during National Public Procurement Practitioners Day (N3PD), held on 7 June, the awards and conference attracted over 140 delegates to One Great George Street in London. BiP Solutions, who organised the event, had lined up high-profile speakers (see right) and also managed to raise over £5000 for the British Heart Foundation, which was presented to the charity's representative Maureen Betts by BiP Solutions' Managing Director Ron Burges. The highlight of the day was the presentation of the Awards which included three new categories this year.

Grahame Steed, Managing Editor of *GO*, said that the judging had been a challenge: *"The quality and quantity of submissions this year were consistently outstanding. It is encouraging that there has been a strong response to the entirely new categories, added to widen the scope of accolades and better represent the excellent work that has been achieved."*

John Oughton, Chief Executive of OGC, outlined how £7bn of procurement savings targeted in the Efficiency Review could be met. He also talked of fostering ever closer working ties, urging delegates to *"encourage competition in the market while avoiding competition with one another."*

From Europe, **Philippe Lebaube, Head of Multimedia at OPOCE**, responsible for SIMAP and TED, urged delegates to think carefully about the information they submit to the *OJEU*, so that it would be effective in attracting good bids.

Bernard Longhi, Chairman, UN/CEFACT TBG6, outlined how his organisation, working under the auspices of the United Nations, is helping to standardise e-procurement across the globe, and in particular he thanked BiP Solutions for its help towards this goal.

Allan Connarty, Director of Operations for the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CI Arb), highlighted the benefits of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) over costly litigation.

Individual Award for Public Procurement Excellence

Alan Ratcliffe, Head of Procurement at Northumberland County Council, for his professionalism, leadership, proactive management, determination and hard work to deliver outstanding results.

Team Award for Public Procurement Excellence

The Audiology Team, NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency, for delivering a 86% reduction on the cost of digital hearing aids available on the NHS. Braintree District Council Central Purchasing Team and Wiltshire County Council Department of Adult and Community Services Contracts Team were highly commended.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Duncan Eaton, Chief Executive of NHS PASA, for a career devoted to increasing the professionalism of procurement in the NHS.

Greatest Procurement Contribution to the Environment, Social and Sustainability Agenda

Leeds Metropolitan University for the proactive approach over ten years towards making their procurements greener and more focussed on social issues. Cornwall Healthcare Estates and Support Service was highly commended.

Greatest Contribution to the e-Government Agenda

Vehicle Operator Services Agency for turning its service into a world leader in innovation. Leeds Teaching Hospital's Supplies Department was highly commended.

Best Service Award

BT for delivering the highly-ambitious £3bn Defence Fixed Telecommunications System for MOD. Owen Williams Consultants was highly commended.

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School's In for Summer



National School of Government

The logo for the Cabinet Office, consisting of a horizontal bar divided into four segments of varying shades of orange and yellow, with the text "CabinetOffice" in white on the rightmost, darkest segment.

CabinetOffice

The Civil Service College is dead. Long live the Civil Service College. The National School of Government is the latest in a series of transformations designed to keep up with the bewildering array of changes in culture, attitudes and expectations of and for today's public servants.

The Prime Minister is quoted as saying: *"The National School of Government will help deliver 'high quality development' for current and future public sector leaders. It has been set up to provide core skills training and professional development that can be aligned to the requirements of the Government of the day."*

Cabinet Secretary Sir Andrew Turnbull, who has championed the mainstreaming of skills and professionalism, launched the new School, which, not surprisingly, will be based at Sunningdale Park and in London.

The School is fortunate to have attracted high quality leadership. Jane Grant joins them in July from her role as Director of Skills at OGC (an unfortunate loss for OGC). She will bridge any gaps between the School's products and services and clients' priorities. For further information, see: <http://www.nationalschool.gov.uk/>

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Looking Good

OGC's new website design is proving popular. <http://www.ogc.gov.uk/>

There has been lots of unsolicited (honestly), positive feedback not only from OGC's regular visitors but also from the American version of OGC. The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) has been very complimentary about the design. In particular, their web designers, who have been watching its development rather more closely than you might expect, were impressed with the improved navigation and structure. This American interest is part of a strengthening of a cross-Atlantic knowledge exchange which has recently brought Sally Mayberry, a Senior Marketing/Communications Specialist, into OGC on secondment.

You should also be pleased to hear that much of the hard work has been carried out in-house using the existing technology. There was an external review at the outset, to provide an unbiased expert opinion of what should be improved, then it was over to OGC with a bit of help from their friends in COI. Andy Norman gets the prize title of *Design Supremo* and Paola Malvisi gets the *New Pair of Glasses* award for reviewing over 1000 web pages – rather her than me – and putting them into a logical structure. The result of all this in-house talent and effort has been a value for money triumph.

You asked for the redesign, so go and look at it! The change is visible right on the front page, but dive in deeper and you will find that it is much easier to find your way around. If you don't, then complain to OGC straight away! As always with things such as websites, it is a work in progress and Marcus Bennett, OGC's head of customer communication who led the work, is encouraging you to give OGC your ideas for future development. There is even talk of a completely new website in the next year or so. If you want to get your great ideas built into it, start typing and send them to: servicedesk@ogc.gsi.gov.uk or phone: 0845 000 4999.

OGC - Home - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address <http://www.ogc.gov.uk/>

OGC
Office of Government Commerce

Contact us T: 0845 000 4999 E: ServiceDesk@ogc.gsi.gov.uk

Home | Efficiency | Procurement | Programmes & Projects | Policy

Home

OGC introduces new website design

Office of Government Commerce

OGC works with public sector organisations to help them improve their efficiency, gain better value for money from their commercial activities and deliver improved success from programmes and projects. Our priorities are to support the delivery of:

- the public sector's £21.5bn annual efficiency gains by 2007/08
- £3bn saving by 2007/08 in central Government procurement
- improvement in the success rate of mission critical projects.

Efficiency
OGC supports the public sector achieve the Government's target of £21.5bn a year gains

- Efficiency Frequently Asked Questions
- Efficiency Programme
- Government Relocation Portal

Procurement
OGC supports the public sector in improving procurement and commercial activities

- eProcurement
- Key Suppliers
- Encouraging Competition
- Supplier Management

Programmes & Projects
Improved project skills will enhance the quality of public projects

- OGC Gateway Process
- OGC Consultancy
- Centres of Excellence
- Achieving Excellence

Satellite Sites

OGCbuying.solutions
An Executive Agency of the OGC in the Treasury.

Toolkit
Brings together policy and best practice in a single point of reference

Shortcuts...
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Publications

Make Your Views Known

OGC has launched a consultation on the draft regulations implementing the new EU public sector and utilities procurement directives.

The new EU public procurement directives aim to simplify, clarify and modernise the current EU legal framework for public procurement. They have been updated to take account of modern practices such as e-procurement and framework agreements, and they clarify the scope to take environmental and social factors into account in the procurement process.

In 2004, OGC consulted on the approach to take in implementing these directives. The current consultation seeks views on the draft regulations themselves. The consultation will run until 12 September 2005 and responses are welcome from all interested parties. The consultation documents are available at: <http://www.ogc.gov.uk/index.asp?docid=1003745>

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Commit to Safe Construction

Public sector construction clients are urged to demonstrate their commitment to health and safety in the industry by signing up, and adhering to, the Strategic Forum's Respect for People Code of Good Working Health & Safety Practices that was published to coincide with the Health and Safety Executive's Construction Health and Safety Summit held earlier this year.

Respect for People: Health and Safety Vision

People working in partnership, demonstrating respect for the safety and health of others by their everyday actions to create a world-class industry with exemplary working conditions.

The Code contains:



- a list of key actions for stakeholders
- advice on implementing the Code
- advice on 'Leading Issues' that should be addressed.

The Code can help construction clients to deliver higher standards of health and safety by demanding the highest standards from contractors and suppliers and making these demands explicit through specification, evaluation and engagement. This is a 'win win' initiative – the supply side reaps the benefit of a trained workforce, working on safe sites and gains real business benefits from higher productivity that, in turn, benefits the client.



So, visit the [RfP page on the HSE web site](#) and take a couple of minutes to demonstrate your support for the Code, which encourages partnership, safe, healthy working conditions for everyone, respect for the communities we work in, a healthy image for the construction industry to attract and retain committed and skilled people and promotes competence.

Public sector clients' performance in respect of construction health and safety is a key concern and the procurement best practice principles are addressed comprehensively in the OGC's [Achieving Excellence in Construction Procurement Guide 10 – Health and Safety](#). OGC was party to drafting the Code.

Public sector construction clients have the power to make a real difference. Sign up to the RfP Code today!
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Beyond Aesthetics

This year's shortlist for the Prime Minister's Better Public Building Award has been announced.

PRIME MINISTER'S AWARD 2005

**BETTER
PUBLIC
BUILDING**

The projects included are as diverse as flood defence, roads, railways, schools, hospitals, the new Home Office headquarters (below left) and the second phase of GOGGS (below right).

In the foreword to the shortlist brochure, Richard Simmons (Chief Executive, CABE) and John Oughton (Chief Executive, OGC) say:



"This diversity is indicative of the unique nature of the Prime Minister's Better Public Building Award, which looks beyond aesthetics to how design and procurement of construction projects can improve the delivery of public services and have a real positive impact on the lives of the communities they serve."

"The UK is in the middle of the largest public sector building programme for a generation. We



urge all those involved with this programme to build on the success that has been celebrated over five years of this award, and we look forward to the day when all public buildings are designed and built to the same high standards."

The brochure is available at: <http://www.cabe.org.uk/data/pdfs/PMsawards05.pdf>

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Having Designs on the Office

The impact of office design on business performance, the latest report from CABE, looks at the relationship between the design of the workplace and business performance and explores how design factors might make office environments more productive. <http://www.cabe.org.uk/data/pdfs/OfficeDesign.pdf>

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And How Was It For You?

Last year, Sir Andrew Turnbull set in train, a Civil Service Reform programme which would modernise all aspects of public sector life. Some of the key issues it addressed were training and skills, linking up with the wider public sector, strategic thinking, efficiency and making the best use of technology.

Delivery and Values: One year on gives the facts and figures behind the progress made towards implementing the programme in the last year. Sir Andrew said that the report: *"demonstrates how, through better business processes, greater professionalism and stronger leadership and corporate services we are contributing to the real improvements people are seeing in public services"*. The report is available at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/improving_services/delivery_and_reform/delivery_and_values/index.asp

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New Public Procurement Network guidance

The Public Procurement Network guidance for suppliers experiencing problems with public procurements in other European countries is available at: http://www.ogc.gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?docid=1003815

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If you have any comments or would like to contribute to *GC forum*, please contact the editor on: phone 01689 838104 or christine.barnicoat@btinternet.com

The Editorial Board Members are: Bryan Avery, Chair (OGC), Nic Hopkins (OGC), John Kitching (British Library), Sandy Flatman (The National Archives), Marcus Bennett (OGC), Duncan Slaughter (OGC), Jean Cross (OGC), Philip Cunliffe, Deputy Editor and Christine Barnicoat, Editor.

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Small but eEffective

Tough decisions have had to be made in the light of the extended remit of OGC. As a small organisation, with no additional resources, reorganisation of its activities has been essential. The eProcurement area has been no exception. Paul Howard, Head of the newly-named Cross Sector eProcurement Team (CSePT), talks to *GCforum* about the recent changes in responsibilities.



The Efficiency Programme is arguably the driving force behind all OGC's activities and, as such, the various work strands have been realigned to help deliver its considerable challenges. Paul explains:

*“eProcurement is an important contributor to efficiency gains. The delivery elements of the eProcurement strategy, such as the Government Procurement Card, eAuctions and eSourcing are now being handled by OGCBuying.solutions. And when the Purchase to Pay Marketplace, **Zanzibar**, is established as an OGCBuying.solutions Framework Agreement, the full toolkit, as envisaged at the outset of the strategy, will be in place.*”

“This allows OGC to concentrate on policy and embedding the use of eProcurement. eProcurement Policy is now dealt with by the Policy unit and CSePT is taking the lead in promoting the use of eProcurement across the wider public sector.”

The aim of **Zanzibar** is to create a streamlined, cost-effective Purchase to Pay Marketplace which provides a single point of access for buyers and suppliers. It is hoped that this low-cost solution will stimulate collaboration and encourage take-up of eProcurement, even in smaller public sector bodies.

<http://www.ogcbuyingsolutions.gov.uk/zanzibar/zanzibar.asp>

Zanzibar is not a sourcing tool. For sourcing and contract management solutions, see :

www.ogcbuyingsolutions.gov.uk/esourcing/esourcing.asp



CSePT is a small team - Paul Howard, Michael Hofman, Sector Team Leader, and the final post is yet to filled - with a big job. Encouraging the take-up of eProcurement across the wider public sector means that they don't expect to be in the office much. Paul says:

"We need to be out there delivering messages and offering help. The cross-sector approach has a fast-developing network, especially in local government, and we want to take advantage of that. By working with and through representative and collaborative organisations, such as the regional Centres of Excellence, we avoid duplication of effort and confusion and also reap the mutual benefits of shared knowledge and experience. The aim is to augment not reinvent.

"Ideally, we would like to replicate this across other sectors – education, police and the NHS – co-operating with the leading organisations which are respected within their own sectors. Collaboration is the name of the game."

One of the most successful tools developed by OGC is the eProcurement Assessment Tool – ePAT. It has been exported across the world, most recently to Costa Rica. It provides a generic, easy-to-use, measurement solution which has sufficient flexibility to fit with the needs of different organisations. There are now plans to take it one step further as Paul explains:

"We intend to migrate this very successful product to a website. This will allow us to build in a wider and even more useful set of options and enable easier access to the product for our customers. It will, for example, be useful for calculating efficiency gains from eProcurement activities. There would also be room to badge the tool so that it fits within an organisation's own suite of management tools.

ePAT is a Microsoft Excel-based questionnaire that has been developed to provide the data required to establish a baseline of the current status of eProcurement. The data helps in assessing the potential savings and also provides recipients with a readiness (to adopt eProcurement) rating for their organisation.

"We are putting together a mock-up which should be ready shortly. We will then be asking our contacts across government to give us some feedback – with sufficient buy-in we would hope to have a useable version later this year."

Blue Frog 2 **eProcurement in Action Spring 2005**



The Blue Frog has been familiar since the publication, in 2002, of OGC's 'how-to' guide to eProcurement - *eProcurement: Cutting through the hype*. This follow-up takes account of the Efficiency Review, the extension of OGC's influence into the wider public sector and the fast-moving and dynamic nature of eProcurement. As it says in the introduction: *"In short, 'Blue Frog' needed updating – 'Blue Frog Two' was spawned."*

It is available at: <http://www.ogc.gov.uk/index.asp?id=2314>

Finally, the wonderful froggy illustrations used here are courtesy of the latest version of eProcurement in Action.

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Or visit:

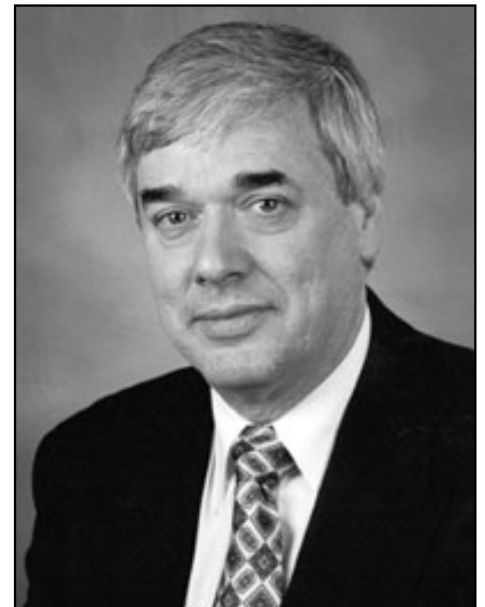
<http://www.ogc.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1002823>

Benchmarking – Old Word, New Importance

Despite never having a particularly high profile in the UK, benchmarking is now set to form a significant part of the public sector landscape, as its principles go to the very heart of the efficiency agenda. Philip Cunliffe spoke to Ken Watling, Head of the Public Sector Benchmarking Service, to chart the history and success of the PSBS and to assess the impact it will make over the coming months and years.

History

Prior to 1992, there was little focus on benchmarking in the public sector. However, more emphasis was apparent with the publication of the White Paper *Competing for Quality*, and even more so with the 1994 White Paper *Continuity and Change*. The latter not only consolidated the marketplace but also encouraged other methodologies, including benchmarking. At that time Ken Watling (right) was head of HM Customs & Excise's Efficiency and Private Finance Unit, who realised this was a new opportunity for change within the department. From this, the Unit developed a system called Hybrid Benchmarking, allied to Market Testing and to the departmental Efficiency reviews, which provided an audit trail for VFM testing. The idea was that, if in-house providers did not provide value for money (following external comparisons), then the work could be outsourced. *"We found that through using comparators – whether looking at metric-type or process comparisons – we uncovered ways of improving performance, and sometimes very quickly,"* he says.



The use by HMCE of this unique Hybrid Benchmarking and other benchmarking techniques was reinforced by the publication, in 1998, of the *Modernising Government* White Paper, which specifically endorsed the use of benchmarking as a legitimate means of improving performance in the public services. The central reform agenda also endorsed the use of benchmarking techniques with Ian McCartney, then Minister of State in the Cabinet Office, announcing in February 2000 that a central focal point should be created to help government departments share knowledge and learn from best practice. Out of this the formation of the Public Sector Benchmarking Service (with Ken as its Head) was a natural progression and it was launched in February 2001. Membership (free to all public sector employees, including those from local authorities, the emergency services and the NHS) quickly expanded and has been continually growing since – membership now stands at well over 13,000.



Learning through Sharing

“Learning through Sharing” is the PSBS’ motto and is a key phrase of the organisation, as PSBS aims to tap into the formal and informal networks in both the public and the private sectors in the UK and abroad - PSBS uses, for example, networks such as the Global Benchmarking Network to help identify and disseminate good practices. PSBS is a navigating tool to find good practices in the public services, as Ken Watling explains: *“Benchmarking is one of the tools for successful knowledge transfer. In procurement, for example, PSBS receives enquiries on very specific topics which we pass on to our OGC members to initiate the reply process. Interestingly, we receive enquiries on various matters from OGC itself!”*

Ken believes that benchmarking is a component of the integrated, multi-faceted knowledge exchange system for the public sector provided by PSBS for its members. Among the products which PSBS offers are:

- a good practice database
- search facilities
- knowledge banks of information
- public and private sector discussion forums, helping create communities of practice and interest groups, with over 100 live discussions currently taking place
- a storage and retrieval document system
- a news feed of information on performance improvement topics, updated daily
- a Benchmark Healthcheck allowing members to benchmark subjects such as management/ staff ratios, absenteeism rates, recruitment and retention etc, and also facilitates comparisons on subjects such as leadership and customer satisfaction levels with validated information
- an online (and telephonic) helpdesk/enquiry unit undertakes research and navigates customers to best practices.

The breadth of subject areas that PSBS is also very significant. *“We go from the top-end policy and strategy area, through the generic areas, to the very specific. For example, we have worked on asylum issues (policy), diversity issues (generic) and uniform issues (specific).”*

Ken Watling sums all this up by claiming that *“the PSBS has made it possible for public servants everywhere to exchange knowledge and to connect with ‘best in class’, irrespective of distance and location. PSBS users can find a wealth of information and guidance on implementing good practice and using benchmarking and other tools to reform public services and to navigate their way to additional sources of online information.”*

Benchmarking for Efficiency

Ken is convinced that the PSBS can assist in the Efficiency Programme by making available, and transferring, knowledge to the whole of the public sector community. And this leads to actual, tangible savings being accrued. An independent impact assessment, published earlier this year, identified notional savings of at least £25 million per annum for the public sector have arisen from PSBS products and services. The assessment stated that *“the PSBS has given rise to a wealth of benefits that far exceed costs. Every pound of annual running costs is now delivering at least an estimated £41.79 of benefits.”* (Source: *“Public Sector Benchmarking Service – Impact Assessment 2001-2004”*, D. Winfield BSc, Daedalus Consulting, December, 2004, page vii).

For the PSBS, success has bred success. It highlights how knowledge management can work for the good, not just of the sponsoring organisation, but for all participants and their customers and, ultimately, the UK public sector as a whole. As Ken Watling says: *“With advances in technology, the transfer of knowledge can only increase, and on a global basis. In order to be useful in improving public services and therefore to the public at large, we need to constantly adapt to new ways of access and dissemination, in controlled environments.”*

Membership of the PSBS is free to all in the public services – in the UK and abroad. To find out more about the PSBS or to register go to www.benchmarking.gov.uk or phone 020 8929 6887.



Summary of main points:

A minimum 10 days mandatory standstill period between communicating the award decision to all tenderers and contract conclusion.

The mandatory standstill period does not apply:

- to below threshold procurements
- to procurements outside the full scope of the procurement directives
- where single tendering takes place under the urgency provision of the negotiated procedure.

Notification of the contracting authority's award decision must contain:

- award criteria
- where appropriate, the tenderer's score
- where appropriate, the winning tenderer's score
- the name of the winning tenderer.

New debriefing rules include:

- providing additional debriefing within the standstill if requested by the end of the second working day of the standstill period
- allowing three working days between this debriefing and end of the standstill.

The standstill to be:

- extended if necessary, eg, around public holidays
- started the day after the award decision is issued and must end on a working day.

If there is a legal challenge, authorities should wait to see if interim measures are granted before proceeding.

If interim measures are granted, they should wait until the outcome of legal proceedings before concluding the contract.