

Keeping up the Momentum

After the hype and intensity of launching a new initiative, there often follows the hard work of implementation. Without the headline-grabbing publicity and high-level interest, it can be difficult to keep others informed of how much progress is being made behind the scenes. This edition of *GC forum* highlights the extent of progress in a number of initiatives which have been blessed (or cursed) with a high profile start. Zanzibar, for example, is of enormous interest to the whole of the public sector and our article *The Door to Government Procurement* sets out progress made to date and also the aims for the programme.

The government commercial community has initiated a number of similar projects and programmes but there has also been a huge impact on day-to-day activity from other sources. Our top two news items illustrate perfectly how reviews and reports involve the skills and efforts of the entire community. Of course, all of this activity benefits from a consistent approach across government, so we have two excellent, recently published pieces of guidance and a more in-depth look at the Decision Mapping published late last year.

News	In-Depth	People and Events
Fast-tracking Procurement Page 2	Sustainable Construction Procurement – Moving Forward Page 4 Page 7	Sudan Unit wins award Page 4
Moving On with Moving Out Page 2	Green Light for Strategic Supplier Management Page 4 Page 8	Future Events Page 5
Better Places by Design Page 3	Decision Mapping Page 4 Page 10	
GPC – One Year On Page 3	The Door to Government Procurement Page 4 Page 12	
		Publications
		Capturing Innovation
		Aggregation – is bigger always better?
		Standardisation of PFI Contracts Page 5

Fast-tracking Procurement

Progress has already been made in speeding up major procurements. Following last December's joint OGC/Cabinet Office report *Making a Difference – Reducing Bureaucracy in Central Civil Government Procurement*, a 10% improvement has been measured in the time spent on major procurements which take over 12 months from OJEU advert to award. Also, as part of its work with departments, OGC will be carrying out a study to investigate any changes that can be made to the procurement process.



The aim of the joint report was to tackle unnecessary bureaucracy in the procurement process, which often leads to delay and additional cost. This is an area of particular concern for suppliers, who incur significant bid costs in lengthy procurements and it is expected that greater competition and increased value for money will follow from shortened timescales. Based on interviews with 56 public and private sector stakeholders, the report outlined a programme of actions designed to reduce bureaucracy. Five key areas were identified and specific actions have been put into place for each area:

- Speeding up the procurement process and reducing costs
- Improving leadership and client capability
- Improving communication with the market and in government
- Focusing on successful project outcomes
- Achieving more consistent use of best practice.

Specific actions fall upon departments in the areas of faster procurement, the use of external consultants, embedding best practice and early engagement with suppliers and OGC is assisting them in their plans to tackle those issues. The regular progress reports made by OGC to the Regulatory Impact Unit in the Cabinet Office, are co-ordinated by Stephen Tokley in OGC's Faster Procurement team who would be happy to help with any queries.

mailto:Stephen.tokley@ogc.gsi.gov.uk

For the full report go to: <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/PublicSector/reports.htm>
[top](#)

Moving On with Moving Out

The last edition of *GC forum* highlighted the outcome of the Lyons Review of Public Sector relocation. Since the publication of that review, the Budget and the trailed conclusions arising from the Gershon Efficiency Review have highlighted further efficiency measures deemed feasible in terms of post reductions across central civil government. The Lyons Review identified 20,000 posts for relocation away from London and the South East and, with the ongoing Gershon Efficiency Review likely to identify many more post savings through efficiency gains, this is a turbulent time for the Civil Service.

As well as the huge Human Resource implications, the changes in the way public services are delivered will have a big property impact. After salary costs, accommodation is the second biggest drain on departmental administration budgets. Changes of the magnitude currently being explored will necessarily reduce the amount of space departments require to undertake their functions, but leased accommodation is not always easy to dispose of. OGC is therefore reviewing its current Property Co-ordination role to ensure that it is able to support the expected activity in workspace acquisition, disposal and transfer, and can help departments' locational decision making process. OGC is providing input to both the Government's responses to the Lyons Review and the Efficiency Review. In addition, OGC is developing frameworks to support a flexible approach to workspace sharing.

Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) are gearing themselves towards receiving a welcome influx of public sector

employment activity with its knock-on effect in terms of economic regeneration. At the recent Public Sector Relocation Summit, held at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre on the 11th May, Sir Michael Lyons encouraged the RDAs to consider their unique selling points and to concentrate on these factors in their bids to woo central government departments. [top](#)

Better Places by Design

Design coding could be the answer to speeding up the delivery of new homes and buildings without shirking on good design, announced Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott when launching the first wave of pilot projects that will trial design coding. This is part of the Government's response to the recent reviews by Kate Barker and Sir John Egan. The pilots will test whether coding can accelerate the delivery of better quality places with the sort of well-built, well-designed homes that communities are so keen to see. Developing the code will be a collaborative process, and local people will have the chance to work closely with other stakeholders in open design workshops held within the community. The pilots are working with the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and English Partnerships (EP) to help ensure a high quality finish. The full details of the pilot projects are available on the [ODPM Website](#)
[top](#)

GPC – One Year On

Use of the Government Procurement Card has increased by an impressive 52%. More than 110 new programmes have gone live and the number of cards has increased to more than 50,000. More customers are building Business Cases to start a programme or making plans to migrate their current card schemes over to take advantage of benefits such as access to dedicated contract managers and legal expertise, access to User Groups and Knowledge Forums, and best practice and implementation guides. All free of charge.

This is all excellent news for the 5-year contract, commenced in February 2003, which extended the agreement to allow the whole of the public sector to take advantage of these benefits. Broadening its appeal has its own challenges and the recent appointment of Jim Parkinson as Head of Payment Cards will help meet these challenges.

Spend under the new agreement has also continued to grow - £409m in the first 14 months, which is almost the same amount as the entire first contract. This means that a cumulative spend of £835m has gone through the GPC since its inception in 1997. The same trend is shown for the £65m savings the new contract has delivered - a cumulative savings total of £145m using the £28 saving per transaction figure. For the taxpayer this is obviously very important – it is all about making best use of the taxpayers' money and, of course we are all taxpayers. In short, this means we are seeing phenomenal growth and we are keen to sustain this over the coming years.

The contract is managed by [OGCbuying.solutions](#) and for further information, contact John Malone on 0151 672 2246 or visit <http://www.ogcbuyingsolutions.gov.uk/>
[top](#)

Sustainable Construction Procurement – Moving Forward

Buildings and the way they operate have a fundamental impact on the way we live and work, on the journeys we make and on the environment we live in. Therefore, decisions made during all stages of the construction procurement process are vital in maximising the sustainability of the world in which we live. This is particularly true in the very early stages, whether for new buildings, or in the repair, maintenance and refurbishment of existing buildings. [Page 7 top](#)

Green Light for Strategic Supplier Management

An action plan for improving supplier relations has been given the go-ahead by the OGC Supervisory Board. Permanent Secretaries, on behalf of their departments, have committed to the new proposals which take forward Key Priority 3: 'Improve the Government's ability to manage supplier relationships'. [Page 8 top](#)

Decision Mapping

The Decision Map guidance for Project Strategy and Procurement was published on the OGC website on 12 December 2003. This article explains with diagrams and a Q&A section how to get the best from the guidance. [Page 10 top](#)

The Door to Government Procurement

OGC and OGCBuying.solutions have commenced the procurement for an electronic Purchase to Pay Marketplace. Following the approval of the eHub Feasibility Study in November 2003, project 'Zanzibar' was designed to provide a single point of access for government and its suppliers. Reduced transactional costs, lower cost of goods and services, wider access to and increased compliance with pre-negotiated contracts, and greater use of collaborative procurement, are all benefits expected to flow from its use. [Page 12 top](#)

People and Events

Sudan Unit wins award



The cross-Whitehall Sudan Unit, made up of a team of officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department for International Development (DfID), celebrated its success after winning the Central Government category of the Public Servant of the Year Awards on 11 May at the Grosvenor Hotel in London.

Chris Mullin, FCO Minister for Africa, said: *"I am delighted that the Sudan Unit's work has been recognised in this way. It is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of all the officials both from the FCO and DfID. Without their patient and often unseen efforts we would not be as close to peace in Sudan as we are today."*

The Public Servant of the Year Awards honour exceptional teams and individuals working in the UK's public services. They are run in partnership with the Office of Government Commerce, the Cabinet Office and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and are supported by the Prime Minister. The Team Awards aim to reward teams that have worked together to achieve a common goal. The Sudan Unit is regarded as joined-up government at its best, and the work of the team is admired by governments throughout the world. The FCO/DfID Unit won against tough competition from the Bullring Recruitment Project, Jobcentre Plus in Birmingham and the DCV Training Team,

Future Events

Society of Procurement Officers in Local Government / Office of Government Commerce 5th Annual Workshop will take place at the Novotel Euston, London on **14 June 2004**. This year's event, entitled "Joint working between public and private sectors", focuses on how government can work better with suppliers, including small and medium-sized enterprises, and how they can be engaged in new methods such as e-auctions. Other topics covered within the workshop programme will include the wider sustainability agenda and how procurement can be measured.

For online booking form: <http://www.bipsolutions.com/events/sopoogc04/booking.php>

17 June 2004 - Small and Medium Sized Organisations Centres of Excellence (COE) Forum Networking and Hot Topic forum. Contact: liz.underhill@ogc.gsi.gov.uk

Public Sector Expo's name has changed to **Procurement Solutions**. It has moved to Earls Court in London, takes place on **22-23 June 2004**, and runs alongside **Government Computing Exhibition and Conference** (<http://www.gcexpo.com>).

Procurement Solutions will have an extensive free keynote and seminar programme which will give visitors the opportunity to hear from leading experts in purchasing.

Visit <http://www.procurementsolutions.gov.uk> to register.

Westminster Explained: Project Management in the Civil Service & Wider Public Sector. 06 July 2004
1 Whitehall Place, London. Event organised by *The House Magazine*.

Contact: gareth.mccallion@ogc.gsi.gov.uk

[top](#)

Publications

Capturing Innovation

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury have endorsed a new piece of guidance from OGC on capturing innovation from suppliers. The Government is keen for suppliers to bring their innovative ideas forward and, where appropriate, to develop them through public sector contracts.

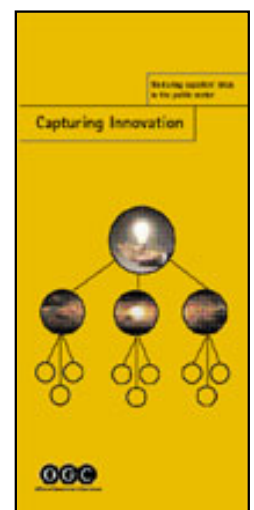
The guidance, entitled *Capturing Innovation*, was drawn up following an OGC research project to examine best practice in this area. It contains practical advice on both encouraging and responding to innovative proposals from suppliers.

Capturing Innovation will be of particular interest to policy makers, Senior Responsible Owners and project managers as well as procurement professionals. The wide target audience also includes ministers, senior managers, professional advisers and end users.

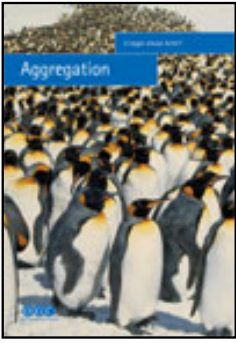
This work also fed into the DTI's wider review of innovation in UK industry and was summarised in the resulting DTI publication of December 2003 *Competing in the Global Economy: The Innovation Challenge*.

<http://www.innovation.gov.uk>

Copies of *Capturing Innovation* are available from the OGC Service Desk on 0845 000 4999. An electronic version can also be obtained from the OGC website at: http://www.ogc.gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?docid=1001717



Aggregation – is bigger always better?



OGC has recently published new guidance on aggregation in response to developments in public sector procurement which have raised questions about the extent to which government should pool its requirements and let fewer and larger contracts. On the one hand the efficiency agenda is driving government to reduce procurement costs, make use of its combined influence as buyers and achieve economies of scale. On the other hand, there are increasing concerns about the role of smaller firms in a competitive market and the fact that government business can become dominated by a few large firms. There is no single, right answer to the question of whether or not to aggregate – the right answer needs to be found on a case-by-case basis.

Aggregation – is bigger always better? is designed to inform decision-making during the development of organisational procurement strategies, and during the strategic planning stage prior to a programme or project. It aims to clarify what is meant by “aggregation”, identifies the possible advantages and disadvantages associated with it, and discusses the key issues that will inform the decision-making process. The guide is intended for all those that influence public sector procurement decision-making, including programme and project managers and procurers. It may also be relevant to senior managers, policy staff, end users and professional advisers.

Copies of *Aggregation – is bigger always better?* are available from the OGC Service Desk on 0845 000 4999. An electronic version can also be obtained from the OGC website at:

http://www.ogc.gov.uk/sdkdev/new_content/aggreat520304.pdf

[top](#)

Standardisation of PFI Contracts

HM Treasury has published an updated version of the guidance on the Standardisation of PFI Contracts (SoPC 3). This is the 3rd edition of this key text. Its publication represents important progress towards greater standardisation across the PFI market. The letter sets out how SoPC 3 will be rigorously enforced, spreading best practice and further improving PFI procurement across the public sector. This process will help achieve further reductions in the length and cost of the procurement process, delivering greater value for money for the taxpayer. SoPC 3 includes guidance on drafting PFI contracts and standard clauses which need to be included within them. The first edition of SoPC was published in July 1999 and was updated in September 2002. SoPC 3 can be downloaded from the HM Treasury website at: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk.

[top](#)

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

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Sustainable Construction Procurement – Moving Forward

Buildings and the way they operate have a fundamental impact on the way we live and work, on the journeys we make and on the environment we live in. Therefore, decisions made during all stages of the construction procurement process are vital in maximising the sustainability of the world in which we live. This is particularly true in the very early stages, whether for new buildings, or in the repair, maintenance and refurbishment of existing buildings.

The Government is committed to developing sustainable construction. As a major construction client, government is ideally placed to help deliver the change within the industry and promote the wider adoption of a more sustainable practice. The Government Construction Clients Panel (GCCP) took up the initiative in 2000 and published *The Achieving Sustainability in Construction Procurement Action Plan*.

<http://www.ogc.gov.uk/sdtoolkit/reference/achieving/sustainability.pdf>

This report set out how government could drive the sustainable development agenda through better procurement of new construction works, maintenance and refurbishment. The Action Plan established a three-year improvement plan, which identified actions and targets around nine key themes:

- Re-Use or New Build
- Designing for Minimum Waste
- Aiming for Lean Construction
- Minimising Energy in Construction and Use
- Avoiding Pollution
- Preserving and Enhancing Biodiversity
- Conserving Water Resources
- Respect for People
- Target Setting.

Those departments and agencies that had signed up to the plan were expected to have achieved a measure of success by March 2003. This work was inherited by OGC following the publication of the report.

Reviewing Sustainable Progress

With the help of consultants, OGC undertook a review of departmental progress against the nine key themes. Whilst the review identified good practice in the majority of departments, it highlighted that both the opportunity for, and effectiveness of, progress varied with the size and type of each department's construction portfolio. It also varied depending on their understanding of the balance between delivering sustainability and the over-riding priority of providing a quality service to their customers. Those departments or agencies, which recognised the direct involvement of construction as part of their service delivery, tended to have performed better. The review showed that government was making progress but that further help and clarity was required to ensure that sustainability is better incorporated during the development process.

Guiding the Government Client

OGC's Property & Construction Best Practice Team is well placed to help guide the government client through the sustainable procurement process. In particular, the Achieving Excellence in Construction Procurement Guides support the Achieving Excellence Initiative for sustained improvement in construction procurement performance and in obtaining whole-life value for money.

Following on from the review, and as part of the Achieving Excellence in Construction Procurement Initiative, the team is currently developing the final guide in the suite AE: 11 Sustainability. This guide will lead the government client through the project procurement lifecycle, identify sustainable considerations at each of the key decision making stages, while highlighting the best tools and sources of advice available. This will, in turn, help to deliver a more sustainable solution.

For further information e-mail: lesley.slaven@ogc.gsi.gov.uk or visit <http://www.ogc.gov.uk/index.asp?id=219>

Green Light for Strategic Supplier Management

An action plan for improving supplier relations has been given the go-ahead by the OGC Supervisory Board. Permanent Secretaries, on behalf of their departments, have committed to the new proposals which take forward Key Priority 3: *Improve the Government's ability to manage supplier relationships*. Ian Tough, Director of Supplier Relations at OGC, reports.

The aim is to target critical market sector sectors which are largely common across central civil government and the wider public sector. Key issues such as bidding activity, criticality, risk exposure and competitiveness will dictate the depth of relationship with each of 32 key suppliers which have been identified within the following sectors:

- IS and IT
- Communications
- Construction
- Professional Services
- Support and FM Services.

Part of the new approach is also to maintain an overview of other suppliers who are not currently bidding for government business, or who bid in a relatively small way – and yet are major players elsewhere in the sectors.

Markets, by their very nature, are both fluid and dynamic. The new approach will lead to a better understanding of how government interacts corporately with key suppliers, taking account of sector issues such as capacity, overall capability to deliver, dependency and dominance all of which are closely aligned with Key Priority 4 which deals with maximising competition and improving long-term capacity planning.

Sharing Information

A crucial element is a greater exchange of information between departments on likely future demands on industry capacity and on the performance of individual suppliers. Departments have committed to take full account of wider central civil government commercial objectives when considering departmental procurement. This requires a willingness to take on board the market structures best suited to competition and security of supply - advice will follow on legal issues around the sharing of information.

Departments and OGC need to work more closely to realise the full benefits of strategic supplier management - departments need to increase their commercial capability and to work with OGC in implementing a more strategic approach to individual markets. OGC will facilitate the sharing of key supplier information and the provision of trends and movements in the markets in which they operate. However, this intelligence will be sterile if departments cannot use it effectively. A well-developed commercial capability would allow departments to use this information to develop their individual relationships with key suppliers and to develop commercially robust approaches to the market.

Working Together

The market sector approach provides an opportunity to address systemic issues prevalent within the sectors identified. As well as working with individual suppliers, industry bodies and trade associations offer an additional, collective route to those sectors. The work of the Senior IT Forum (SITF), undertaken jointly with Intellect in the IT/IS and Communications sectors, is a good precedent for this. Relationships already developed with the Management Consultancies Association and the Institute of Management Consultancy are leading towards a Professional Service Forum based on the successful SITF model. Arrangements for other sectors are now under review.

Taking the Wider View

OGC's current remit is central civil government, but information on market sectors and key suppliers would be incomplete without reference to the wider public sector and private sector demand. The Pre-Budget report, *Competition and Capacity Planning*, reinforces the need for increased commercial knowledge in the wider public sector as well as central civil government. OGC will, therefore, position itself to take account of this broader requirement. OGC has already established contacts and relationships with some local authorities, MOD and the NHS. These now need to be added to and strengthened.

Working together across the wider public sector and with suppliers lies at the heart of Key Priority 3. By establishing a better-informed dialogue with suppliers through sharing information and building a greater understanding of key issues, departments will improve their overall intelligent client capability.

Contact details: ServiceDesk@ogc.gsi.gov.uk 0845 0004999.

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Decision Mapping

One of OGC's priority targets in its Medium Term Strategy was to produce guidance to help departments in making the right choice of procurement method for their procurement projects. The guidance also needed to address the new HM Treasury policy that now prohibits the use of PFI for IT procurement projects. The new guidance, entitled *The Decision Map guidance for Project Strategy and Procurement* was published on the OGC website on 12 December 2003.

The guidance helps departments, agencies and NDPBs with the strategic planning required in the very early stages of programme and project cycles (ie, it informs Gate 0 - strategic assessment - in the Gateway project lifecycle). It is aimed at SROs, practitioners and project strategists, and is intended to guide them through the key questions to address when considering whether and how to go about a particular project or programme .

It then helps determine the best procurement approach in particular circumstances. This is achieved by identifying the organisational goal, and then being clear on the project outcome, outputs and inputs, which support the goal.

Risk Allocation

The guidance also focuses on identifying and allocating risks. Best procurement practice is that risks should be allocated to the party (your department/agency/NDPB etc, or your contractor) best able to manage the. It emphasises consideration by customer and supplier together of objectives, plans, risk and problem resolution.

Applying this guidance appropriately should result in fewer project failures, thus improving the chances of successful project outcomes, realising desired benefits, and achieving value for money. Suppliers will also benefit from this guidance due to the more consistent approach to contracting that the guidance encourages.

Although the more detailed sections of the guidance (ie, parts 4-6) focus on strategic and tactical contracting issues for IT enabled business change projects, the general strategic principles included in parts 1, 2 and 3 which can be applied to projects in all fields (eg, construction, generic goods and services etc.)

Consultation and Events

An essential factor in developing the guidance successfully was the extensive consultation which was carried out through the summer and early autumn with many key IT suppliers to government, legal/commercial advisers, and over 20 departments and agencies. Lessons learned from these interviews informed the development of the Decision Map from the outset.

A series of popular embedding events, commenced in January, have shown the guidance to have been warmly received by government. An ongoing consultative exercise has also demonstrated that industry is welcoming the guidance. Views and suggestions received from both the embedding and consultative exercises will inform drafting of the second version of the Decision Map, to be published later this year.

If you have queries about the guidance, or would like to offer feedback, you can call OGC on 0845 000 4999. You can also contact them on this number if you want to be included in the series of consultation meetings and embedding seminars. OGC looks forward to hearing from you, and hopes you find the guidance helpful.

Some key questions

Q: Does this guidance replace the PFI Standardisation Guidance?

A: Yes, it replaces and updates the Standardisation Guidance but only for IT projects. The Standardisation guidance still applies to PFI projects not centred around IT, for example in construction.

Q: Will the guidance alone guarantee a successful project outcome?

A: No. The guidance is not intended to act as a substitute for the professional commercial,

technical, project and contract-management skills required to deliver and maintain procurement projects successfully

Q: What about projects that are locked into a PFI deal?

A: Where PFI contracts are in existence they should be honoured. However, the Decision Map principles should be applied when the contract is due to be re-tendered. In addition there are a number of useful principles relating to good practice that will be applicable even for contracts that are already in place (eg, dealing with change management). For authorities who are in a contract that is leading up to expiry there is a link to guidance on re-competition issues.

Q: Does the guidance mandate or rule out any particular procurement approaches?

A: No. We are not prescriptive in this regard. However, there is a shift in emphasis away from any presumption that long term or partnering agreements should always be used, and the guidance encourages departments to look carefully at a wide range of possible approaches based on the risks involved and their ability to manage those risks.

Q: Is this the final version of the guidance?

A: No. In conjunction with external specialists, a full consultation process is underway with both the public and private sectors, ending in June. A revised version will be issued towards the end of the year. This will take full account of users' experiences in implementing the guidance, views from the IT industry, and other comments.

Q: What if departments need further assistance in understanding how to use the guidance?

A: The OGC service desk on 0845 0004999 can arrange for all queries to be answered, and organise consultancy support if required.

[Top](#)

The Door to Government Procurement

OGC and OGcbuying.solutions have commenced a procurement for an electronic Purchase to Pay Marketplace. Following the approval of the eHub Feasibility Study in November 2003, project 'Zanzibar' was initiated to develop the concept further.

Zanzibar is intended to act as a single point of access for any central civil government (CCG) buying organisation and their suppliers. Its primary aims are to reduce the process cost of transactional procurement through increased efficiency, and to reduce the actual cost of goods and services bought by providing economies of scale, wider access to and increased compliance with pre-negotiated contracts, and greater use of collaborative procurement. Inclusion of sophisticated management information functionality will also enable individual government departments and agencies (GDAs) and organisations such as OGcbuying.solutions to identify further opportunities for savings through individual or collaborative contracts.

The SR04 Efficiency Review guidance for Transactional Services notes that departments should endeavour to "reduce administration costs by a major shift from manual to electronic processing". The guidance for Procurement also describes the cost changes which can be achieved through the "greater use of framework and call-off contracts to aggregate volume and reduce unit prices" and a "more thorough understanding of the real level of demand across the public sector". The Zanzibar service is one of the OGC initiatives that will enable the successful achievement of these efficiencies.

The benefits of Zanzibar to the buyer and supplier communities include:

- process savings due to greater efficiency in transaction handling
- savings on purchase price due to increased compliance with pre-negotiated contracts
- increased transparency of process through complete audit trail visibility
- greater likelihood of reaching prompt payment targets
- more complete management information across CCG enabling better analysis of expenditure, budgeting and forecasting
- greater ability to target opportunities for savings through collaborative contracts
- a single point of access to a wide variety of public sector buyers and suppliers, allowing catalogue maintenance and integration to be done just once.

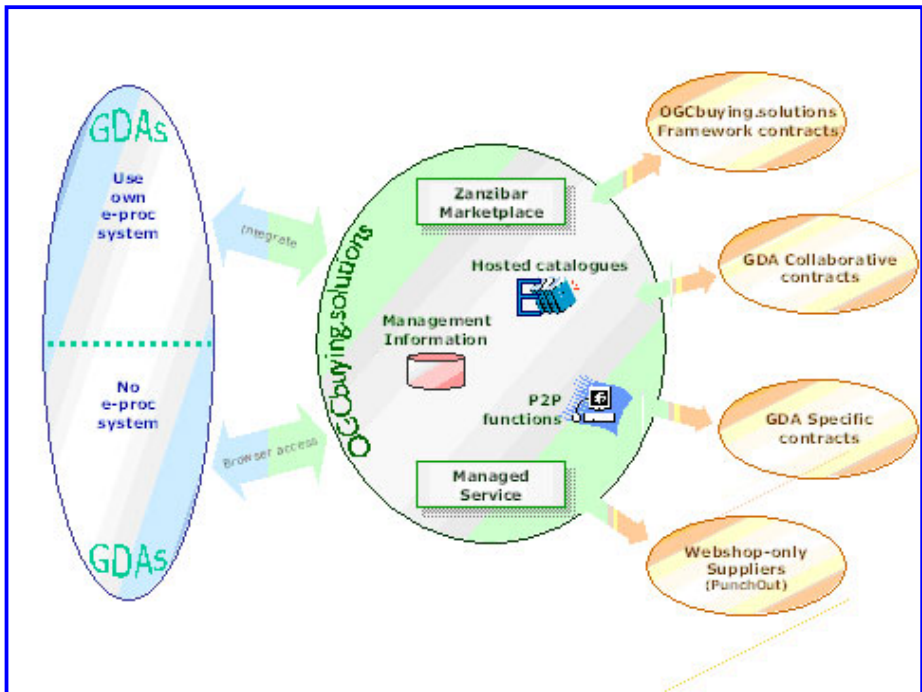
In addition, Zanzibar will facilitate the following:

- central investment in supplier take-on processes and catalogue management to ensure individual GDAs are not repeatedly paying to get the same work done
- an easy, low-cost way of starting electronic procurement for those GDAs who have not adopted eProcurement systems to date
- a flexible solution to provide those who have invested in their own eProcurement systems with a simple way of accessing catalogues from OGcbuying.solutions as well as those made available by other GDAs.

Zanzibar will be offered as a managed service to GDAs and may be available to the wider public sector in the future. Thirteen GDAs have expressed an interest in becoming "early adopters" and have agreed Memoranda of Understanding with OGC.

The next stage of the project will involve the selection of a single service provider and, subject to a successful procurement, the award of a contract by January 2005. It is anticipated the service will be live by Q2 2005.

For more information please see the OGC website or email eprocurement@ogc.gsi.gov.uk.



[Top](#)

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