

# Department for Work and Pensions uses AWARD® to support letting of large services framework contract

## Customer profile

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) leads the Government's response to some of the biggest issues facing the country – welfare and pension reform – and is a key player in tackling child poverty. It is the biggest public service delivery department in the UK and serves more than 20 million customers.

The DWP is a Central Purchasing Body and, as such, this Services Framework Agreement is also accessible to other government departments undertaking social and economic research, specifically Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) research on taxation issues. The HMRC committed to making use of this framework to replace its existing Analysis & Research Framework.

HMRC is a Government Department that was created in April 2005, bringing together the functions of HM Customs & Excise and the Inland Revenue. HMRC employs approximately 100,000 people, which is about a fifth of the entire Civil Service.

## Procurement project overview

This project was for the renewal of the Social and Economic Research Framework of expert suppliers from which the Department for Work and Pensions commissions Social and Economic Research. It was jointly evaluated with HM Revenue & Customs. Social and economic research is undertaken to support policy development and policy/programme implementation for all of these key client groups and businesses.

The Framework is an agreement with a group of suppliers, which sets out the terms and conditions under which specific purchases can be made. All suppliers on the Framework have been approved to supply the DWP.

The Framework significantly reduces the need to carry out contract-letting exercises that are time-consuming and expensive for both the Department and potential suppliers. It also ensures that there are coherent and consistent processes across the Department. The DWP Research Framework is managed by a small team within the Work and Welfare Central Analysis Division.

The Social and Economic Research Framework is one of a suite of frameworks that have been established as part of DWP's Commercial Strategy to develop a sustainable supply base that supports the Department and its businesses.

## Procurement project challenges

The main challenges of this procurement were:

- a small procurement team dealing with a large-scale procurement exercise
- a large number of stakeholders including senior policy management for each policy area across the research department
  - a significant amount of documentation to be dealt with
  - a geographically dispersed evaluation team - more than 65 people in the evaluation team
  - a large and complex bid with more than 123 completed Invitations to Tender (ITTs)
  - the need to demonstrate a clear and transparent audit trail



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

**“I would recommend AWARD® software. Its advantages over a paper-based system are numerous. Not only did it help us produce a better outcome but it also significantly reduced the procurement cycle time and made the whole process far more efficient.”**

**Colin Browne Deputy Framework Manager  
Research Framework, Department for  
Work and Pensions**



### Role and value of Commerce Decisions and AWARD®

To establish the current Framework, the DWP Research Framework Team carried out a two-stage tendering process during 2008 and early 2009. Following wide-scale advertising, 182 organisations completed a Pre- Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ).

**“We involved Commerce Decisions early on in the project and used AWARD® to evaluate the PQQ. At the end of the PQQ evaluation, AWARD® enabled us to get the score sheets off very quickly and start making the selection process,” said Colin Browne, Deputy Framework Manager, Research Framework, Department for Work and Pensions.**

The PQQs were assessed and 151 organisations met the DWP’s minimum requirements and were invited to submit a full Invitation to Tender.

The project team had only six weeks to evaluate the very large number of responses. Commerce Decisions took all the documents that were received and loaded them into AWARD®. In parallel, 70 evaluators were trained using the in-house team following a ‘Train the trainer’ programme delivered by Commerce Decisions.

Of the 123 completed ITTs received, 88 organisations were selected for inclusion on the framework.

**“AWARD® was key to managing the large amount of bids and data. The system ensured that the evaluators saw only the sections they needed to review,” said Colin Browne.**

All the bidding organisations were offered feedback at the PQQ stage, from which excellent supplier feedback was received.

**“AWARD® allowed us to provide quality feedback to all the suppliers.”**

**AWARD® is a very intuitive system, which meant that it did not take long for us to learn how to use it and then train the evaluators themselves,” said Colin Browne.**

Feedback from the evaluators was very positive. One evaluator said: “The AWARD® system was very easy to use. It kept everything organised and I knew where I was up to. All the training and support I received were very good. This made the process much less painful.”

AWARD® delivered a clear and transparent audit trail of the decision process and at the end of the procurement all the bidders were offered a full debrief based on the information generated by AWARD®.

**“I would recommend AWARD® software. Its advantages over a paper-based system are numerous. Not only did it help us produce a better outcome but it also significantly reduced the procurement cycle time and made the whole process far more efficient,” commented Colin Browne.**

### AWARD® Benefits

AWARD® delivers a transparent audit trail that underpins the bidder debriefing process and manages any challenges to the outcome of the procurement.

AWARD® is highly flexible, enabling full integration of the tender requirements and policies.

AWARD® enables project users to be managed centrally, optimising the time spent on evaluating suppliers.

AWARD® is delivered via a security accredited hosted service. Users can access AWARD® from any workstation with an internet connection and web browser.

Powerful reporting capabilities allow a range of selected reports to be generated quickly and tailored to your project.

Enhanced controls allow better management of tender stages leading to efficiencies and on time project delivery.

AWARD® provides a structured and compliant approach to the execution of a procurement.

