

MOD teams with Commerce Decisions to support selection process for major project

Customer profile

The Dismounted Close Combat (DCC) Integrated Project Team (IPT) is part of Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S) which buys more than £5 billion of new equipment and initial spares for the Armed Forces each year.

The DCC IPT operates within a Land Cluster which includes a number of other related IPTs. Their mission is to equip the dismounted soldier with an integrated capability, in order to enable him to prosecute Dismounted Close Combat as part of the wider battle group. Their goal is to be a totally integrated team and be leaders in SMART acquisition. Based in Abbey Wood, they are responsible for a large number of projects of varying sizes.

Project overview

The Surveillance System and Range Finder (SSARF) project is defined as a CAT C project, valued between £20 million and £100 million. The Possible Future Purchase was announced at the end of 2004, with the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) issued to over 30 companies in early 2005. In May 2005, the interested companies were reduced to four, in preparation for the assessment phase trialling in 2006 and a target in-service date of 2008.

The aim of the SSARF project is to provide 24hour surveillance and target acquisition in the battlefield, which will allow operators to identify targets of interest, determine their location and pass to others. The SSARF project is defined as a triservice, multi-discipline project, which means it is for use across a number of areas in all the services - Navy, Army and Royal Air Force. Project procurement challenges This is one of the more significant projects for the DCC IPT; it is highly complex and combines many technologies. A project of this size represents a major challenge with demanding timescales and multiple stakeholders.

Key challenges of the project:

- Tri-service project requiring the management and achievement of consensus among a large number of interested parties
- Maintaining active competition between bidders while continuing essential lines of communication and ensuring a "level playing field"
- Delivering regular up-to-date reports to stakeholders
- Running an efficient and effective procurement process in the face of significant complexity • Running the procurement process in a timely fashion
- Carrying out effective bidder debriefings
- Delivering comprehensive input and evidence to support the decision-making process
- Capturing and interrogating the large amount of information contained in the bidders' proposals

"This is a challenging project, not only because there are a number of new technologies involved, but also because all three services have a vested interest in the fielded equipment," said Trevor Lawrence, Project Manager, DCC IPT.



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Role and value of Commerce Decisions and AWARD®

Commerce Decisions were engaged at the beginning of the project before the PQQs were issued. Right from the inception of the project, DCC IPT decided they wanted to use not only the AWARD® software but also the professional services that Commerce Decisions offer.

"We bought far more than the AWARD® tool. I believe that the combination of Commerce Decisions AWARD® software and professional services will improve the robustness of the result when we award the Demonstration and Manufacture contract in late 2006."

Trevor Lawrence Project Manager, DCC IPT



"One of the real benefits to me was getting the experience of other tender selections from the professional services team at Commerce Decisions. They were involved right at the start of the project. I decided that we would gain maximum benefit from using not only the AWARD® tool but also the total Commerce Decisions package," observed Trevor Lawrence.

The project began with the SSARF stakeholders building a set of questions for the PQQ and by scoping the potential answers. The Commerce Decisions consultants on the project facilitated sessions to identify key questions that needed to be asked, and the criteria against which the response from the bidders would be marked. The marking criteria were then declared to all the potential bidders."

"Commerce Decisions assisted us in simplifying the whole marking process which has worked very well. We reduced the number of questions from 75-100 to fewer than 20, which greatly increased our efficiency and effectiveness. The questions were then weighted and arranged into a hierarchy. Commerce Decisions consultants helped guide the team through the process, providing steering when necessary," explained Trevor Lawrence.

Using AWARD® Bidder Interaction technology, the bidder responses were delivered to the evaluators electronically. Evaluators made extensive use of the electronic versions of the bidder documentation during the evaluation process. This allowed them to evaluate from a hot desk or remote location, working with the subject matter experts. Because AWARD® is delivered via the intranet it allows evaluators extensive flexibility to work when and where they wish. The administration of the whole process was automated using AWARD®, which meant that the Tender Assessment Panel could be convened as soon as the subject matter experts had completed their scoring.

AWARD® pulled together all the information relating to the assessment into a presentation, which proved invaluable when all the bids were considered at the Tender Assessment Panel. This allowed the team to make a well-considered decision.

"AWARD® helped make the Tender Assessment Panel a very productive exercise. The stakeholders, who represented a wide range of interests, were very pleased with the process and felt they had complete ownership. At the same time, through the use of AWARD®, we were able to improve the transparency to the bidders," said Trevor Lawrence.

AWARD® allowed the DCC IPT to approach the debriefing in a different way, in that all the bidders were given customised graphics that indicated how the decisions had been made. Every one of the bidders was happy with this process, and no face-to-face meetings were required. Not only did this save the IPT team a great deal of time but the added visibility of the overall process meant that they all accepted the outcome more readily.

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"Getting Commerce Decisions involved right at the beginning of the project enabled us to develop a well focused Assessment Phase tender selection strategy which following an initial investment of effort, made a marked improvement in the effectiveness of the marking and decision making process," commented Trevor Lawrence.

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.

