

Supporting the Service Personnel & Veterans Agency in the letting of the Future Contract for Armed Forces Pay, Pension & Administration Service Provision

Customer profile

SPVA was formed as a tri-service agency in 2007 to provide harmonised personnel administration services and accurate payment of salaries, allowances and pensions to the serving and veterans communities.

SPVA is responsible for the delivery of a harmonised and simplified tri-service administration system, known as Joint Personnel Administration (JPA). The Agency has direct interaction via the JPA and subsidiary systems with some 285,000 regular and reserve personnel and 365,000 Armed Forces pensioners.

About the SPVA Future Contract

This complex project was to provide service provision agreements to deliver pay, personnel and pensions services to both serving military personnel and veterans communities. The full contract will replace the current interim contract which expires in November 2012, having been in place for three years. The solution essentially comprises a large and highly complex information system (IS)-based service.

In addition to providing these services, the winning bidder is responsible for developing and maintaining associated Human Resources IS applications and elements of the IS infrastructure.

The competition was run over a two year period under the EU competitive dialogue procurement procedure. Three suppliers were selected at the pre-qualification stage to take part in the competitive dialogue stages leading to the final tender selection.

Project procurement challenges

The key challenges on this complex project were:

- it was critical to demonstrate a clear and transparent decision-making process, particularly as the incumbent supplier was also bidding

- the nature of the contract is highly complex which presented issues both for the bidders, in getting a proper understanding of the requirement; and for the evaluators in fairly comparing complex responses
- a large number of stakeholders were involved, including the MOD, Cabinet Office, HM Treasury, Trades Unions, the three single Services and a number of Third Sector organisations who lobby on behalf of the veteran community
- evaluators were geographically dispersed
- solutions with about 800 requirements had to be evaluated in an effective and efficient manner.

Role and value of Commerce Decisions

Commerce Decisions Ltd (CDL) started its involvement in the programme before the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) was issued. CDL and AWARD® had been selected by the project team to support the procurement based on its proven track record with the previous SPVA Interim Contract competition, and its reputation within the MOD and elsewhere.



CDL consultants liaised with all key stakeholders and undertook their Structured Criteria Development process to produce an efficient set of criteria for use across all stages of the competitive dialogue. They also supported the team's development of the decision-making process and invitation documentation to ensure industry best practice was being used.

“It was of critical importance that the contract was open and auditable, particularly as the incumbent was bidding. Using AWARD® ensured that we were able to deliver a transparent letting process,” said Colonel Alan Brown, Assistant Director, Future Delivery, SPVA.

Over 80 evaluators were involved at various stages during the competition. Those involved in the PQQ evaluation were briefed by the Commerce Decisions consultant to ensure they could maximise the value that



AWARD® could deliver during the evaluation cycle. Thereafter, members of the SPVA team conducted all of the AWARD® evaluator training required.

“We used AWARD® to bring coherence to the evaluation. It enabled us to ask precise questions for each area of the business and to allocate weightings in order to deliver a balanced result. The evaluators found AWARD® to be very effective. It ensured we carried out a consistent evaluation. AWARD® was easy to use and flexible, allowing the evaluators to work where and when they wanted to,” said Colonel Brown.

In total over 7,000 individual assessments were entered into AWARD. The tool allowed the procurement team to view the progress of the evaluation in real time. It also provided reports for the various review boards to demonstrate the decision process that the project team had taken. This ensured that the review boards could see that the project had been executed correctly - crucial in maintaining credibility and stakeholder buy-in.

“We were able to produce reports as and when we wanted them, which proved to be most useful,” observed Colonel Brown.

“Using AWARD®, which is a well respected industry tool, really helped us with the stakeholders. I can’t see how we could have carried out such a robust job without AWARD®.”

Throughout the dialogue process, and following the letting of the contract, bidders were given full feedback on the Authority’s views of the strengths and weaknesses of their offerings.

“We used AWARD® to prepare for the bidder debriefs, which enabled us to give structured and well-organised reports that the bidders found extremely useful. They demonstrated and supported our decision-making throughout the evaluation,” said Colonel Brown.

Role and value of Commerce Decisions

- AWARD® delivers a transparent audit trail that underpins the bidder debriefing process and manages challenges to the outcome of the procurement
- AWARD® is web-enabled, allowing geographically dispersed users to work when and where they want to
- AWARD® supports and enhances the project and tender management process

- AWARD®’s powerful document management capability enables easy access to key documents as and when they are needed
- AWARD® is a highly flexible tool that allows project managers to fit it to their specific procurement processes
- AWARD®’s powerful reporting capabilities allow reports to be generated rapidly and in real time
- AWARD® improves the quality of the project outcome and reduces the time taken to run the project
- AWARD® enhances stakeholder buy-in
- AWARD® enables a more efficient, effective, structured and better managed procurement process
- AWARD® is a well-respected industry standard tool used throughout the MOD and the wider public sector
- CDL support enables a coherent decision-making strategy
- CDL support enables the production of an effective and efficient criteria set, bought into by stakeholders
- CDL support enables an evaluation process that is both efficient and industry best practice.



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