

Commerce Decisions works with the Department for Constitutional Affairs on major national services contract

Customer profile

The Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) was formed in June 2003 incorporating the responsibilities of the former Lord Chancellor's Department. The Department's aim is to provide for effective, efficient and accessible justice for all, to ensure the rights and responsibilities of the citizen, and to modernise the law and constitution.

The DCA is responsible in government for upholding justice, rights and democracy. It currently employs about 24,000 civil servants, of whom more than 18,000 work for HM Courts Service (HMCS) in courts throughout England and Wales.

The DCA achieves significant savings by professionally managing its procurement and commercial activities to best effect. However, 'best in class' procurement is not just about getting the price right, it relies on a fine balance of whole life cost and fitness for purpose, while meeting European Union rules about competition and treating all suppliers fairly.

Project procurement challenges

This project represented part of a major overhaul of contracts following the merger of the Court Service and Magistrates Courts. Valued at circa £100 million, it involved aligning the Guarding & Key Holding Contracts across seven regions.

The key challenges for the project were:

- Obtaining delivery of a service that fully met their requirements
- Delivering value for money
- Ensuring engagement with all stakeholders via representative panels

- Working to challenging timescales
- Effective evaluation combined with a transparent audit trail
- The need to engage successfully with the incumbent/existing suppliers
- Delivery of regular up-to-date reports to the stakeholders

Role and value of Commerce Decisions and AWARD® Commerce Decisions were engaged at the beginning of the project, at the pre-qualification stage, when over 50 expressions of interest had been received. The DCA used the UK Government hosted AWARD® service, which facilitated online evaluation.

"At the beginning of the project, Commerce Decisions provided the evaluators with training on AWARD®, and then specifically for the core project team on how we could build reports from the system on demand. Doing this ensured that once the project got under way and once the responses were received, we were able to get up and running fast,"



commented Lesley Pyne, Senior Procurement Manager at the DCA.

Once the responses to the tenders had been received, they were loaded into the system. Being web-based, AWARD® allowed the evaluators to work remotely at a time to suit. The need for multiple, expensive and time-consuming meetings was much reduced and the speed of the whole evaluation process was significantly improved.

"AWARD® enabled me to see how the evaluators were progressing, so that I could provide support where it was required in order to maintain the project's momentum. This was particularly critical as we were working to challenging timescales."

Lesley Pyne, Senior Procurement Manager, Department for Constitutional Affairs



AWARD's flexibility allowed the evaluators to see and work on specific regions and criteria. "Use of AWARD® enabled evaluators to concentrate on specific criteria and regions, and this improved the efficiency and the effectiveness of the evaluation process," observed Liam O'Donnell, Contract Manager at the DCA. "As the project manager, AWARD® enabled me to see how the evaluators were progressing, so that I could provide support where it was required in order to maintain the project's momentum. This was particularly critical as we were working to challenging timescales," said Lesley Pyne. A feature of using AWARD® is the clear and transparent audit trail it generates, thereby enabling the project team to deliver detailed feedback to suppliers. "I particularly liked the ability that AWARD® gives evaluators to enter the rationale and support for their decisions. This allowed the team to provide bidders with clear reasons and rationale as to why they were or were not chosen for the project," commented Lesley Pyne. "I also liked the audit trail AWARD® provided; it was secure and provided excellent reporting capabilities."

OGC eSourcing managed service

Commerce Decisions provided the eEvaluation functionality (AWARD®) for the OGCbuying.solutions e-Sourcing framework agreement, which delivered e-Sourcing managed services to the UK public sector.

"This framework agreement gives government access to the best resources available in support of electronic sourcing," said Barry Donovan, Director of eCommerce at OGCbuying.solutions.

"Public sector procurement staff now have a very effective tool to help achieve value for money, and will be able to transact more effectively with the supply market."

OGCbuying.solutions, launched in April 2001, provided public sector procurement professionals with a route to the products and services they need in order to maximise procurement efficiency and value for money.



Note: OGCbuying.solutions is now Crown Commercial Services (CCS).

AWARD® and associated services are available via the CCS GCloud framework.

On 28 March 2007 it was announced that the Department for Constitutional Affairs would take control of probation, prisons and prevention of re-offending from the Home Office and be renamed the Ministry of Justice.

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.

