

# Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs deploys AWARD® for greener procurement

## Customer Profile

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is a Government Department in the UK.

Defra make legislation to deliver policies in areas such as;

- the natural environment, biodiversity, plants and animals
- sustainable development and the green economy
- food, farming and fisheries
- animal health and welfare, environmental protection and pollution control
- rural communities and issues.

Although Defra only works directly in England, it works closely with the devolved administrations in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and generally leads on negotiations in the EU and Internationally.

## The Vision

Defra's vision statement is "The environment is the natural foundation on which our society and economy are built. Our long-term prosperity, economic success and quality of life are enhanced by our environment. If we manage our natural assets in a sustainable way, they will continue to meet not only our current needs, such as for energy, sustenance, minerals, fresh water, clean air and fertile soils, but also the needs of future generations. The food sector plays a key part in our economy, and farmers play a crucial role in managing the land. Defra is taking steps to help increase the competitiveness and resilience of farms, fisheries and the whole food chain to ensure a secure, environmentally sustainable and healthy supply of food.

The government is committed to the development of a sustainable green economy. This offers substantial opportunities for UK

businesses, driving the development of products, services, markets and jobs, and reducing costs through the efficient use of resources by all businesses and consumers. Defra work to ensure that the economy and our society are resilient to shocks, by adapting to

the impacts of climate change and preparing for emergencies such as animal disease outbreaks, floods and droughts."

## Priorities

Major responsibilities;

- Prepare for and manage risk from animal and plant disease
- Prepare for and manage risk from flood and other environmental emergencies
- Structural Reform Priorities;
- Support and develop British farming and encourage sustainable food production
- Help to enhance the environment and biodiversity to improve quality of life
- Support a strong and sustainable green economy, resilient to climate change

## Sustainable Procurement

Defra purchases a wide range of goods and services each year and is keen to make it straightforward for prospective and existing suppliers to do business with them. This means helping suppliers to understand their policies and practices, and ensuring that they are aligned with Defra's two main purchasing objectives;

- value for money
- sustainability

Defra's "Procurement and Commercial Function" (PCF) is responsible for the Department's procurement of goods and services. It also supports the agencies and other organisations within the Defra network, and is developing a hub to facilitate collaborative procurement.

## Role and Value of Commerce Decisions and AWARD®

The PCF's main responsibilities are;

- the undertaking of procurement projects
- the letting of national call-off contracts
- the development of departmental procurement policy
- the provision of support and advice to managers and procurement staff.



## Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

The PCF is committed to the achievement of Defra's central procurement objectives;

- **'Value for Money'** through competition. This does not always mean choosing the cheapest option - it may be more cost effective to buy a more reliable service or a better quality asset with lower maintenance costs and a longer operating life.
- **'Procuring sustainably'** - buying goods and services in a way that delivers 'Value for Money' on a whole life basis. That is, in terms of generating benefits not only to Defra, but also to society and the economy whilst minimising damage to the environment.

AWARD® is the tool chosen by Defra to evaluate tenders in a robust, controlled and objective manner; without bias towards suppliers. AWARD® ensures the integrity of the competitive process.

Each member of the evaluation panel has an individual log in to the AWARD® software. Each evaluator independently assesses each supplier submission based on the scoring criteria set out in the evaluation guidance. The scores are registered in AWARD® in realtime.

**"Using AWARD® makes the procurement process more efficient, and gives us hard evidence to justify our decisions,"**

**Procurement Manager**

AWARD® is a key tool in the procurement lifecycle, supporting the tendering process and award of contracts at Defra. Commerce Decisions engaged with Defra in 2008 and have supported the deployment of AWARD® across the PCF. AWARD® has supported projects of all sizes and complexities within Defra. To date, it has been used to evaluate over 300 suppliers, with over 14,000 documents registered.

During any procurement there are many key challenges such as;

- Providing a clear and transparent audit trail
- Achieving value for money contracts
- Working to tight timescales
- Managing a number of documents and data that need to be accessed easily and rapidly
- Managing bidders
- Debriefing the losing bidders effectively

These challenges are all successfully overcome by AWARD®. The automatic audit trail captures justifications with detailed reporting for analysis and debriefs, Contract value can be visualised from multiple viewpoints (compliance, cost, innovation, etc) to maximise value for money.

AWARD's collaborative space for document management allows multiple authors and reviewers to access a central secure repository. This facility also allows document linking and searching that increases both the efficiency and quality of the evaluation process.

AWARD® is a secure web-based tool which can be accessed over the internet. As AWARD® is accredited by the UK Government (OGC BuyingSolutions—now Crown Commercial Service) it is available for the entire UK central civil government and wider public sector via the GCloud framework.

**“Using AWARD® gives us the confidence and ability to run all our procurements effectively, following Government guidelines. It enables us to work towards our own sustainability targets, significantly reducing the need for both paper records and travel.”**

**Procurement Manager**

**“AWARD® is now an integral and key element of our procurement strategy. We cannot imagine returning to a paper-based process.”**

**Senior Procurement Manager  
Department for Environment,  
Food and Rural Affairs**

