MOD deploys AWARD® to speed up procurement process and improve the outcome on landmark DLO project

Customer profile

The CSE IPT is a cluster IPT responsible for the in-service support of over 800 equipment types which are operated by all three Armed Services. Their primary output is to deliver the required level of support to meet operational and peacetime activities on time, to cost and specification.

The range of activities for which they are responsible includes setting maintenance policy, supply and asset management, equipment repair planning, defect investigation, financial planning and procurement.

Project overview

In 2002, the CSE IPT embarked on an exercise to establish a more innovative and effective way of supporting a range of its Surveillance Target Acquisition and Night Observation (STANO) equipment. The project was initiated because there was a number of significant issues around the existing support of this equipment:

- The long timescales for repairs

- The overall cost of the repairs

- The availability and supply of spares

The combination of the above resulted in capability gaps and reduced operational effectiveness. The availability of equipment and spares was only about 70%. Moreover, there was a large number of separate contracts which could be rationalised.

In 2003, following a one-year pilot to test the concept in an operational scenario, involving about one-third of the Common Weapon Sight (CWS) fleet, an Expression of Interest was issued to which five responses were received.

In 2004, after the business case was approved, the IPT engaged with Commerce Decisions and deployed the AWARD® software. AWARD® was used to help evaluate the two tenders that were then submitted.

As a result, a £16.5m Availability Contract was let in 2005 to Thales Optics Ltd (now Qioptiq). This landmark contract is a first for CSE IPT - moving successfully from traditional support to Contracting for Availability. To date, performance has exceeded all customer and stakeholder expectations, averaging 98% availability per month.

Project procurement challenges

The innovative nature of this project represented a major challenge to CSE IPT. The way in which services were to be delivered was a significant change to the traditional approach of equipment support.

Key challenges were:

- Gaining the endorsement for this innovative approach from all the key stakeholders, who represented a wide range of interests

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

- Ensuring high levels of objectivity during the decision-making process

- Providing regular progress reports to senior management

- Carrying out effective bidder debriefings

- Providing hard evidence to support the decision-making process

- Capturing and interrogating the huge amount of information generated by the tenderers in their bid responses

"By using AWARD® we were able to ensure that we had a clear and robust audit trail in case we were challenged at any stage during or after contract award."

Jim Ayres, Deputy IPT Leader and Senior Commercial Manager

Role and value of Commerce Decisions and AWARD®

Commerce Decisions has a strong track record working with MoD IPTs on a wide range of procurement of different sizes and complexities. It was this that convinced CSE IPT to deploy AWARD® on this groundbreaking project. The CSE IPT engaged Commerce Decisions at the tender stage.

When the responses were received from the bidders, AWARD® was used to evaluate their ability to meet the customer requirements. This demonstrated that the original submissions did not reach the level required. Using the information generated by AWARD®, the project team was able to work in an objective way with the bidders to highlight the weaknesses in their submissions. The bidders were then able to modify their submissions to make them closer to the tender requirements.

AWARD® was deployed rapidly and the project team required very little training to get up and running. It allowed access for multiple users while the project manager was able to monitor the progress of the evaluation. The software helped the project team to manage the project closely and objectively, and ensured that all the evaluators used the same criteria, enabling everyone to work on the same basis.

The bid responses contained a significant amount of information. Without AWARD's powerful search and document management capabilities, the project team's task would have been much more difficult and extremely time-consuming. The team were able to assimilate all the relevant information, ensuring an effective evaluation.

"By using AWARD® we were undoubtedly able to get a better final outcome. Very early on in the process AWARD® helped us to feed back to the bidders that their bids were under 75% compliant.

This resulted in their responses being improved and their bids becoming over 90% compliant. This in turn allowed us to request best and final offers at the end of the process," observed Group Captain Paul Ridge, CSE IPT Leader.

"This was a very competitive bidding situation. By using AWARD® we were able to ensure that we had a clear and robust audit trail in case we were challenged at any stage during or after contract award. This was one of the key reasons for selecting AWARD® in the first place. However, as we used the tool more, we found that its value grew, assisting us in improving the compliance of the bids, the quality of the evaluation process, and greatly reducing the time taken for the procurement process. AWARD® reduced the time of the initial evaluation process alone from about 8 weeks to 4 weeks," said Jim Ayres.

Note: DLO is now part of Defence Equipment & Support.

CSE IPT activities have been incorporated in to Operational Support Programmes.

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 securityaccredited 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.

Commerce Decisions
A QINETIQ company