



JERSEY CONSTRUCTION COUNCIL RESPONSES TO GOVERNMENT OF JERSEY PROCUREMENT REVIEW

Overview

To evaluate the procurement process of the Government of Jersey in order to determine whether the process achieved is value for money, to examine the information of the relevant control and audit of general recommendations with respect to procurement by the Government of Jersey and identify any processes made in achieving implementation of these recommendations.

Ariba System

From a builder's merchant's point of view the general view was that the Ariba system is night and day better than what was in place previously. Placing orders for products and invoicing is much improved and it was felt that delivery was exceptional.

From a self-employed contractor perspective the view was that Ariba system has been problematic due to lack of training - so poorly delivered.

It was also mentioned that for smaller firms the lack of staff who are trained on the product can be of a disadvantage to smaller businesses.

It was asked as to whether questions have been raised not just about Ariba but also about the tendering portal?

Is the tendering portal sometimes too complicated for a smaller contractor to be involved with?

More work required on making sure that people are aware that they could be on the portal, so the smaller businesses could actually participate at schools or other projects.

The suppliers area is a challenge as there is a requirement to select your criteria and if the project is uploaded onto the portal under a different heading, it doesn't automatically flag up that the tender has been uploaded.

It was highlighted that hospital is a good example of a project that came out that nobody knew about. Government were chasing around to establish why there was a lack of responses and the answer was because they'd given it an obscure reference.

Fail safe is to tick every option in order not to miss an opportunities rather than relying upon an appropriate tag reference.

It was suggested that a response can be that there is a requirement to maybe have an awareness especially for smaller contractors

It was stated that with regards to the states tendering the procurement process is inadequate. General view is that that there are inconsistencies as sometimes a good set of documents are issued if it comes from a certain team and other times the criteria of what you're bidding against will be totally different so it is unsure of what the process is going to be - therefore a more streamlined process is required.

It was asked as to whether the same kind of document is used regardless as to whether it's a 40 million pound project or 40 000 project.

Has the government communicated with you how it plans to address the areas of improvement identified?

A really good example re the communication we have from the new healthcare facility has been poor.

Have there been any barriers to engaging with the procurement process that you are able to highlight?

The point of contact or what is the point of contact was highlighted as a barrier as previously discussed.

The process of uploading and sending works. Consultants have previously uploaded projects for the government and they have got a name of who has received it. There is sometimes a requirement for more clarity on whether it's a design element or construct on some of them so consultants end up going back to them asking for further information on what is actually required. More definition within a scope and what feedback mechanisms are there between local businesses and government in relation to the procurement process.

Are there any initiatives you would recommend to government aimed at enhancing the supplier and local business participation in procurement?

Longer lead time are needed from government. A lot of last minute requests such as wanting schools doing in summer holidays is not helpful. It was reported that there have been some delays putting a project on the portal and any lost time seems to be pushed on to the supplier - so if it takes longer the tender period will be really short

Conversations undertaken with the construction industry response team had highlighted that their funding months will start at the end of the year, and if not completed by the end of the year then the whole process starts again.

It potentially takes three or four months to begin the process but could there be a rolling or biannual evaluation of costs so that the project can actually get completed . Trying to get some of the big projects done in 12 months is an impossible task. Should there be further communication with some of the smaller contractors about getting the information onto the portal and b) giving further training about how the system works? This could potentially make better use of the private sector.

How do you feel the government is ensuring the procurement process as processes are transparent and fair for all local businesses?

Smaller businesses could potentially be disadvantaged but it was felt that this has been addressed by having a centralised process and creating a more fair and transparent process albeit more work needs to be undertaken.

A drop-in centre or telephone desk could be worthwhile to address IT issues and training to get familiar with the system. Potentially this could be set up at Digital Jersey or Highlands College.

Can you discuss any successful case studies where supply engagement has significantly improved procurement outcomes?

Could tap into private sector a little bit more to help them refine the process or scope.

Possible examples of where it could be improved. Certain things have been achieved where visits to certain buildings have been arranged so that attendees get the proper scope of what's being tendered but this is very intermittent. If the building is known then there is little point in attending those meetings. It was noted, however, that some firms have been scored lower because they didn't go to a building that was already known. So there are some anomalies.

There are examples relating to government where they have shown a new building to look at the scope for how it is maintained and these are not individual but these are examples of where supplier engagement has actually probably improved in terms of the tender response

Has the government got the balance right for competitive pricing with the goal of supporting local businesses in the procurement process?

There are a lot of examples in construction of jobs that have not been appointed to local business.

Question was asked as to what it was felt the right balance for low spend versus off-island spend should be? Is it only if it's cheaper it should go off-island?

If it goes off-island there is no benefit of a circular economy which is what the whole purpose is.

What are the next steps government should undertake to refine and improve procurement process?

The scope and trying to use local project managers to assist them and engagement. It was felt that if the project is big enough and warrants it, then government should engage by offering up their time to either walk the job, talk about the job, provide information on how the procurement is going to look and why the procurement is being undertaken in this way

Better feedback loops in terms of different projects and how it could have improved on the portal, identify systemic issues.

Other matters you wish to raise not been covered in the questions above, please do not do please to provide these as well.

Conflicts of interest that exist are not included. On certain projects some individuals have a very significant say in what goes in in terms of shaping the tender and the assessment and then a recommendation is made and not many of these are overturned