

PROCESS INNOVATION IN THE REFORM OF PROCUREMENT *improving public procurement of professional design services in construction*

Dutch model for strategic benefits of [an integrated e-procurement portal](#) which includes amongst its facilities a helpdesk, procurement guidance and advisory service, and data bank for improving and promulgating exemplary public procurement practices, developed by the independent foundation Architectuur Lokaal. This is, crucially, an independent charity sustained by donation.

This e-procurement system commenced in 2005 and most of its core parts have now been running for over 4 years. The portal is free to users and handles in excess of 300 public procurement processes per annum (2012) covering all public procurement notices, and automatically provides the services found within disparate and is fully integrated with the other equally important supplementary attributes.

This portal not only provides a graphically clear and simple portal for accessing construction projects and others but also publishes guidance, assists by providing standard best practice recommendations, monitors procurement practice, and transparently advises procurers upon issue of notices where there are shortfalls, seeks remedy, monitors and evaluates awards, and operates a repository, registration and certification service. It monitors market data (and aberrant market behavior), publishes reports and promulgates best practice.

The first and foremost intent is to educate public clients and improve practice. Not 'to name and shame' but to advise and discuss bottlenecks and successes in selection procedures, so that clients can learn from each other's successes and failures and so that all parties involved can discuss the appropriateness of requirements and criteria. This is not a one sided process, Steunpunt publishes a clients response alongside their own letter. This is reported to have had a significant impact on promulgating best practice.

The portal has gained enormous respect across the Dutch Construction industry and is frequently called upon to advise and evidence Dutch Procurement issues by national and local procurement agencies. It maintains continuous dialogue between public clients, architects and design and construction managers around its simple 'manifesto for better procurement'.

In the EU Commissions Evaluation of the action Plan for the implementation of the legal framework for electronic procurement, (by Siemens / Time.lex for the EU Commission / Internal market 2010) Steunpunt was cited as the most accessible portal in NL.

Discussing is going on with other EU countries (United Kingdom, Ireland, Scotland a.o.) to adapt the system to their national standards and modify and updated the Dutch system; it gets expanded to embody new practice under the proposed revisions to the EU Procurement Directive, enhances e-procurement, they benefit from our experience, (which helps them sustain and expand their service), and harmonisation is improved.

This provides opportunity to pilot a highly reputable sector specific integrated system, with additional potential application for roll out and or expansion to other sectors.

WM, BS & OO7 ver 8. 2/02/13