

The Sustainable Procurement Information Network www.s-p-i-n.co.uk

Summary

The Sustainable Procurement Information Network (SPIN website) is a product of the East Midlands Centre of Excellence's Sustainable Procurement Project.

SPIN is the first and only web information portal dedicated to supporting local authorities in their efforts to procure sustainably and contains the very latest information relating to the sustainable procurement agenda. This 'one-stop' website provides resource material which will help procurement practitioners develop sustainable procurement initiatives in local government.

The SPIN website is extremely easy to navigate, with comprehensive information just one click away from the home page. Local authorities and public sector organisations are also being urged to contribute to the content of the website in order to add even more value to this resource.

SPIN is maintained by the East Midlands Centre of Excellence and since its 2007 launch has also received backing from the Regional Centres of Excellence network, firmly setting SPIN as a national resource for sustainable procurement information.

Project background

The East Midlands Centre of Excellence (EMCE) funded a project titled the 'East Midlands Sustainable Procurement Project'.

The Sustainable Procurement Project worked with every local authority in the region through a combination of visits, meetings and training workshops to raise the profile and capacity for sustainable procurement in each authority.

The project recognised that local authorities typically encountered similar barriers when trying to implement sustainable procurement practices.

A report produced by Forum for the Future (February 2006) confirmed that most authorities are held back from a more sustainable approach by the additional cost of sustainable options and an inability to offset whole life savings against short term budgetary limits. A lack of time and resource to do anything other than what is conventionally expected of local authorities is also a common barrier.

Sustainable Procurement Project benefits

The Sustainable Procurement Project not only raised the profile of sustainability across the East Midlands, but also substantially increased the understanding of sustainable procurement amongst a wide range of personnel in each of the regions authorities.

Furthermore, the project also established the foundation on which to deliver additional sustainable procurement projects as the public sector continues to respond to the expectations of central government.

In order to support the regions desire for sustainable procurement the project board set out to build the Sustainable Procurement Information Network (SPIN) website, the objectives for the website included:

- Identifying a suitable system for knowledge share
- Populating SPIN with sufficient information
- Identifying and adding exemplars of good practice
- Allowing for ongoing administration and maintenance
- Producing a user guide to support the development of SPIN
- Identifying the willingness of other organisations to support SPIN.

Benefits achieved

SPIN provides valuable resource material which will help develop sustainable procurement initiatives in local government. The website is extremely easy to navigate, with comprehensive information just one click away, amongst many other things the website contains:

- Latest News and Events
- Sustainable Procurement
- Sustainable Development
- Strategies Policies and Guidelines
- Toolkits and Training
- Specifications and Templates
- Case Studies
- Document Library.

The SPIN website is open to and encourages contributions from all local authorities and public sector organisations. This will ensure that the website is populated with relevant and authoritative documents. There is also an in-built Forum facility which enables registered users to communicate about relevant sustainability topics and issues.

Partners

To deliver the Sustainable Procurement Project and subsequent SPIN website the EMCE worked in partnership with:

- A dedicated group of regional practitioners
- Each local authority in the region
- The Regional Centres of Excellence network
- Forum for the Future
- The University of Derby.

Role of RCE

The EMCE funded the development of the SPIN website, facilitated the direction of its development and provided the on-going admin and maintenance of the website post project. The EMCE has also promoted the website to 1,400 regional local authority contacts and nationally via the RCE network. SPIN was also distinguished as a 'Star Website' by Government Opportunities magazine following a national press release in 2007.

Web link

Visit www.s-p-i-n.co.uk for the very latest news, documents and events relating to sustainability and sustainable procurement.

Contacts

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