



Defence Commercial Business Forum (DCBF) - Collaboration Working Group

A code of practice for collaboration

Introduction:

The MOD's Defence Digital Service Delivery & Operations (SDO) organisation and the Defence technology industry are collectively keen to identify opportunities for a more collaborative approach to the transaction of business, and to move away from an adversarial approach to MOD-supplier relations, as has been the case in previous years. Both parties agree that changing behaviours and the dynamics of the relationship will deliver benefits to all concerned and will engender a more trusted business environment.

The Approach:

To that end a joint *Code of Practice* has been developed which reflects the following five key points:

1. Improved visibility & engagement on existing & future business opportunities.
2. Encouraging regular formal and informal dialogue to enable improved long term business relationships.
3. Delivering business with increased commercial buy-in via direct involvement and a better understanding of each other's organisation and drivers.
4. Talk first (rather than letter or email exchanges) ensuring individual contract/project issues are flagged at 1*/Head of Commercial and cross-cutting (multi-programme/contract issues) are flagged to the Commercial Supplier Relationship Manager (SRM) Lead (where appropriate) and/or 2*/Director Commercial before further senior escalations are instigated across Defence.
5. Where appropriate on specific programmes demonstration of collaborative behaviours which could include those which are compatible with, or certified to, ISO 44001 "Collaborative Business Relationship Management Systems" (formerly BS11000).

Explaining more about each one of these as follows:

1. Improved Visibility & Engagement on existing and future business opportunities:
 - Every effort will be made by the Department and Industry to engage ahead of the formal procurement cycle;
 - Future pipeline and opportunities will be clearly signposted as early as practically possible, with every effort made by the Department to use plain language to ensure the requirements are better understood by Industry in the relevant market capability;
 - There is recognition that content and the Department's timescale priorities can evolve and change, and accordingly regular updates with explanations will be provided to Industry to minimise nugatory activities and spend by all involved;



- Industry recognises that early sight of future business opportunities is preferable to no forward visibility at all, even if any information released is heavily caveated and subject to change; and
 - Industry visibility of research and development activities and work with other customers across Government and other sectors where relevant.
2. Developing long term business relationships through:
- Regular dialogue, informal and formal, at all levels between Industry and the Department, and outside of specific programmes, including:
 - regular fireside chats;
 - more formal customer relationship management, once that is set up through those government departments responsible;
 - open and honest feedback in both directions must be a feature of building & sustaining these relationships;
 - work at the right levels between organisations, involving seniors as necessary to move matters forward; and
 - regular Supplier Forum with Defence Digital's Supplier Forum held at 2* level.
3. Delivering business:
- Recognise the dependencies and obligations within programmes on all concerned, have programme teams produce and work to their own charters, gaining buy-in through direct involvement;
 - Encourage the involvement of Commercial staff, at all levels down, in project meetings to ensure matters are dealt with promptly and effectively;
 - All parties should focus on outcomes and adopt a willingness to be pragmatic;
 - Ensure the cost of business of all parties is understood by all;
 - All parties must use contract change provisions effectively, moving away from a more informal approach;
 - Review the terms and mechanisms included within proposed contracts to ensure they are compatible with the benefits of collaboration;
 - Share, manage and mitigate supply chain risks through individual programmes and escalation of strategic supply chain risks where appropriate; and
 - Recognise positive behaviours and good working relationships.
4. Talk first (rather than letter or email exchanges):
- Move away from issues being handled through protracted exchanges of correspondence. Pick up the phone & arrange a meeting;
 - Deliver on your commitments and word: ensure actions are owned and have agreed timescales that are met;
 - Think holistically about relationships. Raise concerns and issues, including legal, at appropriate levels as they occur. Do not accumulate issues but effectively manage them as they arise; and
 - Meet as often as is necessary but do not wait for physical meetings. If an issue is urgent make greater use of collaboration tools online to share information and discuss.



5. Where appropriate, consider the use of [ISO 44001](#) "Collaborative Business Relationship Management Systems" (formerly BS11000) and/or approaches recommended by the Institute for Collaborative Working (ICW).