

BIS | Department for Business
Innovation & Skills

**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
STRATEGY**

JULY 2012

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BIS Continuous Improvement Strategy

Business, Innovation and Skills sits at the heart of the Government's focus on sustainable and balanced growth. In this challenging economic climate it is vital that all our policies on higher education, research and innovation, skills, enterprise, trade and markets work together to support growth.

BIS is committed to developing the staff, systems and infrastructure that can support and strengthen delivery of this vital agenda. We have already achieved a great deal and a comprehensive programme of work is underway across BIS to ensure we are a high performing, efficient and effective department, contributing over £4 billion in planned savings by 2014-15. The [Guide to BIS](#) sets out our achievements over the last year and our plans to support strong, sustainable and balanced growth.

This Continuous Improvement Strategy outlines our approach to developing a continuous improvement ethos across our work and draws together our various projects to transform BIS and our Partner Organisations. The detailed actions and timetable will be set out in a separate Implementation Plan due to be published on 30 July 2012

Why Continuous Improvement?

The overarching principles of Continuous Improvement, acting on feedback, evolutionary changes and quickly removing obstacles to efficiency, are an excellent fit with our existing work to create a BIS that is more flexible, open and innovative. Our work in this area is also supported by our values:

- **Focus on what matters most**
- **Commit to each other's success**
- **Empowered to deliver**

Our approach to continuous improvement covers core BIS and Partner Organisations and aims to focus resources and integrate activities that are critical to the successful delivery of sustainable and balanced growth across the UK economy. We have initiated a number of programmes to maximise efficiency, effectiveness, address underperformance, respond to external influences and to change our culture and processes.

Our policy remit to support growth is one of the widest and most challenging in Whitehall. In common with other Departments, we are facing constrained budgets and the need to keep improving the way we work with our customers and Ministers. Our response to these challenges began in 2010 when BIS became one of the first departments in Whitehall to implement a significant programme of change to enhance our capability and tackle a significant budget reduction:

- We undertook a restructuring and selection process across the core department, and in other agencies and Partner Organisations.
- We reduced staff numbers by 20 per cent and expenditure by over £200 million in cash terms relative to 2010-11.
- We implemented new team structures, reduced layers of management and delivered clear accountability and a focus on priorities.

The next phase of our change programme focused on building staff engagement and strengthening our leadership. In autumn 2011 we held BIS Conversations with over 1000 staff asking how BIS could be more flexible, open and innovative and began a Board Engagement programme.

The next stage of our change journey is to focus on continuous improvement. A fully integrated continuous improvement programme, with stronger connections across BIS and our Partners, will support our work to deliver the actions outlined in the Civil Service Reform Plan and the upcoming spending review. The attached Annex highlights the progress of some of our Partner Organisations.

We are committed to sharing our knowledge and experience with other government departments and keen to learn from their experiences. We are regularly asked to share our experience and knowledge with other departments, particularly in the context of restructuring and selection programmes, our Conversations approach to staff engagement and the development of our Change Agent Network.

Continuous Improvement has been at the heart of a number of key areas of work

Developing customer focus

BIS works across government, with our Partner Organisations, the private, public and third sectors. We are developing new ways of working with customers and stakeholders, enhancing our stakeholder engagement skills and techniques, and improving processes to ensure BIS continues to be well connected, listens well to external views and provides strong leadership on the growth agenda across all areas of government. BIS leads the "Growth and the Economy Communications Hub" which works across government to ensure that all our campaigning communications with diverse audiences are better targeted, more effective and deliver value for money

External feedback from the Ipsos MORI Stakeholder Survey 2012 shows the Department's reputation has improved significantly since 2009. On key reputation scores such as familiarity (83%), favourability (75%), and working relationships (76%) BIS scores well above the average for Whitehall departments, with the absolute scores proving exceptionally high.

We have made significant progress in improving our digital capacity:

- The migration of 1 million customers of regional BusinessLink 'face to face' services to a digital service on the BusinessLink.gov.uk website.

- ‘Employee in a box’ – an online tool to help employers navigate employment laws before employing people – is being rolled out.
- The National Career Service came on line in April 2012. It offers independent and impartial information and advice on learning and work, combining face to face local advice with a new interactive website.
- Companies House website is providing services digitally to companies and individuals

Systematic collation of evidence on impact of BIS policies helps us evaluate the impact of our work on our stakeholders. Over 70 BIS Impact Assessments were considered by the Regulatory Policy Committee in 2011-12.

Our BIS Outreach programme allows staff to spend time with our stakeholders in business and the skills sector developing their understanding and providing valuable customer insight.

We are committed to developing our customer engagement in the policy making process. We recently applied open policy making to the Kay Review of UK Equity Markets and Long-Term Decision Making, and the Hargreaves review of intellectual property system. We have also established mechanisms to systematically draw on external expertise to shape policy working with the Automotive Council, Green Economy Council, Aerospace Business Leaders and Aerospace Growth Partnership, Green Construction Board Snyder Group (Business and Professional Services), the BIS Retail Strategic Forum and the Sector Skills Councils.

Staff engagement

Following the restructure and selection process our staff engagement index dipped to 49 per cent and a key message from staff was for senior management to be more visible and open. In the months following the restructure, we launched a successful initiative to engage staff across BIS, seeking their views on the themes of innovation, flexibility and transparency. The initiative was known as the ‘BIS Conversations’ and was supported by an extensive staff network of volunteer change agents. A large number of ideas were generated and these were taken forward by staff, with Executive Board support. One of the key outputs of these Conversations was the creation of new BIS values and behaviours.

In March 2012, we introduced an Executive Board engagement programme to increase Board visibility and help staff to understand the links between their work and the work of the wider Department. One of these events is a fortnightly update from members of the Board, where they hold face-to-face conversations with staff about BIS achievements and focus areas. We also run an extensive programme of events to share knowledge, reduce silos and engage staff in BIS work and performance. This includes our high profile speaker series, whereby external industry leaders share their thoughts and experiences, including feedback on BIS policy and their own leadership journeys. The events programme also includes regular policy updates for our Senior Civil Servants and other leadership events to provide senior staff with the tools and information to communicate with staff.

Open and clear management information

We are increasing the use of visual management techniques to present performance information in an easily digestible way, allowing progress to be tracked and enabling early identification and resolution of issues.

We have developed a Dashboard for the Executive Board which provides a comprehensive overview of the department. It will allow the Board to identify strategically where their attention should be focussed e.g. on specific issues or cross-cutting themes. The value of the Dashboard is maximised, not only through the data it provides, but in the debate and questions it raises. A summary of the Board discussions on the Dashboard will be published on the BIS intranet. We are developing a comprehensive data pack which includes data from our Partnership Organisations.

The Dashboard style of visual management is used across BIS, for example, the Business and Skills Group's Dashboard is accessible to all staff and has created a more transparent system of reporting and sharing of good practice. Progress against the 57 Ideas generated from the BIS Conversations is mapped on the Change Wall on the ground floor of the department. An eye-catching display using cartoons and humour, it has created a recognisable brand for our commitment to CI. This information is also provided on a dedicated part of our intranet site and reported to the Board.

Better prioritisation

A strong theme that emerged from the BIS Conversations was the need for better prioritisation and clarity over how and at what level decisions are taken. For this year's update of the published external Departmental Business Plan/Structural Reform Plan we worked closely with the Cabinet Office to focus the 2012 Business Plan on a lower number of key structural reform actions, significantly reducing the number of actions compared to the 2011 version. We are keen to ensure that next year's Plan goes even further in focusing on a small number of key priorities and milestones, and are working with Cabinet Office on possible options for a new model that would also be better aligned with our internal reporting.

The BIS Strategy and Analysis teams have been commissioned by the BIS Executive Board to develop a framework and evidence base for prioritising the allocation of administrative and programme resource across BIS. The aim of this work is to support the Executive Board in making evidence-based decisions on resource allocation within BIS which are then reflected in the Department's Administrative and Programme spends.

Our approach to Horizon Scanning has contributed to better prioritisation and continuous improvement by mapping out future trends and drivers for change as well as improving understanding of key uncertainties. We can use this thinking to maximise opportunities and minimise risks in developing strategy and policies.

Confident Teams

The substantial restructure we undertook over 2011 allowed us to implement the Confident Teams approach; flatter structures, clearer lines of accountability, staff closer to decision making, decisions made at the right level; combined with mechanisms to free up Board

members' time to focus on key strategic issues and increase the visibility of Board workings. We will evaluate the impact of Confident Teams and recommend further actions for improvement.

Improved Governance Arrangements

We are also committed to excellence in our governance procedures and set up new and improved structures at the start of the financial year. The objectives were to:

- Help more senior staff – from Directors through to Deputy Directors – be closer to decision making and have greater opportunity to drive the direction of BIS;
- Free up the Executive Board's time to focus on the key strategic issues and have more face to face engagement with staff across BIS; and
- Increase visibility of decision making within BIS and transparency around how the important choices are made

The new structures came into force on 1 April 2012. The Executive Board has created three new Committees – People, Operations and Performance, Finance and Risk. The membership of the Committees is drawn from the director cadre within BIS. The creation of the Performance, Finance & Risk Committee, in particular, ensures that maximum benefit can be gained by integrating risk management with operational planning, performance and financial management and thus enhancing our risk management capability.

Our level of Continuous Improvement Maturity

As described earlier, BIS has already made great progress on continuous improvement. An early priority will be to assess our CI maturity across the whole department and Partner Organisations in a way that is both consistent with the rest of government and appropriate to our diverse range of work. We will also review the level of expertise in continuous improvement methodologies across the department and our Partner Organisations with the aim of sharing and enhancing our CI expertise.

A major step in developing our CI capability has been to create a new Directorate within BIS. The Corporate Effectiveness Directorate links our Change, Innovation Capability, Internal Communications and BIS Secretariat Teams to co-ordinate effort, ensure consistency of approach, avoid duplication, share learning, plan and record impact and benefits.

BIS is applying Continuous Improvement principles and culture - acting on feedback, evolutionary changes, quickly removing obstacles to efficiency – across all areas of the department. In specific areas, such as our investigation and prosecution work, LEAN methodologies have been utilised to improve processes and secure significant improvements in efficiency. We are currently preparing for Investors in People assessment as part of the re-accreditation process and its emphasis on staff empowerment and customer focus supports our CI vision.

Several of our Partner Organisations have taken the decision to introduced formal CI methodologies. For example, Ordnance Survey implemented Lean Management in 1999-2000 and recently supported the accreditation of four Six Sigma Black Belt practitioners

and Companies House has this year set up a dedicated Continuous Improvement Delivery Team of trained practitioners.

Other Partner Organisations are continuing to build and mature their capability using external standards as the platform for embedding continuous improvement such as Investors in People, ISO standards or EFQM's Business Excellence methodology. The Competition Commission's corporate services team have achieved the Customer Service Excellence Award and is the only in-house team to have achieved such accreditation.

Achieving our vision for Continuous Improvement

A comprehensive programme of work is underway across BIS to ensure we are a high performing, efficient and effective department, contributing over £4 billion in planned savings by 2014-15.

Our work to further develop and sustain our CI culture will be delivered through linked programmes of work covering:

- new ways of working;
- building our capability;
- reforming corporate services; and
- working with and learning from our Partner Organisations

New ways of working

New ways of working will allow us to exploit the synergies across all our work programmes and maximise our resources.

We are developing plans to move to a more flexible ICT-enabled workstyle which transforms how and where we work and how we collaborate and deliver to our stakeholders. BIS has been a pilot department for an initiative to explore "the office of the future" looking at innovative ways to improve agility and engagement, including the use of technology and space.

Over 2012-13 we will further develop new ways of working with the support of appropriate HR policies on flexible benefits, poor performance management, grievance, disciplinary and attendance management procedures.

Our values and behaviours underpin our new ways of working:

Focus on what matters most

- I focus on outcomes and know what makes a difference
- I am able to challenge what doesn't add value
- I work efficiently and avoid duplication
- I am flexible and adapt to changing priorities

Commit to each other's success

- I respect other's expertise and listen to them
- I am proud to act as an ambassador for the whole of BIS
- I work collaboratively and use my knowledge to help others
- I am open to constructive challenge

Empowered to deliver

- I take responsibility and let others do so too
- I coach and support
- I know what is expected of me
- I innovate to find better ways of doing things

Our values and behaviours were developed directly from engagement with staff through our BIS Conversations. Workshops with staff led to the creation of a set of behaviours which bring to life how our values can be demonstrated every day. We have developed a Values Toolkit for use by senior leaders and managers to help them discuss ways to embed the values and behaviours with staff.

We have enhanced the role of some 80 volunteer Change Agents; giving them a clear job description, public support from the top of the office and development opportunities which include training in facilitation, listening and questioning skills. We have also created a Facilitator Network of over 50 staff, trained in The Innovation Space in BIS. Facilitators provide advice, support and high quality facilitation, enabling productive and innovative co-collaboration across teams and our stakeholders – in addition to saving costs on external facilitators.

Knowledge sharing is a key driver of continuous improvement and our Internal Communications Strategy for 2012-13 has set out a framework of actions that will involve, motivate and inspire staff to connect with each other and the organisation. We have set out what we expect from the Board, SCS, managers and all employees in this regard and will roll out a Line Manager Communication Programme.

Building our capability

The BIS Capability Strategy aims to ensure the skills, knowledge and experience of staff evolves and continuously develops. We will achieve this through focusing on the individual, team and organisational performance. Our priorities are Leadership, Performance Management, Talent, and Learning & Development.

Continuous Improvement requires increasingly visible and informed engagement from senior leaders. Our BIS Leadership Challenge Programme sets out what we expect from BIS Leaders at all levels of the organisation. We have introduced SCS 360 degree feedback as part of the annual appraisal process and explicitly seek examples of areas for improvement. We are introducing new ways of profiling and developing talent, strengthening our assessment and support for talented people and developing our approach to succession planning.

Effective Performance Management is key in continuously improving organisational performance. We have introduced a programme of Optimising Performance Masterclasses giving people the opportunity to build their skills and explore many of the myths surrounding performance management. We are also preparing simplified BIS policies and processes for grievances and managing poor performance. Line managers can also undertake training such as Managers as Coach. We have established a network of trained, qualified Coaches within BIS, available as a resource for the whole department.

Our L&D Strategy is underpinned by a quarter by quarter programme of activities. The focus for 2012-13 is PPM, policy delivery, prioritisation and developing commercial skills. We are nominating senior people to attend the new Major Projects Leaderships Academy. We have increased our L&D budget to ensure resources are available to meet our objectives and will create a joint L&D and analyst project team to look at how we can gain more robust evaluation data.

Reforming our corporate services

We have an extensive programme underway to reform corporate services across BIS and our Partner Organisations: The Corporate Services Portfolio. The portfolio creates a CI corporate service culture which drives efficiency and enables a focus on core frontline business.

The Portfolio consists of six ambitious programmes:

1. **Procurement** – to save around £160 million within this CSR period by introducing general procurement services which enable BIS and our Partner Organisations to buy better.
2. **Estates Strategy and Optimisations** -to rationalise from about 200 to 50 offices, managed effectively across the estate to save over £100 million within this CSR period.
3. **ICT** – to reduce the £260 million per year spent on ICT across BIS partner organisations by £100 million within this CSR period.
4. **Shared Services** – to save £4 million per year through cheaper, simpler, better corporate services; releasing cost and enabling our businesses to focus on making a difference.
5. **Human Resources** – to remove duplication and standardise HR policy, generic learning and development and resourcing processes; reduce the HR resource and the cost per head of HR services
6. **Finance for the future** – to rationalise reporting, remove duplication, provide timely, accurate and efficient financial information.

Working with, and learning from, our Partner Organisations and others

The BIS Family includes over 40 partner organisations varying significantly in their size, function and legal status. Despite this diversity, a continuous improvement culture is

growing and developing across all areas with a range of approaches and levels of CI maturity. BIS has left the decision on whether an organisation adopts a particular CI methodology or embeds CI principles in other ways, to the Partner Organisations themselves. Partners will report regularly to BIS on their CI progress.

We are planning to work closely with our Partner Organisations to learn from their knowledge and experience of Continuous Improvement. Ordnance Survey is currently using its experience to coach several government departments and agencies and is a member of the new Cabinet Office-sponsored Institute for Continuous Improvement in the Public Sector. BIS is a member of the Government CI Network and meets regularly with others to share best practice and test new ideas.

The attached Annex provides details of the CI approaches currently being undertaken by a number of our Partner Organisations.

Measuring Progress and Accountability

Measuring progress against our ambitions will be key to demonstrating the impact and benefits of a continuous improvement culture.

Assessing our maturity

We will undertake work to develop a clearer picture of CI maturity across all Groups in BIS and our Partner Organisations that is consistent with the rest of government and appropriate to our range of businesses. To do this we will make use of the DWP CI Maturity Model and regularly assess our progress against the model.

Capturing impact and benefits

An early priority in our Continuous Improvement Implementation Plan will be to commission work to:

- Establish hard and soft, customer-focused baseline measures
- Capture data on costs, benefits and savings
- Set targets and priority areas for CI development
- Undertake a detailed risk assessment and create a Risk Register

Reviewing progress and updating the Strategy and Plan

In order to ensure the Strategy remains relevant, appropriate and ambitious it will be reviewed regularly as part of our governance process. In particular to ensure that it dovetails with our work to support the delivery of the Civil Service Reform and our contribution to re-balancing public finances.

Governance

Current responsibility for delivery of the various strands CI work falls to our People Committee and the Operations Committee. The Corporate Effectiveness Directorate will work closely with these Committees to ensure they are able to assess and review progress.

Continuous Improvement activity in our Partner Organisations have their own governance arrangements and these will stand. We will set up mechanisms to gather data on progress regularly from Partner Organisations.

Timetable

Continuous Improvement takes a long term view and helps develop measures and understanding of the contribution and impact of everyone's role towards productive outcomes. A detailed timetable will be published in our Continuous Improvement Implementation Plan. High level milestones for the next three months are:

BIS Continuous Improvement Strategy: High level milestones for next 3 months		
Actions	Timeline	Responsible
<p>Review governance structures and establish appropriate governance procedures to support CI.</p> <p>Ensure that structures will cover our actions to support the Civil Service Reform Plan and New Ways of Working</p>	Complete by October 2012	Change & Innovation Capability Team and BIS Secretariat
Commission work on baseline data and impact of CI	Commission July 2012	Change & Innovation Capability Team
Undertake comprehensive CI Maturity assessment for whole of BIS family	Complete by October 2012	Change & Innovation Capability Team and BIS Secretariat
<p>Develop and deliver messaging around CI for all staff</p> <p>Run CI awareness and engagement campaign</p>	<p>Develop July – August</p> <p>Deliver September 2012</p>	Internal Communications Team
Update Continuous Improvement Strategy and Implementation Plan	October 2012	Change & Innovation Capability Team

Annex A: Our Partner Organisations are developing a range of CI approaches

Ordnance Survey

Ordnance Survey has a number of approaches to help focus the business on continuous improvement (CI). From a process improvement perspective, Ordnance Survey has used lean and six sigma techniques in its data collection areas for several years, and has recently introduced an 'Agile' approach to product development. From a cultural perspective, Ordnance Survey employs the Investors in People (IiP) framework and also has an ongoing engagement strategy to continuously improve employees' engagement with Ordnance Survey and its business goals.

Ordnance Survey's approach to CI may be summarised as follows:

- Investing in staff, as they are the people who know Ordnance Survey's business best.
- Developing and encouraging staff to apply the skills they develop, and recognising and supporting their efforts in doing so.
- Encouraging everyone in the organisation to learn from the best-practice of others, and to share Ordnance Survey's knowledge and experience as widely as possible with others in the public sector and beyond.

Lean Management:

Ordnance Survey began to implement continuous improvement, based upon Lean-Principles, in 1999/2000 and branded this approach as 'Lean Management'. Ordnance Survey made a specific investment in 'lean' by sponsoring two senior managers to gain an MSc in Lean Operations Management at Cardiff University.

These staff then introduced tool and methodology training workshops and provided training for over 50 specially-selected staff across the organisation. Ordnance Survey also developed a 'softer' cultural program to underpin the harder operational efforts, by, for example, introducing 'Kaizen' groups/activities across the organisation; and by introducing ideals such as "never knowingly walk by a problem", "never knowingly pass on a defect" and "never knowingly accept a defect".

Ordnance Survey recently acquired four Six-Sigma Black Belt practitioners (including one Master Black Belt), by sponsoring internal staff through a leading international Six Sigma accreditation programme.

Companies House

2009-2010 Focus on Improvement training to all grades introduction to LEAN tool and techniques

2010 Set up Ideas Database and Forum, introduced concept of Rapid Action Workshops, training in-house facilitators working with teams on problem solving/process mapping

2011-12 Rolled out Visual Information Boards, Approach to Coach and Approach to People training

2012 Set up a dedicated Continuous Improvement Delivery team with trained practitioners

2012-2013 Work with individual teams looking at their Vision/SIPOC/Metrics/NVA and 5S

National Measurement Office

Central to their approach is the use of quality management systems in particular ISO 9000 whose key aim is 'continuous improvement'. Part of the continuous improvement process is to take on board recommendations by auditors (both internal and external), customer feedback surveys and complaints. At the end of each year a management review takes place which looks at the outcomes achieved against the annual plan and implements improvement plans for the following year. This follows the classic continuous improvement cycle of 'plan, do, check, act'.

Similarly, NMO uses the Investors in People standard and the annual Civil Service Staff survey as the main focus of our staff engagement. Emerging from this, the Agency runs a Staff Focus Group, whose membership comes from across the Agency. All NMO staff are encouraged to make suggestions for agenda items to be considered by the Focus Group. These are discussed and any suggested improvements/ideas are submitted to NMO's Management Board for consideration and approval.

In 2007 we embarked on an overhaul of all of our systems, beginning with the staff appraisal system and then moving on to the corporate planning process, the risk register, management and financial reporting, the balanced scorecard and changes to the Annual Report format. In virtually all cases, the existing processes were taken as the starting point and were consciously developed rather than abandoned and replaced – a process described by one member of staff as "evolutionary transformation". The language and processes of a "Change Programme" were deliberately set aside. This approach has provided an excellent platform for major expansion and diversification and there are no plans to alter it. We believe that the flexibilities of Executive Agency status, supported by scrutiny from the National Audit Office, Investors in People assessment, our various Internal Audit procedures and the governance represented by using non-executives on our Steering Board and Audit Committee provide the best combination of challenge and stability necessary for working in a competitive environment

Met Office

Although we do not use a particular recognised methodology such as Kaizen or Sigma Six, the principles of “Continuous Improvement” are embedded throughout the management processes of the Met Office. For example:

- The Trading Fund model encourages improvements in efficiency and effectiveness; we operate multi-year CSAs (Customer Supplier Agreements) that have incremental efficiency targets built-in.
- Many of our corporate objectives are based upon continual improvement to customer outputs, rather than finite goals.
- We have annual BPMs (Business Performance Measures) that seek year-on-year improvement to our outputs.
- The performance management process and achievement of Business Performance Measures are linked to staff pay.
- We seek to continually improve the organisational climate through feedback from our annual employee attitude survey and leadership climate surveys.
- Staff development activities form an integral part of our performance management process.
- Our internal audit team works in partnership with all staff to share best practice and encourage continual improvement across the office, enabling us to better meet our corporate objectives in an efficient and effective way.
- We are ISO 9001:2008 and ISO 14001:2004 compliant – ensuring that we continually improve the understanding of our processes for delivering products and services to customers, and ensuring efficiency and quality

Research Councils UK

The UK’s seven Research Councils, working together as Research Councils UK, set up a shared services centre to reduce spend on administration. The continuous improvement made through the sharing and standardising of processes has released more funds for investment in science and research, keeping the UK at the forefront of research and innovation globally.

Following publication of the Wakeham report, *Financial Sustainability and Efficiency in Full Economic Costing of Research in UK Higher Education Institutions*, the Research Councils were set an efficiency savings target for the spending review period totalling £427.9 million.

The Research Councils initiated a programme to achieve these efficiencies in regard to research grants and Research Council institutes and facilities, as well as encouraging the more intensive use of existing and new assets across the research base. These will be achieved in two main ways - through the application of an efficiency factor to the indirect costs and by reducing the indexation rate used on research grants. These apply both to new grant awards and to the remaining payments on grants awarded in the past.

Other programmes of work contributing to continuous improvement across the Research Councils are:

- e-Infrastructure Consortium
- Developments in University Asset Sharing Systems
- RCUK Shared Services Centre
- BBSRC Management Development Programme
- EPRC Strategy and Planning Group
- Leadership for NERC (L4N)
- The NERC Change Management Framework
- NERC Business Performance Management
- STFC Computational Science and Engineering
- STFC ISIS Facility
- STFC Human Resources Process Re-engineering project

Engineering Construction Industry Training Board

The ECITBs approach to continuous improvement has five main strands;

- Personal Development Reviews (PDR)
- ISO 9001
- Risk Management System
- Complaints and Enquiries
- Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey

The PDR process sets annual objectives, designed to improve their performance and that of the organisation. The objectives are set in collaboration with the individual and are periodically reviewed for progress and achievement. Over the years this has resulted in a number of process and procedural changes that have improved performance. The PDR system also identifies and addresses training and development needs within individuals, which also contributes to improved business performance.

The ECITB operates an ISO 9001 system. Every year each process document, which contains details of the appropriate aims, objectives, processes and procedures, is internally audited. The process has identified problems and issues that, as a result of being addressed have improved performance.

The ECITB's Risk Register details the significant risks to expected organisational performance. By identifying and implementing mitigating actions the risks are reduced and improvements in performance achieved.

The ECITB utilises complaint and enquiry logs to detail customer and stakeholder issues. Regular review of the logs identifies issues that come up time and time again.

The ECITB measures its performance each year through an independent survey of customers' satisfaction. An action plan is developed to address the issues raised. The ECITB has seen a rise in customer satisfaction over the last 3 years.

CITB – ConstructionSkills

In 2006 the Awarding Organisation section of our business identified that they had a strong need to improve and strengthen customer relationships and service. Since then they have aligned a programme of improvement activities towards delivering this strategic aim. This programme has included changes to recruitment practices, staff and leadership training, internal and external communications and customer facing processes and systems. As a result over the 5 year period the Awarding Organisation has seen its customer approval ratings improve year on year from 62% to 80% and from being the lowest ranked in the market is now ranked in the top quartile against similar organisations and have achieved accreditation from the Institute of Customer Services

United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority

A Change Management Steering Committee (CMSC) oversees and drives identification and subsequent implementation of Cultural, behavioural and process changes based on five change enablers: flexibility, integration, simplification, leadership and accountability. Actions are assigned to sponsors who identify resource to implement the changes. Progress is monitored via CMSC and the Executive. Authority performance milestones are identified from a list of change initiatives and contribute to the company bonus if achieved.

We also have a Continuous Improvement Programme (CiP) which aims to focus resources and integrate activities that are critical to the successful delivery of the fusion programme. It is concentrating on a number of key projects to maximise efficiency, effectiveness, address underperformance and respond to external influences and to change our culture and processes. It takes a long-term view, simplifying functions and processes, stripping out waste and unnecessary bureaucracy. CiP helps develop measures and understanding of the contribution and the impact of everyone's role towards productive outcomes for the overall organisation.

Competition Commission

The Competition Commission's corporate services (HR, finance, procurement, IT, information centre etc) team have achieved the Customer Service Excellence Award for the services it provides to its internal and external customers and is currently seeking re-accreditation. We understand that that we are the only in house support team to have achieved this accreditation.

The Certification Office

Our approach to continuous improvement is aided by our small size. We are able to review all of the work of the office at an all staff Monthly Brief. The Brief allows for assurance to be given to the Certification Officer and the chance to review and improve systems.

Recently staff identified specific improvements to both the way we chase organisations for statutory financial returns and the way information is presented on these returns.

Low Pay Commission

Recent improvements through ongoing consideration of how to do things better have included providing an advance copy of the LPC report before it has been finalised through proof reading, enabling the Government to consider the report two weeks' earlier than would otherwise have been the case, which in turn allowed stakeholders' wish for confirmation of October's minimum wage level by the date of the Budget to be met.

We are beginning implementation from the spring 2012 annual review exercise. These will include an online booking system for stakeholders to book meetings with LPC officials as part of our consultation this year, putting a searchable bibliography of all LPC commissioned research on our website, investigations of scope for acquiring software to typeset our annual report ourselves, of moving away from an annual cycle of commissioning research and of finding co-sponsors for research in order to make our research budget deliver greater value.

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URN 12/930