

INSPIRE case study

Inno booster – Innovation in light and furniture

Acknowledgement: This case-study has been produced thanks to the contribution of Inno booster Consortium (see: <http://www.inno booster.eu/about-inno booster/>)

The Inno booster inLIFE project is a part of the Horizon 2020 programme initiated by the European Commission.

“Inno booster inLIFE” stands for “Inno booster in Light and Furniture” and aims at supporting public procurers in purchasing new and improved solutions in the field of resource efficient interior and exterior lighting as well as innovative office solutions. The project is an ongoing PPI Project.

The project aims to contribute at creating a liaison between innovation and standardisation and to obtain a critical mass of demand for innovative products from two different technological fields, the lighting and the office environment. Both of the groups of products are contributing to grand societal challenges at EU level as they address the issues of climate change and reduction of resources in open plan offices.

More specific objectives of the project would be to define technical specifications for innovative solutions and formulate a business-case regarding the procurement of innovation, to use innovative tender procedures, to reduce costs and environmental damage in the long run, to provide the public sector with first class infrastructures and services and to choose innovative and trendsetting technological solutions to foster innovations in Europe.

An important issue for us is to achieve sustainable outputs. Results attained during the life-time of the project should be preserved and developed further after the implementation of the project as such has ended. This project shall create the basis for started processes to continue after the project has been implemented.

The two procurement authorities participating are the Austrian Procurement Agency (FPA), having the lead of the project and the Hansel Ltd. from Finland, as project partner. The scientific monitoring as well as the theoretical input is guaranteed by the Austrian Institute for Technology, (AIT). The Austrian Ministry of Finance as well as the Airport of Linz are the beneficiaries in the purchasing process and project partners within this project.

Status: on-going

Project Lead: Stefan Wurm

E-mail: innovation@bbg.gv.at

Phone: +43 1 245 70 817

1. Identification and assessment of unmet needs within (and starts from) the public bodies

For both work packages – light and furniture – a first needs assessment was conducted through customer workshops. In these workshops, public authorities could voice their plans for change for the next years. In addition to this, a subcontractor will be engaged in 2014 to find new potential customers.

Many official buildings like hospitals, airports, and others face a high need of illumination, which can't be reduced due to security reasons. It is thus crucial to find ways of maintaining the level of illumination while reducing the energy consumption as well as a low switching rate. At the moment, fluorescent tubes seem to be the most preferable alternative. However, the current market of high efficient fluorescent tubes and other new technologies in lightening (LED and others) is often not very transparent for procurers. Many suppliers offer different systems but most of the public procurers are sceptical about these offers. The main problem of widespread fluorescent tube systems is the installation costs. There is not much interest in changing luminaries except within the context of a total reconstruction. This is the reason why a solution should be found, that new tubes match with the existing installation. The potential new product should combine all these advantages and could create a new standard on the Internal Market or at least change the way public sector uses light applications.

Furniture

Studies show that daily working in open-plan office spaces with plenty of colleagues could be annoying and stressful. Therefore furniture industries are working on noise-reducing furniture solutions, especially for open-plan offices.

Public authorities have to provide a considerable amount of office working stations. People working in open-plan offices are asking more and more for single office solutions as they feel a decrease of concentration when having to work in the same room with several colleagues. On the other hand there is a need for flexibility and efficiency which is given by open offices. Thus, the number of open-plan office spaces increased in the last years.

Due to home office solutions which are widespread in public institutions, working stations can be used by any of the employees, as the stations are not nominal. In addition to this, the number of employees fluctuates permanently and therefore ongoing movement would be necessary. As public authorities want to lower their reconstruction and adaption costs for offices, open-plan offices are a good solution because of their flexibility.

As acoustic experts have found out, the functional and sound absorbing office furniture is creating an optimised working and environmental climate. On the basis of the provided values, European furniture producers will have the opportunity to contribute to a standardised acoustic program. The findings could be used in the development of an own production line.

It is proved that the reduction of noise and sounds in offices is boosting concentration and is leading to a more efficient use of working time and a better working cycle.

2. Involvement of users in specification of requirements and/or piloting

To successfully conduct the actual procurement and ensure that the most innovative producers know about the planned tender and hand in their offers, the purchasing bodies Federal Procurement Agency and Hansel conducted a market analysis to get a deep insight on innovative producers all over Europe. All of them have

been contacted and were invited to the Supplier Innovation Days where they had the chance to share their ideas on innovative solutions.

3. SoA analysis via open technical dialogue and early market engagement

By conducting a needs assessment (where the main technological and economic advantages of the new products were explained) the real interest of the potential customers to buy such an innovative product was checked, whereby all existing channels of public procurement networks were included in the assessment.

As a following step, the first basis for a technical description of the product was drafted and possible suppliers were invited to a test. The results of this test buy provided the project partners with the necessary experience for developing the right technical criteria for the final tender. The pilot innovative tender procedure was finalised with the input of a procurement law specialist.

4. Specification of functional / performance-based requirements

All project partners worked out specifications for the product together in order to find potential suppliers in their countries.

Based on the needs assessment of all partners and the test buy, a common tender or minimum common technical description for a tender are set up.

5. Verification of innovative solutions (either within the tendering process or in pre-commercial phase)

The test buy represents an integral and crucial part of the first interim phase. In order to ensure a high level of innovation rather than merely buying “better than standard” furniture, the Austrian Ministry of Finance carried out the test buy within the Innobooster project.

Based on this, an evaluation study is conducted to assess potential for improvement and to understand the importance of the different criteria in order to implement the right ones in the tender procedure.

6. Shared allocation of risks and benefit (including IPR)

Since only existing innovative solutions are purchased, (new to the market, new to the procurer), there are no IPR issues.

7. Enable the participation of SMEs

The project will be tendered in several smaller lots. This measure should enable the participation of SMEs. Apart from tendering in several lots (on the level of NUTS 3 regions, which are 35 regions in Austria) FPA tries to support SMEs by publishing a short and simple abstract for every tender, providing early information on tenders via the FPA homepage, to allow bidding consortia, provide a checklist for bidders, offer a service to answer questions of bidders and to provide the chamber of economics with information.

8. Enhance the competition during execution and facilitate innovation over the contract period (for PCP multiple sourcing and approach in phases, for PPI performance condition, lots....)

To successfully conduct the actual procurement and ensure that the most innovative producers know about the planned tender and hand in their offers, the purchasing bodies FPA and Hansel conducted a thorough market analysis to get a deep insight on innovative producers all over Europe. All of them have been contacted and were invited to the Supplier Innovation Days where they had the chance to share their ideas on innovative solutions. Moreover competition is fostered through tendering in lots.

9. (Identified) Knowledge, skills and resources needed to conduct PCP/PPI

- Commitment of procuring public body
- Good knowledge of market
- Ability to find channels for innovation / solutions outside the available products
- Thorough project management knowledge to keep a project going for a long time

10. Business / service case development- was this present and relevant

Yes, saving energy and space and thus money is important in establishing a business case. The final savings however can only be calculated after the final procurement.

In the evaluation study, a business case was not the essential point of focus.

11. What was the main aim of the procurement? Procure only new technology/solution or technology+ service (service procurement) leading also possibly to change in care model/delivery?

Care model not applicable here. Main aim is procurement of energy efficient products as well as an improvement of the workplace atmosphere.

12. Procurement results - was it worth the investment in the pre-procurement phase?

To be determined by an evaluation study, results available in 2015

13. Main lessons learnt in general

- Holistic approach necessary – solution systems rather than only furniture
- Individuality vs. standardization – find a reasonable balance
- Additional consultancy might be needed to find optimized solution for customers
- Don't rely on solutions already in place – certain degree of innovation is required within INNOBOOSTER