



Procure Plus

Assurance statement: added-value activity 2010

Introduction

Corporate Citizenship has undertaken a third review of Procure Plus' added-value activities, following previous reviews in 2008 and 2009. The work was conducted during November and December 2010

Previous reviews identified a number of strengths in Procure Plus's added-value programme. They also highlighted a number of areas to address in the future. Our objectives for the current review were to:

- Assess Procure Plus's progress during 2010, and;
- Apply the assurance process to assess any new or developed activities

Our assessment is confined to Procure Plus's performance during the year to November 2010. Detailed findings have been provided to Procure Plus in a management report along with recommendations for action in the short and longer-term.

Procure Plus's added-value programme

Procure Plus undertakes a number of added-value activities focussed on the following areas:

- Employment, training and skills development opportunities for **trainees**
- Creation of and support for **social/community enterprises**
- Funding **Sense of place** projects adding value to areas already being regenerated by its clients
- A programme of **tenant involvement**, to ensure that the views and interests of tenants are effectively represented in key decision-making processes

Assessment of performance

In a year that has seen significant changes within the organisation, and in the external climate with regard to social housing funding. Procure Plus continues to undertake a range of added-value activities that are **material** to the business and its key stakeholders (tenants,

contractors, registered social landlords and the wider community where it operates), which enable it to increase the level of social value it adds through its operations.

The continued development of its tenant involvement programme during 2010, to the stage where tenants are actively engaged in all key areas of the organisation's work from attendance at board meetings to sourcing green technologies, is indicative of the way that Procure Plus **responds** to stakeholder interests and issues, as is its response to the recommendations made in these reviews. It also continues to **include** key groups by actively seeking and enabling their views and participation.

So Procure Plus continues to demonstrate, through its added-value programme, the characteristics of materiality, inclusivity and responsiveness that are key to any organisation that operates in a socially responsible manner.

Looking ahead

The review has identified a number of considerations that Procure Plus should address to ensure it can achieve its objectives consistently, particularly as it and its commitments grow. A number of these are specific to individual elements of the programme and are included in our management report. However, there are some key issues that cut across the programme that Procure Plus should address in the coming year. These are:

1. Capture a fuller picture of the value the programme creates

Procure Plus has a mission to create value for its communities. To demonstrate the value that is generated through the added-value programme it should build on the work it is already doing to capture a more complete picture of the investment it makes into the programme and what this achieves for the communities where it operates. Areas to address in the short-term include:

- Record the full picture of what Procure Plus currently invests to create value through the added-value programme. As well as the cash contributed to the programme this should also include any other resources supplied (e.g. the extent of the staff resources used to manage and deliver the programme)
- Continue, and develop, the process of assessing progress against objectives of Sense of Place projects
- Consolidate the results of the trainee programme and social enterprises to demonstrate the range and depth of successful outcomes

2. Publish an annual action plan/progress report

Procure Plus has an excellent record in including the groups and individuals on whom it directly impacts (tenant representatives, trainees, social enterprise employees and managers

etc.) and providing them with information on its objectives and performance with regard to the added-value programme. However, more peripheral groups are currently less well served. Producing a publicly available report on progress achieved and future objectives will help to ensure that important audiences, such as wider tenants, existing and potential clients, potential contractors etc. have a good understanding of the added-value programme and how it fits with the wider work of the organisation.

We have provided Procure Plus with detailed feedback about these and other more specific considerations in our management report along with recommendations for action in the short and longer-term. We look forward to learning how Procure Plus acts on these in future.

About Corporate Citizenship

Corporate Citizenship is a specialist management consultancy advising organisations that seek to improve their economic, social and environmental performance. A detailed note describing our relationship with Procure Plus and the process we have adopted appears at the end of this statement.

Forming our opinion

In forming our opinion we have used a set of assessment criteria developed to establish that Procure Plus's approach to achieving its objectives, along with any processes and systems it employs to do so, are effective. In developing the criteria we have had regard to external standards on responsible business practice, such as the Good Corporation Standard as well as the principles underlying the international assurance standard AA1000as 2008 (particularly with regard to the principles of materiality, responsiveness and inclusivity). As noted, this process is outlined in more detail at the end of this statement.

Corporate Citizenship
www.corporate-citizenship.com
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Note on our relationship with Procure Plus and on the assurance process

Our relationship with Procure Plus

We have not worked with Procure Plus any time during the period covered by this review, other than on this limited assurance project.

The assurance process

As there are no statutory guidelines for the assessment in this area, we have formed our judgements based on emerging best practice among other companies, the principles of the assurance standard AA1000, the approach of the Good Corporation Standard, the stated views of principal stakeholders and our own professional expertise and experience.

A team of three, led by a director, undertook the assurance and commentary process. The team has a variety of professional and technical competencies and experience. The work was commissioned in October 2010 and was completed in January 2011. Detailed records were kept of meetings, assurance visits and correspondence relating to the assignment, as well as to technical matters relating to the accuracy and presentation of data.

Our external assurance and commentary has involved the following elements:

1. Meetings and discussions with a targeted section of Procure Plus's managers dealing with added-value performance.
2. An analysis of best practice among other companies, the principles of the Good Corporation Standard and AA1000as.
3. An assessment of the internal processes, notably the procedures adopted to ensure that added-value performance is tracked, targets are set and that the data is accurate.
4. Direct engagement with stakeholders to seek their views on Procure Plus's added-value performance and its effectiveness.

Our work therefore did not extend to a complete audit of the Procure Plus's added-value performance, or of its wider social responsibilities, beyond that mentioned above. We have not been responsible for devising the internal management and reporting systems that yielded the performance data.

The opinions expressed in this external assurance statement and commentary are intended to extend understanding of Procure Plus's added-value performance and should not be used or relied upon to form any judgements, or take any decisions, of a financial nature.