

Case study

Innovative procurement for a sustainable solution; cleaning beds : Erasmus University Medical Centre, The Netherlands

The project

Erasmus University Medical Centre (Erasmus MC) is renewing its bed washing facility to provide enough clean and disinfected beds for its daily operational needs. This currently exceeds 70,000 beds per annum and is expected to increase. The existing machine is labour intensive and uses a large volume of water and energy to operate.

In brief, it is expensive and out of step with the hospital's sustainability policies and objectives. The current machine is nearing the end of its life and needs to be replaced in summer 2013. This gives the hospital time and opportunity to explore the possibility of procuring a more efficient, more effective and sustainable solution.

"Clean beds are essential for patients and patient care is foremost, and the timely delivery of clean beds is seen as an important issue for the staff of the Erasmus MC"

Frank Raymaekers Sector Manager,
Healthcare Support & Logistics

Background

The Erasmus MC has a strategic ambition to be a green and low carbon hospital and to decrease the total amount of energy used. As one of the partners of a multi-year action plan for all academic hospitals in the Netherlands, a 20% reduction in energy use is sought by 2020. The project is a first attempt to curb the use of energy and limit the carbon footprint by using procurement as a method. It is also the first time that the procurement team have adopted innovation procurement methods.

Adopting a pro-innovation approach

This project is driven by the policy of energy and cost saving, efficiency, reducing water use and wastewater discharge, to create a more efficient and effective way of dealing with soiled beds to support the day-to-day operations of the Erasmus MC.

The Erasmus MC wants to stimulate the market and explore new approaches and ideas from across the supply chain to find better solutions than currently exist. By adopting 'innovation procurement' thinking, it will receive the best possible (future) offers in the procurement process.

A project team, assembled from various departments in the Erasmus MC, has started to look at this much earlier than they would normally in a (European) procurement process. The joint procurement and operations project team defined both the characteristics of the current process (including the current carbon footprint of the process) and the required outcomes that they are looking for. A total cost of ownership (TCO) model of the current process has been created using a financial TCO-model that had been successfully verified and tested in another procurement project.

There have been a number of meetings in support of the project, for example expert meetings with procurement professionals and a peer learning visit to The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust (UK).

These meetings have been an invaluable source of learning, and a forum to exchange ideas and practical experience. We heard first hand how the supply chain can be engaged and encouraged to innovate and discussed the importance of the pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) stage and designing it in a way that does not exclude parties who can bring experience from other sectors.



The public sector academic hospitals in the Netherlands have set themselves ambitious targets for a 20% reduction in their average energy consumption by 2020.

Market sounding

A market consultation plan was developed and the project team began the market sounding exercise in September 2011. A short survey was carried out which confirmed supply chain interest in the market consultation and the procurement opportunity. The project team have also explored the 'wider market demand' for the solution. There are at least 6 other hospitals in the Netherlands that are interested in the outcomes of the consultation. The market consultation phase will conclude at the end of 2011 and will inform

Erasmus MC on how the procurement process should be organised to enhance the chances of a successful outcome.

There are safeguards in place to ensure that the solution will be in place on time. If the market consultation fails to demonstrate an appetite in the supply chain to supply an innovative solution the project team will fall back on the regular procurement process. However, given the level of interest so far, this seems unlikely.

Key Features to date

- Cross-departmental project team, involving Facility Management, Purchasing, Microbiology, Estates.
- High level support from directors of departments and the Tender Board.
- A total cost of ownership model was developed and tested and has shown the impact of a life-cycle approach.
- The carbon footprint (as well as the costs over the lifetime) of the current solution has been calculated to act as a benchmark.
- A genuine unmet need: the supplier of the current bed and mattresses washing station has confirmed discontinuation of the current product line. A real solution is needed in a matter of a few years.
- There is a potential wider market once a solution has been identified.

Next Steps

If the market consultation shows enough potential and confidence from the supply chain, a board decision will be taken about the proposed innovation procurement strategy by the project team. This is planned for early 2012.

"We are delighted that the Tender Board of Erasmus MC has given a vote of confidence to continue this work and use innovation procurement practices."

Joram Nauta LCB-HEALTHCARE Pilot Project Coordinator

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