

# Safety Schemes in Procurement Newsletter

Edition No. 1 - April/May 2010



*“Our mission is to act as an umbrella organization to facilitate mutual recognition between health and safety pre-qualification schemes wherever it is practicable to do so”*

## In this edition:

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## Past Chair's Introduction



**The Safety Schemes in Procurement Forum (SSIP), a not for profit, umbrella organisation, was launched in May 2009 with the full support of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to facilitate mutual recognition between health and safety pre-qualification schemes, reducing duplication and improving standards of health and safety – ultimately saving lives.**

On a personal note, after three years the time has come for me to step down as SSIP chair. It has been a great privilege to have held this post, lead on the formation of the Forum and to have worked with a number of excellent, like minded professionals. As a team we have overcome numerous challenges in getting the Forum off the ground (the grey hair is a testament to that!). Our reward for all that hard work is summarised eloquently in this newsletter.

At the SSIP bi-annual elections held during the Forum meeting on 8 April, leadership passed to the new management team.

I am delighted to announce that Simon Mantle of the National House-Building Council will be Chair and Dermot Maurer of Exor Management Services will be Vice Chair. In addition, a vote was taken to determine the five Registered Members joining Founder Members on the Forum Management Group. The five are Altius Vendor Assessment, Association for Project Safety (APS), British Standards Institute (BSI), Eurosafe UK and Facilities Services Group (FSG).

I will continue to offer support to the new Chair and Vice-chair, wherever needed. However, I know that with the new team at the helm, SSIP will move forward and continue to influence improvement in mutual recognition and safety compliance.

I want to take this opportunity to thank collectively and publicly, those of you who have cajoled, supported and encouraged me over the years. Without you I could not have done all that I have – thank you!



John Murphy

### Key Primary Short Term Key Objectives for the new SSIP Leadership

1. Introduce a common database to verify supplier status.
2. Develop and implement an effective communications strategy (including an event to be held later this year).
3. Move SSIP from being a Forum to a company limited by guarantee

Almost one year on, I am delighted to say that SSIP's membership has grown to 13 Registered Members including the original Founder Members: The Contractors Health and Safety Scheme (CHAS), the National House-Building Council (NHBC), Exor Management Services and Constructionline to include the following:

- Safety Management Advisory Services (SMAS)
- Altius Vendor Assessment
- Facilities Services Group (FSG)
- Eurosafe UK Ltd
- British Constructional Steelwork Association (BCSA)
- Heating and Ventilating Contractors' Association (HVCA)
- Association for Project Safety (APS)
- British Standards Institute (BSI) (UKAS accredited)
- NQA (UKAS accredited)
- Laing O'Rourke Construction Ltd (subject to successful audit on 4 May)

There are currently eight Affiliate Members actively supporting and promoting SSIP: The Specialist Engineering Contractors' (SEC) Group, Construction Clients' Group (CCG), Construction Industry Council (CIC), United Kingdom Contractors Group (UKCG), National Specialist Contractors Council (NSCC), National Federation of Demolition Contractors (NFDC), VolkerFitzpatrick and the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA).

All these Members work together to enhance mutual recognition across the construction industry – and we look forward to welcoming more members throughout the rest of 2010 and beyond.

So currently, the number of suppliers (service provider to a buyer) registered under an SSIP scheme now totals more than 50,000 and taken together each scheme services over 10,000 buyers (procurer of services from a supplier). This is very encouraging.

## The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) - Five great reasons to support SSIP!

**Gordon Crick, HM Inspector of Health and Safety (and HSE's representative on SSIP) explains why the HSE supports and endorses SSIP.**

1. SSIP is currently constituted as an association and is explicitly a 'not for profit organisation'

**So the first of five myths that SSIP is 'just another money making scheme', is not the case:**

Within a year or so, SSIP intends to reconstitute itself as a Company Limited by Guarantee, and will retain its not for profit ethos. As an association, and later as a Company Limited by Guarantee, the mutual recognition agreements between member schemes are set out in the 'Deemed to Satisfy'. This is a legally binding document which member schemes are required to sign up to following application to SSIP and successful, independent audit. The individual member schemes which make up SSIP all charge a fee for carrying out a health and safety assessment. These fees vary, and are set by each member scheme. There are inevitable costs involved in providing the infrastructure to enable mutual recognition to take place between the schemes, and these are met by the individual schemes, supporting bodies and trade associations, through membership of SSIP.

Costs associated with the SSIP are determined by the member schemes and set at a level which should not put suppliers off. The SSIP accounts will be published on the SSIP website at [www.ssip.org.uk](http://www.ssip.org.uk).

More over, SSIP explicitly forbids member schemes from selling further health and safety services on the back of carrying out assessments for suppliers.

2. SSIP meets HSE's own standard for Stage 1 health and safety pre-qualification

**This brings us on to Myth two, 'SSIP embraces low standards'. And it is a myth because:**

HSE supports SSIP because SSIP members have all adopted the Core Criteria set out in Appendix 4 of the CDM 2007 Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) (L144, Managing Health and Safety in Construction, available as a free download from the HSE website ([www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk))). These core criteria were developed in consultation with the construction industry as part of the process of revising the previous set of Regulations. The Core Criteria specifically indicate the documents and processes which an employer needs to develop in order to demonstrate a basic competence in managing health and safety. These documents and processes apply to all construction businesses.

The assessment process adopted by SSIP member schemes consists of a desktop assessment of documents taking anything up to two to three hours to complete. Where necessary, the assessment is supplemented by telephone calls and email contact. Typically a business will take a repeat cycle of scrutiny and resubmission before the assessment is achieved. HSE regards this process as a proportionate and cost effective way of forming a reasonable judgement based on evidence, which is what the ACoP requires.

3. SSIP has competent assessors

**Myth three is 'Individual assessors are not competent' which is not the case as SSIP members have agreed a minimum level of competence in health and safety for their assessors:**

An assessor must hold the NEBOSH General Certificate in Health and Safety, or equivalent. All assessors must have experience of advising contractors or designers on health and safety, or experience of health and safety management. All assessors are required to have excellent communication skills, and be subject to a CPD programme. All the SSIP members have quality control procedures which routinely monitor the quality of the assessors' work.

In 2010 HSE intends to develop with the International Register of Chartered Auditors (IRCA), a certification scheme for individual assessors, to provide further assurance of the competence of SSIP assessors.

4. The buyer retains responsibility to carry out a Stage 2 health and safety assessment

**The fourth myth is that 'SSIP takes the responsibility off the buyer':**

Again, this is not the case as SSIP aims to provide a service to buyers by carrying out the initial Stage 1 assessment of competence to tender for work. This assessment covers the full range of health and safety competencies, but does not drill down to examine specific risk management experience. Buyers therefore retain the responsibility to carry out a Stage 2 interview in order to establish that the experience and track record of the supplier is adequate for them to carry out the specific job they are tendering for.

HSE believes it is vital that buyers understand and take ownership of their responsibility to carry out a Stage 2 process.

5. SSIP membership is for third party accreditation schemes, major contractors and UKAS accredited certification bodies

**And lastly, we come to Myth five 'SSIP is only for third party accreditation schemes':**

Membership of SSIP extends to Third Party accreditation schemes, but also includes major contractors who carry out competence assessment of their supply chain. This has benefits for those contractors who benefit by gaining access to a much wider supplier base. Contractors who join SSIP will be subject to the same terms and conditions as the third party accreditation schemes.

Membership of SSIP and the mutual recognition arrangements also extend to UKAS accredited certification bodies (Currently BSI and NQA) that accredit OHSAS 18001. In the case of a supplier who has achieved OHSAS 18001 through accreditation by BSI or NQA, SSIP recognises that this achievement satisfies the requirements of an SSIP assessment.

## Buyers – we urge you to adopt the SSIP ethos!

Paul Reeve, Head of Safety and Environment, at the Electrical Contractors' Association (ECA) and the Specialist Engineering Contractors' (SEC) Group representative on SSIP, explains the benefits of SSIP to buyers and how buyers' involvement is key to the success of SSIP in enhancing mutual recognition.

Buyers share responsibilities with their suppliers to ensure health and safety at work. One of the buyer's key responsibilities is to take reasonable steps to ensure that the suppliers they appoint (for example, contractors or consultants) are competent to do their work safely. Often, some of the buyer's responsibility is discharged through asking health and safety pre-qualification questions (PQQs) or using a pre-qualification scheme to do this for them. However, there are many health and safety PQQs or schemes and this has led to considerable and unnecessary cost to both suppliers and buyers - notably in terms of paperwork and assessment time, and confusion.

To help resolve this major problem, buyers can pre-qualify suppliers whose basic health and safety management capability has already been successfully assessed by members of SSIP. SSIP is a Forum of third-party audited pre-qualification assessment schemes and others (including HSE and leading supplier bodies such as SEC group). Significantly, successful assessment of a supplier by any SSIP member is accepted by HSE as meeting its basic (Stage 1) requirements for supplier health and safety capability.

SSIP is a fundamentally important contribution to meeting recommendations in the 'Glover' report\* and we encourage buyers to consider the benefits of accepting an 'SSIP-assessed' supplier without asking further general health and safety questions. This can save buyers considerable time and cost by removing the need to repeatedly assess the response to basic health and safety questions, for example. You may, therefore, find it helpful to refer to the acceptability of 'SSIP accreditation' as part of your PQQ process.

Accepting an SSIP-assessed supplier meets the basic required standard of health and safety capability\*\* But just as importantly, it frees up time and resource for buyers to concentrate on more job-specific, supplementary (Stage 2) health and safety questions. Good supplementary questions are invaluable for supplier assessment, ensuring proper health and safety, for example, by finding out more about suppliers' experience of specific work, or whether they have a suitably trained team and other resources to do the work safely\*\*\*.

In view of HSE's active support for SSIP assessment and the push to continually improve the cost-effectiveness of pre-qualification activity, we invite buyers to include SSIP assessment as a core method of assessing suppliers' basic health and safety capability.

If you would like to adopt the SSIP ethos in your procurement process, you may find it helpful to use the template wording in your communications to suppliers - soon to be posted on the SSIP website at [www.ssip.org.uk](http://www.ssip.org.uk)

Buyers already adopting the SSIP ethos include Kier Group, Persimmon Homes, Bellway Homes, Redrow PLC, Cardiff Council, Wigan Council, Bexley Council, Doncaster Council, Buckinghamshire Council, Superdrug and Comet amongst many others.

### Customer Satisfaction Surveys

An SSIP Founder Member recently carried out a satisfaction survey on its registered suppliers. Two of the questions asked were at the heart of SSIP, these being **1**) reducing duplication within pre-qualification and **2**) improving health and safety within companies. Both questions have produced very pleasing results. For question **1**) 62% gave a good or excellent rating. For question **2**) 86% gave a good or excellent rating. These two results give a clear indication that a positive difference is being made.

At the Construction News 'Health and Safety in Construction 2010' event on 25 March, Philip White, Construction Chief Inspector at the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) mentioned SSIP in his keynote speech about HSE's strategy to reduce the number of fatal accidents in construction. One of their strategy's key themes is 'Competence' and he referred to the fact that SSIP uses the CDM core criteria to ensure corporate health and safety competency.

Lord McKenzie of Luton, Minister for Health and Safety, voiced support for SSIP at a recent House of Commons dinner organised by the Specialist Engineering Contractors' (SEC) Group. He also voiced his support for the view in Rita Donagy's 2009 report 'One Death is too Many'. The Government's response to this report was published on 30 March 2010 in which SSIP is recognised on page 17 as reducing duplication in health and safety pre qualification. Both reports can be downloaded at [www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/policy-publications/fatal-accidents-inquiry.shtml](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/policy-publications/fatal-accidents-inquiry.shtml)

### SSIP Forum

Contact: **020 8545 3367** or email: [enquiries@SSIP.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@SSIP.org.uk)  
Applications for Registered or Affiliate membership: download the application form at [www.ssip.org.uk](http://www.ssip.org.uk)

Watch out for the next edition of the SSIP newsletter in **August 2010!**

Check [www.ssip.org.uk](http://www.ssip.org.uk) for details of the SSIP Forum event later this year.

\*Glover report: Accelerating the Economic Engine

\*\*The Health and Safety Executive has set out the basic (Stage 1) criteria in its guidance on competence and training in the Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007.

\*\*\*Buyers should note that using SSIP schemes covers only general (Stage 1) capability - it does not remove the buyer's requirements to make any further enquiries about health and safety capability, as required for specific work.