

Many believe that improvements in the delivery of projects on time, within budget and to reliable levels of quality could result from increased standardisation. Already proven with many UK customers, BIW: Standards Manager allows a client to share standard information across more than one project. Written specifications, policy statements, contracts, pro-forma templates, design drawings, pictures, models, graphics, branding information, O&M manuals, even website links, can - subject to security privileges - easily be coordinated by both client users and supply chain partners.

## The standards challenge

Standards are usually defined to inform team members involved in design, tendering, construction and operation of assets about an organisation's expectations.

Policies and procedures have to be implemented and recorded to ensure that the project (i) services a pre-defined business need and (ii) is designed and built to a specified standard. Subsequently, during the asset's operational life, these standards must be capable of being accessed, maintained and - where necessary - updated. They also need to be accessible to all interested parties, from trade contractors to senior corporate managers. And in addition to the many project or asset-related standards, most organisations will have numerous other corporate standards - also requiring access, maintenance and revision - covering operational aspects.

These standards are not project-specific, but apply across many separate schemes. Some will apply across all scheme; others will apply only to projects of a particular type, or may be adapted for use on a on-off project.

How such information is formulated, used, re-used and developed, is dependent on several key factors, including:

- Is standard information and details held in consistent formats across the organisation and business partners?
- Does the completeness and consistency of standards vary between business partners?
- Are consistent processes applied to manage changes to standard information or details?
- Who manages and updates the standard - the most expert or the most convenient?
- Is the updating process efficient?
- Can user feedback (eg: improvement suggestions) be easily communicated and incorporated?
- Are previous versions of standards still accessible?
- Is an audit trail maintained, recording what changes to a standard were made, when, why and by whom?
- Can the organisation or team member identify which standard (or its revision) has been deployed on which project at any point in time?

- How are new standards notified to the organisation and its business partners?

If these issues are not effectively addressed, an organisation's experience may be characterised by, for example:



- **low efficiency** - it becomes difficult/confusing for internal and external staff to use standard details
- **poor supply chain flexibility** - poorly detailed standards hamper an organisation's ability to try new suppliers; it must rely on existing suppliers with in-house knowledge
- **errors and rework** - insufficient detail or lack of accuracy can cause expensive and time-consuming problems
- **increased expense** - it becomes costly to manage the publication and dissemination of standard documents, manuals and other information
- **inaccurate tendering** - information may not be sufficiently accurate or complete for a supplier to submit an accurate tender (some may manage this risk by inflating their tender price, adding further costs to the client)
- **lack of continuous improvement** - knowledge and experience gained during interpretation and application of the standards at the project level may not be captured and used for possible standard enhancement
- **low motivation** - lack of clarity and accuracy in standards can impact on team members' enthusiasm to use them
- **unnecessary replacement** - during refurbishments, costs may be saved by accessing previous revisions of standards, rather than replacing items unnecessarily
- **poor quality 'as-built' information** - if standard components and materials are used, it is easier to ensure contractors record what they used and where
- **slow problem response** - for general operational or health and safety reasons, a client may need to quickly discover where a particular material or piece of equipment has been used across an entire property portfolio
- **poor supply chain relationships** - with no platform for all participants to interact and share information, partnerships can quickly become ineffective

## BIW: Standards Manager - an overview

BIW: Standards Manager supports a more dynamic, collaborative approach to the development and maintenance of standards. Organisations can share information that is common to more than one project and implement manageable feedback processes. A client organisation and any authorised members of its supply chain can publish, view, comment upon, and - if necessary - update any standard the organisation needs applied.

BIW's system draws on, arguably, the most powerful resource an organisation has: the knowledge and experience of its own staff and supply chain partners. Most internal people recognise the value of greater use of standard approaches. And, once they see the direct benefits to them (eg: reduced operating costs, better management information, increased business volume, etc), most responsible supply chain members will also be keen to commit their know-how.

This does not mean creating 'islands' of expertise. Knowledge and information about standards is extracted from the client organisation and its supply chain, and is managed in a secure, shared repository accessible anytime, anywhere, by all authorised team members. As a result, the system provides a framework for continuous improvement, reduced waste/cost, and increased profits, for all members of the supply chain.

Standard information can also be dynamically integrated into the project environment. BIW allows for the exchange of information between BIW: Standards Manager and the structured relational database underpinning its core technology, the BIW collaboration platform. As a result, for example, a project team can import corporate standards covering:

- **procedures** - descriptions detailing how work activity should be undertaken (eg: company, health and safety, statutory regulations)
- **specifications** - descriptions detailing what materials, components and/or services, and what standard interfaces, should be used, in which circumstances
- **design forms** - the format that is designed to satisfy a particular function (eg: toilets, reception areas, etc)

In short, the application caters for any major organisation repeatedly involved in projects or programmes with highly similar formats/processes, and/or who requires a high degree of consistency. The BIW: Standards Manager environment also caters for the differing viewpoints of each department, function and/or area of the business that uses standards.

## The benefits

How much an organisation benefits from using BIW: Standards Manager will, of course, depend on the extent to which the organisation and its supply chain embraces this new way of working. Potentially, the benefits could include:

- **greater accessibility** - standards add value when they are communicated and implemented effectively. BIW's interface guides users to standards relevant to their responsibilities
- **easier publication** - Standards can be defined and compiled automatically using original source data, where appropriate
- **better version control** - BIW's system allows users to view previous versions of a standard (aiding later facilities management, planning and alteration)
- **greater accuracy** - BIW's system makes it easy (i) for partners to give feedback, and (ii) for clients to adopt their contributions, promoting continuous improvement
- **more direct information management** - 'expert' business partners can manage their own standards
- **better integration with 'live' projects** - relate live projects to existing standards (and vice versa)
- **better cost management** - the impact of changes can be monitored, cost implications can be dynamically generated
- **less 're-inventing the wheel'** - clients and design teams with adequate ranges of standard equipment, etc are more likely to select items from this pool than invent new ones
- **more efficient use of building footprint** - by using standard templates for functional areas and assembling them into complete model buildings, design teams can respond more quickly and consistently to different sizes of footprint
- **capture more experience** - standard processes, components, etc can be continuously refined to reflect changes and experience gained on real projects
- **lower administration costs** - enabling business partner 'experts' to manage standards directly cuts administration costs for both supplier and client
- **greater transparency** - all participants will know when key recipients have viewed new drawings or documents
- **more innovation** - enabling team members to view and comment upon new standard proposals more quickly means new processes can be mobilised more quickly, increasing the potential for innovation and continuous improvement
- **improved review processes** - by recording all revisions, BIW's system allows teams to step back and consider what was previously used (and perhaps worked well)
- **better monitoring of use of standards** - dynamic integration with the projects environment allows users to view an audit trail detailing what standard was used on which project, when and why

### BIW Technologies Limited

21-25 Church Street West, Woking, Surrey GU21 6DJ

T 0845 1300 800 Int +44 (0)1483 712620

F 0845 1300 900 Int +44 (0)1483 756325

E [info@biwtech.com](mailto:info@biwtech.com)

[www.biwtech.com](http://www.biwtech.com)