

Book review

Client Best Practice Guide

ICE Best Practice Panel. Thomas Telford Ltd, London, UK, 2009, ISBN 978-0-72773-650-5, £32.50, 48 pp.

The *Client Best Practice Guide* offers guidance to clients on the many ways they can positively influence the success of their projects. The authors assert that this guidance covers the planning, development and implementation stages, as well as during operation and final decommissioning.

Although first published in 2009 this is the sort of publication that does not easily date and will be of value to public and private sector clients for some time to come. It will also help suppliers of clients to better understand what a best practice client should look like.

There are eight sections in the guide: what makes a successful client; essential stages of a project; developing a delivery strategy; establishing the client team; procuring the supply team; caring for people and the environment; keeping everything on track; taking responsibility for the end result. The initiative was to identify best practice in UK construction project procurement and delivery, and to share it as widely among client organisations and its (ICE) members as possible.

The guide aims to furnish UK construction clients with the information they need to answer the following questions.

- (a) Am I using best practice?
- (b) How can this be assessed?
- (c) How does this lead to project success?

The guide acts as a good benchmark for clients, giving clear and understandable pointers throughout. Chapter 1 includes a number of characteristics that define a good client for a construction project which include 'having a strong belief and commitment to the project' and 'generating trust, respect and appropriate behaviours within the team'. The five essential stages of a project are discussed in Chapter 2, these being planning, development, implementation, operation and decommissioning. These are also mapped against commonly used work stages produced by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and the Office of Government Commerce (OGC).

The guide refers to its online maturity assessment profile tool, ClientMAP, which is freely available through the Institution of Civil Engineers website. This tool has been developed to help clients assess their readiness and ongoing capability to lead construction projects in relation to the best practices identified in the guide. The benefits of this tool include a rapid and accessible self-assessment of a client's readiness and ongoing capability to lead projects in relation to best practices, setting the project up for a success. This tool can be found at www.ice.org.uk/ClientMAP

There are some excellent examples of good client practice and best practice initiatives from the UK construction industry. The collection of all of this, putting it into clear definitive guidance for everyone and the development on the online ClientMAP tool has yielded an excellent guide that is relevant to all those interested in advancing client expertise in the construction industry.

Robert Gerrard