

Nominee: G-Cloud Programme – framework G-Cloud i

Supporting Vendor: Skyscape

Nomination title: G-Cloud Programme – framework G-Cloud i - supported by Skyscape

The G-Cloud Programme was launched in 2011 as a key element of the UK Government's ICT strategy. The UK public sector has many challenges to contend with, including budget constraints, the use of legacy technology, skills shortages, high costs and long term contracts to name but a few. Added to which, the purchasing and supplier frameworks previously in place were notoriously inflexible – something that has been recognised by the Government IT Strategy and which the G-Cloud Programme was looking to re-address. The UK Public Sector's spend on ICT is estimated to be in the region of £17 billion a year. The majority of this spend (over 70%) was with a small group of incumbent suppliers where the commercial arrangements were characterised by long, costly and complex contracts that were difficult and expensive to exit from. ICT systems were usually delivered as part of lengthy, complex programmes, and generally bespoke according to the specific requirements of the buying organisation, therefore very expensive, with long deployment times. This made the UK public sector a very difficult market to enter for new suppliers – in particular for SMEs. This in turn made it difficult for the UK public sector to access and benefit from the innovation, value, agility and competition that new suppliers bring to any market. Complex, costly and lengthy procurement processes also discouraged SMEs from competing for government business.

In 2011 the Cabinet Office commissioned a "Lean Procurement" which reported:

- It could take over 100 hours to read the guidance for competitive dialogue tenders
- It could take over 77 weeks from OJEU to contract award to run a competitive dialogue process
- In one competitive dialogue process alone, it cost £5.4m to conduct and £4.4m was external costs (external advisors)

The G-Cloud Programme was formed in March 2011, and immediately began to develop a revolutionary contractual vehicle to address many of the issues inherent in Government ICT. In February 2012 the first G-Cloud Framework went live. The framework was a radical departure from conventional Government frameworks, and was characterised by a number of unique features:

- Disruption of the UK public sector ICT market and creating competition and breaking the oligopoly of incumbent suppliers by creating low barriers to entry for SMEs
- Introducing utility based transacting "pay for what you use only when you need it" supported by transparent, granular pricing driving significant cost reductions
- Rapid technology deployment and supporting commercial arrangements to enable better value and more responsive public services

The G-Cloud-i Framework was available to 29,000 buying organisations. When it went live in February 2012, there were nearly 300 suppliers on the Framework, offering 1700 cloud-based services to the Government. Over 50% of the suppliers were SMEs, most of whom had never had the opportunity to do business with the UK public sector before. Skyscape was one of the original G-

Cloud-i SME suppliers, offering Infrastructure-as-a-Service, Platform-as-a-Service and Software-as-a-Service via the Framework. Skyscape's products and services have been specifically designed to meet Government needs as described in the Government ICT Strategy and G-Cloud Framework & Strategy. Built upon the unique infrastructure technologies, services and innovation of the Skyscape Cloud Alliance (QinetiQ, VMware, Cisco, EMC and Ark Continuity), Skyscape's services are secure, sustainable and compliant and its products are scalable, UK sovereign and offer the best price/performance in class. Skyscape's full Cloud Services are designed to address the barriers to public sector cloud adoption (security, assurance, lock-in) whilst promoting agility and value pricing that challenges the incumbents.

A key financial benefit of Skyscape's services is that they enable public sector organisations to only pay for what they use, allowing for servers to be turned off in the evenings and at weekends. All Skyscape products and services are assured by a CESG Pan Government Accreditor to support IL0 to IL3 data. Skyscape's core advantages and differentiated messaging that resonates with Government include:

- Disruptive in pricing – a vast improvement in value compared with traditional UK public sector delivery
- Easy to adopt, easy to use, easy to leave – a clear contractual obligation to assist in moving applications and data away from Skyscape if or as required
- Proven assurance – assured by CESG and accredited to internationally recognised certifications in security, service and carbon reduction
- Protected by QinetiQ's leading Cyber Protective Monitoring capabilities
- A full cloud service catalogue with meaningful, industry leading SLAs
- Visible measured services – real, meaningful SLAs which are industry leading, aligned to business needs
- Sustainability – one of the lowest carbon footprint computing platforms in the industry, with audited carbon certificates and offset availability

The launch of G-Cloud-i was a significant exercise that took a radically different approach from conventional public procurement. It required commitment, determination and a willingness to take risks on the part of both the G-Cloud Programme and the Government Procurement Service to drive through the changes. The UK Public Sector responded positively, making a number of high profile and successful purchases, including the hosting for GOV.UK from Skyscape, demonstrating that the Government is ready to embrace low cost utility services and is willing to buy directly from SMEs. The G-Cloud Framework has transformed the way that the public sector can buy and use its ICT services. Deployments can take hours rather than months, and simple, standardised call-off contracts can be agreed in similar timeframes. All of this reduces costs for the UK taxpayer, enables better value public service and is helping to grow the economy as SMEs such as Skyscape thrive and grow in the emerging market.

According to Maude, "G-Cloud is proving itself the model of an innovative, more cost-effective and open way for the government to buy and operate IT, making it easier for companies of all sizes to compete for public sector business... This revolution in the way government can use IT services – on demand and on a utility basis – provides greater flexibility and choice, and will drive delivery of public services that are better value and more responsive to changing needs".

Why nominee should win

- G-Cloud has revolutionised the way the UK public sector buys and consumes ICT, driving better value and more responsive public services
- The UK public sector is now open and accessible to SMEs such as Skyscape, enabling innovation, agility and growth.
- Skyscape provides an assured cloud infrastructure for the UK public sector by transforming the provision of IT into a lean, elastic, assured, green utility – providing a genuine on-demand cloud computing service. Skyscape services are unique in that they are easy to adopt, easy to use and easy to leave, allowing the Government to avoid expensive licensing costs