

PIANC MarCom WG 194 – A Framework for Early Contractor Involvement

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Summary

The PIANC Marcom WG 194 - ECI Report - A Framework for Early Contractor Involvement in infrastructure projects was published in June 2022 for industry use and includes information that will benefit infrastructure owners, contractors, and engineers. The WG 194 Report examines the factors influencing the ECI choice and setup with guidance on ECI implementation looking at benefits and barriers. Guidance on ECI implementation is provided including a framework for the selection of the most suitable procurement process, contract models and the further management of the ECI process. Finally, the Report provides case studies and lessons learned from infrastructure projects worldwide that have utilized ECI.

Keywords

Early Contractor Involvement (ECI), ECI implementation, stakeholder participation

Introduction

It is increasingly acknowledged that the potential for project cost blowouts of projects coupled with the progressively complex nature of planning for infrastructure works can negatively affect both the procurement and execution processes for many infrastructure projects and for waterborne transport infrastructure projects in particular. Industry practitioners are increasingly looking at alternative methods which engage parties earlier in that process to effectively 'de-risk' their projects at an early stage.

Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) is a strategy initiated by infrastructure owners (clients) towards main contractors, optionally expanded with consultants, stakeholders and subcontractors. The purpose of this is to optimize values in project delivery and objectives, through their participation and knowledge-sharing in stages of project planning and design, prior to project execution.

ECI Development

In various parts of the world the potential was identified for improving outcomes by various approaches. One group of approaches includes project alliancing,

project partnering and integrated project delivery.

The relevant years and the origins of these initiatives are captured on a global map (Figure 1) below.

These approaches were collectively described as relational project delivery arrangements (RPDAs), as well as 'collaborative working' or 'integration'.



Figure 1 – Lahdenperä, P. (2012)

Previous industry efforts prior to the WG 194 such as the Forum on Early Contractor Involvement have initiated knowledge exchange and discussions addressing various aspects of ECI related to maritime infrastructure construction. However, these efforts did not address frameworks relating to how the relevant parties in an ECI process should act.

The lack of guidelines often results in inefficiencies, misaligned focus or distortions in the relationship between the parties involved.

It was realised that there was an industry need to establish a set of structured and well accepted guidelines for ECI processes. To address this industry need the PIANC Working Group 194 was established.

An understanding by all parties of the implications of going down any ECI route, and a shared willingness to accept the implications, are crucial to the achievement of benefits of ECI.

The hallmarks of a successful ECI process [2] have been identified as addressing :

- Good faith
- Transparency
- Equal treatment of all parties
- Fairness
- Clarity through clear rules of engagement
- Protection of intellectual property

The WG 194 Report examines the factors influencing the ECI choice and setup with guidance on ECI implementation looking at a variety of ECI types and the factors influencing the use of ECI including benefits and barriers.

The aim of the first five chapters of WG 194 Report are to

- Collate and review all available information and reporting on ECI in its various forms;
- Give an overview of the trends and existing approaches driving ECI future developments;
- Analyse relevant factors in ECI (drivers and barriers);
- Explore the range of existing ECI approaches;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the different ECI approaches and of the different stages in the life of the Project for Contractor Involvement;
- Assess the application of ECI and how it fits in with the different procurement regulations for infrastructure projects.

Further guidance on ECI implementation is provided including a framework that can be utilized for the selection of the most suitable procurement process, the selection of the most appropriate contract model and the further management of the ECI process.

Finally, the Report provides case studies and lessons learned from infrastructure projects worldwide that have utilized ECI.

Conclusion

This paper shares the authors own experience with ECI together with findings and knowledge of the PIANC working group and focuses specifically on key take-aways for procuring effective ECI's, addressing ECI procurement models and the guiding legislative principles that govern ECI models in public procurement. Experience is shared on topics such as project feasibility and contractor selection during the procurement process.

References

[1] Lahdenperä, P. (2012), Making sense of the multi-party contractual arrangements of project partnering, project alliancing and integrated project delivery , Construction Management and Economics.

[2] PIANC MarCom WG 194 – A Framework for Early Contractor Involvement. (June 2022).