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Management, Procurement and Law
The ICE Intelligent Client Capability Framework
--Manuscript Draft--

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Abstract:	Recent aspirations to transform the delivery of major capital programmes and projects in the public sector are focusing on the achievement of value for money, whole-life asset management and sustainable procurement, embodied in the principles of the Intelligent Client. However, there is little support offered to those working in client functions to promote the development of the skills and behaviours that underpin effective client decision-making. In line with the re-launch Infrastructure UK's Project Initiation Routemap, the Capacity Building Panel at the Institution for Civil Engineers has taken the first step in providing individuals with client capability development guidance. The Intelligent Client Capability Framework translates the principles of the Intelligent Client into a self-assessment with big potential, not just for building the capacity of Civil Engineers as Intelligent Clients, but for UK clients in general.
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"The role and performance of clients is the single most important factor in determining the success of construction projects and capital works programmes."

ICE Client Best Practice Guide

Understanding why major capital programmes do not achieve maximum value is key to unlocking the full potential of the UK's pipeline of major economic infrastructure – and this is reflected in the current UK public sector focus on improving client capability.

Studies into the causes of underperformance such as theInfrastructure UK (IUK) Cost Review (IUK, 2010), the National Audit Office's Guide to Initiating Successful Projects (NAO, 2011) and the Project Initiation Routemap (IUK, 2014) have successively highlighted barriers to effective delivery linked to poor clienting and project initiation. This evidence base has uncovered a clear need for a greater focus on building client capability to align with the degree of complexity imposed by the delivery of major projects and programmes. In short, the need for more 'Intelligent Clients'.

For successful delivery, client's must be capable of specifying the requirements to external participants and managing the delivery outcomes. Fundamental to this is the selection appropriate private sector participants and the management of those relationships to maximise value. While it is recognised that varying operating and delivery models impact the breadth and depth of the required client capability, the term 'Intelligent Client' crucially refers to the capability and capacity to manage the process of translating policy to outcomes. It is this role that maintains the client firmly at the centre of efficient, productive, value-for money relationships.

Critical to improving client practice is the identification and development of the individual skill sets that determine to what extent clients function as reflective participants capable of setting up appropriately for delivery. These skill sets are not often articulated and rarely linked to any sort of systematic process for continuing professional development – until now.

The ICE Intelligent Client Capability Framework

Specialist skills in engineering and business have long been championed as critical to the delivery of successful projects; however, the majority of those within public sector client functions do not come from a specialist background (Aritua et al, 2011). For the Capacity Building Panel at the ICE this meant two things. Firstly, the lack of civil engineers in client functions identified a need for focused development offerings to support those who aspire to those roles; and secondly, there is at present a critical gap in supporting those who already have clienting responsibilities. Therefore, the Capacity Building Panel has undertaken to address these gaps through the provision of the ICE Intelligent Client Capability Framework.

The purpose of the framework is to provide a guide for ICE members who find themselves working in a 'client' capacity by outlining client capability in terms of the

behaviours and abilities that have the potential for adding value to the delivery of major project outcomes. The Framework incorporates the principles IUK's Project Initiation Routemap by directing users to reflect on their own capability and identify areas for the incorporation of good practice.

The Intelligent Client Capability Framework provides role-specific guidance and therefore should be considered as one aspect of continuing professional development. It is not a performance assessment, a recruitment tool or an official standard. It is a systematic means of identifying areas for capability enhancement for individuals who are undertaking the role of the client. This is achieved through the consideration of the issues associated with the role during project/programme initiation, procurement and delivery including:

- Adequately testing the business case;
- Providing continuity of investment/funding;
- Accurately translating and communicating the high level requirements to key stakeholders;
- Ensuring maximum value is derived from all relationships;
- Supporting those relationships with responsible and effective governance arrangements and appropriate interface management; and
- Articulating the nature and shape of the organisation required to deliver

Researchers from the Engineering Project Academy at the University of Leeds see the Framework as having the potential to effect real change in the way Civil Engineers contextualise projects. The capabilities in the framework are based on a public sector back catalog of real UK projects and research into the decisions ultimately driving poor performance. This has amounted to a cross-sectoral and cross-discipline continuing professional development aid that has the potential to help all project participants think more about the role they play in supporting successful major projects and the UK's economic recovery.

The Framework can be freely accessed at http://www.ice.org.uk/intelligent-client