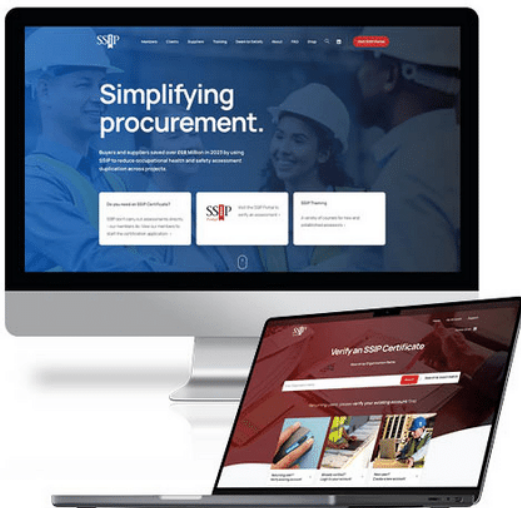


Streamlining Safety: Why Buyers Should Stipulate SSIP Certification for Suppliers

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In today's complex business landscape, ensuring the health and safety of everyone involved in a project is paramount. For buyers, commonly referred to as clients, this responsibility extends to every supplier they engage. But navigating the world of health and safety assessments can be a minefield. That's where [Safety Schemes in Procurement \(SSIP\)](#) comes in, offering a streamlined and efficient solution. This article explores why buyers should stipulate SSIP certification for their suppliers, highlighting the benefits for all parties involved.

The Buyer's Responsibility: Ensuring Competent Suppliers

Clients have a legal and moral obligation to ensure the competence of their suppliers, particularly in sectors like construction where health and safety risks are prevalent. Regulations like the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM) place a clear onus on clients to conduct thorough health and safety assessments. While these regulations primarily focus on construction, the principle of ensuring supplier competency applies across all industries.

Traditionally, this assessment process has been time-consuming and resource intensive. Clients often find themselves duplicating efforts, assessing the same suppliers multiple times for different projects. This not only creates an administrative burden but also delays project timelines. SSIP offers a powerful solution to this challenge.

SSIP: Simplifying Pre-Qualification

SSIP acts as an umbrella organisation, fostering mutual recognition between various health and safety assessment schemes. This means that a supplier certified by one SSIP member scheme is effectively

recognised by all other members. This mutual recognition, facilitated through the “Deem to Satisfy” (DTS) route, drastically reduces assessment duplication, saving both time and money. In 2023 alone, this saved suppliers and buyers over £10 million.

By stipulating SSIP certification, buyers can leverage this established framework to streamline their pre-qualification process. Instead of conducting individual assessments for each supplier, they can confidently rely on the SSIP certification as evidence of a supplier’s commitment to health and safety.

Confirming Competency with Ease

The SSIP Portal, a free online resource, provides access to a database of over 84,000 suppliers and their SSIP certifications. This allows buyers to quickly and easily verify a supplier’s competency, confirming their compliance with health and safety legislation. This eliminates the need for internal health and safety assessments, saving valuable time and resources.

The Benefits for Buyers:

- **Reduced Risk:** Engaging SSIP-certified suppliers mitigates the risk of working with organisations that fall short of health and safety standards.
- **Simplified Procurement:** SSIP streamlines the pre-qualification process, eliminating the need for repetitive assessments.
- **Cost Efficiency:** By reducing administrative burden and avoiding duplication of effort, SSIP delivers significant cost savings.
- **Confidence in Competency:** SSIP certification provides assurance that suppliers have been assessed against a robust set of criteria aligned with HSE guidelines.

The Benefits for Suppliers:

- **Reduced Duplication:** SSIP’s mutual recognition framework eliminates the need for suppliers to undergo multiple assessments for different clients.
- **Cost Savings:** Suppliers save time and resources by avoiding repetitive assessments.
- **Enhanced Credibility:** SSIP certification demonstrates a commitment to health and safety, enhancing a supplier’s reputation and making them more attractive to potential clients.
- **Streamlined Prequalification:** SSIP simplifies the pre-qualification process, making it easier for suppliers to bid for contracts.

SSIP Supporter Membership: A Step Further

For organisations that are committed to promoting high health and safety standards within their supply chain, SSIP Supporter Membership offers a range of exclusive benefits. Supporter Members, often trade associations and main contractors, can actively contribute to the development of pre-qualification standards, participate in forum meetings, and gain unrestricted access to the SSIP Portal. This allows them to have a greater influence on industry best practices and gain deeper insights into supplier assessment information. Many Supporter Members, like Laing O’Rourke, stipulate SSIP certification throughout their

supply chain, ensuring a consistent and robust approach to health and safety management.

What is SSIP and Why is it Important?

SSIP was developed to simplify and standardise health and safety pre-qualification in the UK. It aims to reduce the burden on suppliers by creating a system of mutual recognition between different assessment schemes. All SSIP member schemes adhere to the HSE-backed SSIP Core Criteria, ensuring a consistent and rigorous approach to health and safety assessment.

“SSIP uses a clear and trusted standard to check a supplier’s health and safety. This helps make sure everyone is held to the same standard, reducing confusion across the industry. Through annual assessment Suppliers are required to maintain good health and safety practices and continuously monitor their safety performance.”

Eleanor Eaton, SSIP Chair

The HSE’s Endorsement

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) actively supports the work of SSIP, recognising its crucial role in simplifying pre-qualification and promoting straightforward mutual recognition between member schemes. The HSE has a permanent non-voting role on the SSIP Forum, ensuring the integrity and consistency of the assessment process through annual independent audits. The HSE encourages clients to accept valid SSIP certifications as evidence of a supplier’s competency, eliminating the need for further health and safety assessment at the pre-qualification stage.

Beyond Pre-Qualification: Project-Specific Scrutiny

While SSIP certification provides a valuable foundation, it’s important to remember that it represents the pre-qualification stage. Clients still have a responsibility to conduct project-specific scrutiny of their chosen suppliers before work commences. This should involve assessing the supplier’s skills, experience, track record, and documentation in relation to the specific project requirements.

The Future of Procurement: Embracing SSIP

With evolving legislation, such as the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Procurement Act 2023, the focus on due diligence and robust procurement processes is only going to intensify. SSIP provides a practical and effective solution for buyers seeking to streamline their health and safety assessments while ensuring the competence of their suppliers. By stipulating SSIP certification, buyers can not only reduce risk and save resources but also contribute to a safer and more efficient working environment for everyone.

Considering SSIP Supporter Membership?

If you’re an organisation that values health and safety and wants to play a leading role in shaping industry best practices, consider becoming an SSIP Supporter Member. Contact enquiries@SSIP.org.uk to learn more about the benefits and how to join.