

## MOD Capability Database

T&E Capabilities offered by European Governments, Academia and Industry

### Test & Evaluation Catalogue for the Ministry of Defence

When the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) required conversion of its bi-annual PDF Test & Evaluation Catalogue (TECC) into a live web application, consultants Jacobs Sula worked with Evergreen to successfully deliver the tool.

Evergreen converted the substantial original publication into a sophisticated live Internet based tool. The work challenged Evergreen's coding, project management, database and data migration capabilities. The result, launched successfully after a short development cycle, is an easy to use web application. It enables suppliers to update their entries, the MOD to edit and manage the information, and users to make sophisticated searches.

Describing the project, Simon Cooper of Jacobs Sula says:

'For provision of the new web based tool, we selected Evergreen, who have provided website hosting and design for us for a number of years. Evergreen proved to be competitive, flexible and responsive to our client's needs. They maximised the flexibility and minimised the through-life costs of website maintenance and administration by adapting their proven content management system to provide the extra functionality required for our project. We, our clients and viewers of our new website have expressed how impressed we are with the clear HMI, agility and future flexibility built into the TECC.'

### Full Case Study

The Ministry of Defence (MOD), through their consultants Jacobs Sula, required the design and development of a web application to replace their existing PDF Test and Evaluation Capability Catalogue (TECC). The role of the TECC is to support defence industry teams, prime contractors and other evaluators as they identify suitable European test and evaluation capability.

Prior to the TECC application, Jacobs Sula published the TECC bi-annually as a PDF document on behalf of the MOD. Each time, the document, containing details of some 900 suppliers, was manually extracted from a data base, updated, formatted and reissued. This was a costly, labour intensive process and as more and more providers joined the catalogue the TECC became a victim of its own success – eventually resulting in publishing and distributing a PDF document exceeding 1100 pages.

Evergreen's challenge was to replace the cumbersome TECC with a live and improved Internet tool. And ultimately, to support the organisational aim to reduce the cost of test and evaluation activities across the European Defence Agency.

### 'Capable and well regarded'

Simon Cooper, Senior Consultant Systems Engineer at Jacobs Sula, takes up the story: 'We engaged Evergreen several years ago to transform our original in-house website into something that was more intuitive, cleaner and with a lower maintenance overhead. This was achieved through provision of Evergreen's content management system, which allowed us to update day-to-day information (such as news and vacancies), without needing to employ people with website expertise.

'When we rebranded our website to reflect a change of company ownership, all communication between ourselves and Evergreen was dealt with promptly and effectively – we were left very impressed!

'So when the web-based database project was needed, we naturally turned to Evergreen to see if they could assist. Their response, when we discussed the TECC project, reinforced this and by November 2011 we'd entrusted the TECC application development to them.'

### Creation, updating and editorial control of supplier entries

Cooper again: 'We wanted a web application and database to do everything the old TECC did. We also wanted powerful search capability and the cost advantages of a live web tool so TECC users could search the database quickly, filter the results, compare these results with others and output a set of bespoke results which could be considered further offline. Comparisons were to be based on a bespoke taxonomy of supplier capabilities as well as their location.

We also needed a method of getting in contact and a feedback system. But the real challenge was that the MOD needed to exercise their editorial role and approve supplier entries before publication, while we needed to move the burden of creation and update of the supplier entries to the suppliers.

### Another major challenge was the volume of data

Working to a tight brief, design and development progressed steadily through the winter of 2011–12. At the top level, Evergreen's developers had to deliver a reliable web-based version of the original TECC. At a detail level, although the brief included the ability to print search results, Evergreen championed the benefits of combining results into a single bespoke print or PDF output.

Another major challenge was the volume of data that had to be standardised and imported into the database from an Access database that had been subject to multiple modifications over the years. Evergreen supported the data cleansing with a variety of tools that always ensured that the day-to-day business of running the TECC service was not impacted.

### 'A versatile tool that can be scaled without limitation'

With the web application live, Simon Cooper recalls how Evergreen worked closely with Jacobs Sula and the MOD to agree the scope of works before developing and delivering the solution: 'Thanks to Evergreen, the old Access database has been retired and we have replaced it with a versatile tool. It can be scaled without limitation and at minimal extra cost as the MOD supplier database grows. What's more, the new TECC is always as up-to-date as it can be and is licence free. It's a huge step forward.'

### 'The final data migration run went like clockwork'

According to Cooper, the seven-month development phase went remarkably smoothly, particularly given the complexity and volume of data that Evergreen handled. The teething troubles encountered with inconsistent data and the intricacies of European location mapping were handled by Evergreen in a helpful and proactive way. If one moment stands out in Cooper's recollection of the project, it's the day data migration was completed. 'We knew Evergreen had everything under control,' he explains, 'but we were all relieved when the final data migration went like clockwork and everything was correctly in the database.'

### Smooth handover to the MOD

The site is now live after a smooth handover. With the project complete and the application operating in support of the business, Cooper says: 'We, our clients and viewers of our new website have expressed how impressed we are with the clear HMI, agility and potential for future flexibility. It does everything they wanted and more – they have no complaints. They have told us they are delighted with the tool, it far exceeds their expectations and is really easy to use.'

### Reaffirmed confidence in Evergreen's capabilities

Continuing, he says: 'Our experience on the TECC has reaffirmed our confidence in Evergreen's capability on a substantial project. We found their experience with larger organisations, their patient, methodical approach to large data pools, their perseverance and the way they handled our data migration particularly impressive. They are also very nice people to work with.'

### 'Happy to recommend them in future'

Yet again, Evergreen has drawn on its considerable experience with online databases and web applications to deliver an important resource for the MOD and its suppliers. With another project in the bag, the final word goes to Simon Cooper, who says: 'We haven't had an opportunity to recommend Evergreen yet. But given our two positive experiences, we'd certainly be happy to recommend them in future.'

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“ Evergreen proved themselves to be competitive, flexible and responsive to our needs.”

Simon Cooper, Senior Consultant Systems Engineer at Jacobs Sula  
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