AN INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR CONSTRUCTION QUALITY, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT: A FRAMEWORK FOR IMS

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Abstract
The Integrated Management System, or IMS, is being seen as an effective way of handling the multitude of management functions and procedures that are conducted throughout construction projects. Quality, safety and environmental management are at the forefront of developments where management systems integration is thought to deliver a range of benefits including reductions in the duplication of procedures and paperwork, savings in project administration costs, and gains in both project and company efficiency. It is recognised however that contracting organisations are implementing integration in different ways. This makes current best practice and the wider understanding of key potential benefits difficult to identify and share across the industry. This paper reports on a UK government funded research project, completed in 2004, which focused on the better understanding of systems integration within construction. The research, conducted within the UK construction industry, examined the activities of thirty major contracting organisations and in collaboration with five companies at the leading-edge of management systems integration provided detailed case study evaluation of some of the principal facets, advantages, issues and problems. Summarised in this paper are key findings which can help contractors become more aware of IMS and assist them with IMS development and implementation based upon current best practice.

Keywords
Construction management, integrated management systems (IMS), quality, safety, environment.

INTRODUCTION

Previous papers (Griffith, 2002; Griffith and Bhutto, 2004) introduced, described and contextualised the concept of the Integrated Management System (IMS) as applied to construction. The aim of this paper is to add to the rapidly evolving knowledge base in IMS. The research presented in this paper is based on the findings of a Higher Education Funding Council for England [HEFCE] sponsored PhD research programme examining IMS application by major contracting organisations. Completed by Bhutto (2004), it reports on the experiences of contractors at the leading-edge of IMS developments within the UK. The findings present a detailed evaluation of current practice and points the way forward with considerations and advice on IMS implementation within construction. As the functions and processes of construction management become embraced more and more by standards-based management systems, so the findings in this paper become more relevant to contracting organisations operating both in the UK and worldwide.