

CLOUD Software: AWARD® Strategic Evaluation

THE AWARD® SUITE.....	2
COMMERCE DECISIONS SECURITY AND ACCREDITATIONS	6
AWARD® SAAS DELIVERY	6
INFORMATION ASSURANCE.....	7
UK GOVERNMENT MARKING SCHEMES	8
SECURITY.....	8
CONFIDENTIALITY	8
AVAILABILITY.....	8
MONITORING AND AUDIT	10
DATA CENTRE.....	10
DATA INTEGRITY	11
TECHNICAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	13
BACKUP AND DISASTER RECOVERY	13
SERVICE CONSTRAINTS	16
ON-BOARDING.....	17
ON-BOARDING	17
USER SUPPORT	19
HELPDESK	19
EXPERTASSIST	20
EXPERTASSIST+	21
MANAGED SERVICES	22
OFF-BOARDING.....	23
TERMINATION/OFF-BOARDING/EXIT PLAN	23
DATA RESTORATION/SERVICE MIGRATION	24
TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS.....	24
TRIAL SERVICE.....	25

The AWARD® Suite



The AWARD® suite is an innovative web-based solution designed specifically to support strategic projects; providing teams with the confidence that they are dealing with procurement challenges efficiently, meeting the demands of procurement regulations and delivering robust decisions that are open to external scrutiny. AWARD® delivers consistent repeatable processes for both project and organisational deployments. Over the last 25+ years, it has been proven to reduce time to contract, improve value for money, and reduce risk. AWARD® delivers intuitive and robust evaluations with strong, automatic audit trail, supporting a diverse range of applications including construction programmes, transport and defence systems, IT outsourcing, collaborative frameworks and multi-lot projects.

The Suite comprises packaged solutions which include modules to support projects through the various phases of a procurement evaluation.

- **AWARD® Plan** – Planning your procurement
Pipeline Notices, Preliminary Market Engagement Notice, Requests for Information, Questionnaires, Security Gateways, Communications, Unlimited Data Rooms/Folders, Supplier Self-Registration/CDP Integration, Sourcing Tools Integration)
- **AWARD® Define** – Designing the procurement
Innovative SCD (Structured Criteria Development), VfM (MAT Assessment War-Gaming/Scenario Testing) and Weighting Criteria with Sensitivity Analysis.
- **AWARD® Procure** – Evaluating Supplier Proposals
Evaluation, Moderation and Reporting, User Assignments per Criterion, Multi-Lots, Negotiation Rounds, AI Sentiment Analysis.
- **AWARD® Manage** – Managing the Contract
Unlimited Data Rooms/Folders, Obligation Management, Key Performance Indicators, Supplier Performance Reviews, Legal Documents

Together, our AWARD® Solution delivers the most comprehensive strategic evaluation solution available on the market. A short summary of each feature is given below, but for more details, please visit www.commercedecisions.com



Market Engagement

- Engage the market to identify bidders and potential solutions ahead of the competition
- Information landscape, document research and review
- Market information and management system

- Questionnaire, RFI reviews (Supplier inputting responses)
- Options reporting
- Market Engagement Data Analysis



Datarooms

- Secure, resilient OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE cloud data environment.
- Multiple Document Folders, each with security of access
- Document and workflow management, each with security of access
- Robust user access and management.
- Clear, efficient, auditable communication.
- Intuitive user interface.
- Reporting capabilities.
- MB/GB/TB storage available



Supplier Interaction

- Secure document transfer and data storage for bidders/suppliers.
- Bid upload capability
- Bidder acknowledgement function ensures external users accept terms and conditions before accessing the project.
- Full communication channels for Buyer & Supplier – Notification, Queries, Clarifications - management, control, and audit.
- Full reporting capabilities.
- Full, robust event log audit.
- Sealed answer books ensure bids are not accessed prior to tender deadlines.
- Bidder/Supplier submission tools.



SCD (Structured Criteria Development, incorporating Requirements)

- Identify and record the goals of high-level organisational needs.
- Deliver a robust audit trail of decisions.
- Identify, record, and assess dependencies and risks.
- Record the evidence required and formulate the evaluator guidance to ensure the evidence is assessed correctly.
- Perform sensitivity analysis on the requirements to ensure appropriate scoring schemes and weightings are applied to key criteria.
- The Requirements capability provides a collaborative environment for the development of requirements during the early stages of a project.



Weighting

- Best practice tools to create defensible weights including Commerce Decisions' 4-Factor Method.
- Weighting Workshop to weight your criteria in an auditable and repeatable manner.
- Sensitivity analysis on the weightings with full audit and reporting



Value for Money (VfM)

- A robust and efficient tool for buyers to define what they mean by Value for Money.
- Integrated Most Advantageous Tender (MAT) Methods for the buyer to analyse the impact of different formulae and parameters on their competition, to optimise the outcome.
- Scenario Testing / War-Gaming, a robust way of ranking every scenario bid.



Evaluation

- Conduct robust, transparent strategic evaluations
- Negotiation Phases, Dialogue Rounds
- Work collaboratively
- Supports best practice processes
- Controls risk
- Reduces time to contract
- Enables real-time reporting
- Delivers enhanced bidder debriefs for Qualification, Tender, Negotiation, Dialogue and Final Results



Reporting & Analytics

- Best practice reporting capabilities via custom templates
- Comprehensive, intuitive report wizard
- Build bespoke reports
- Reports can be exported to Excel to be presented in familiar graphical formats
- Assessment Summary Packs



Managing Contracts

- A robust and efficient method to manage documents and communications with legal representatives and suppliers
- Best practice tools to review Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Supplier Performance and Obligations
- Contract Changes



Integration Capability

- Application Program Interface (API) enables integration with Sourcing suites and back-office systems
- Integration with Sourcing solutions enables organisations to deploy a best of breed tool set for tactical and strategic projects
- Sourcing partnerships include Jaggaer, SAP Ariba, Atamis and Proactis, with other options available

AWARD® packages to meet all requirements

AWARD® is a flexible, scalable solution that has been developed to support single projects, programmes and organisations of all shapes and sizes.

Great British Nuclear uses AWARD® for £1.1bn small modular reactor and strategic projects:

- **Legal Compliance & Transparency:** AWARD® ensures adherence to the UK Procurement Act 2023 and provides clear audit trails.
- **Speed & Efficiency:** Framework-based awards (e.g., G-Cloud) allow faster risk-reduced procurement without lengthy competitions.
- **Independent Assurance:** Formal award stages support oversight roles like stakeholders for technical and contractual assurance.
- **Structured Governance:** Clear criteria and documented decisions reduce risk and increase stakeholder confidence.
- **Supplier Engagement:** Transparent award processes encourage SME participation and strengthen supply chains.

National Highways using AWARD® to support complex, multi-billion-pound procurements, including frameworks such as the Scheme Delivery Framework (SDF) renewal and M&R2 programmes.

AWARD® is actively used in the UK Public Sector, particularly for robust evaluation, auditability and transparency which are essential.

Adopting AWARD® for:

- Robust transparency and audit trails required by public procurement regulation
- Structured scoring and consensus moderation, which spreadsheets and standard sourcing tools cannot provide reliably
- Defensibility against challenge, especially in strategic procurements
- Integration with other e-sourcing tools (e.g., JAGGAER, Atamis, BIP Delta) when needed for comprehensive procurement execution

Even where sourcing systems exist, AWARD® is often preferred for evaluation and decision documentation because it offers more flexible weighting models, scoring, clearer audit records and reduced error risk versus spreadsheets.

Whatever your requirement, whether it be for a single project, programme or across an organisation; standalone or working alongside your Sourcing system, we have packaged our AWARD® solution to suit. Our packaged solutions are designed to support procurement teams whether it's just the strategic evaluation capability you need, a fully managed service with access to our best practice methodologies, or a mixture of the AWARD® modules and our professional services team with thought-leadership.

Commerce Decisions Security and Accreditations

Commerce Decisions has been successfully delivering the SaaS hosted AWARD® capability across the Public Sector since 2001. The AWARD® service is secure to OFFICIAL, including all descriptors such as OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE, OFFICIAL-COMMERCIAL and ITAR/EAR.

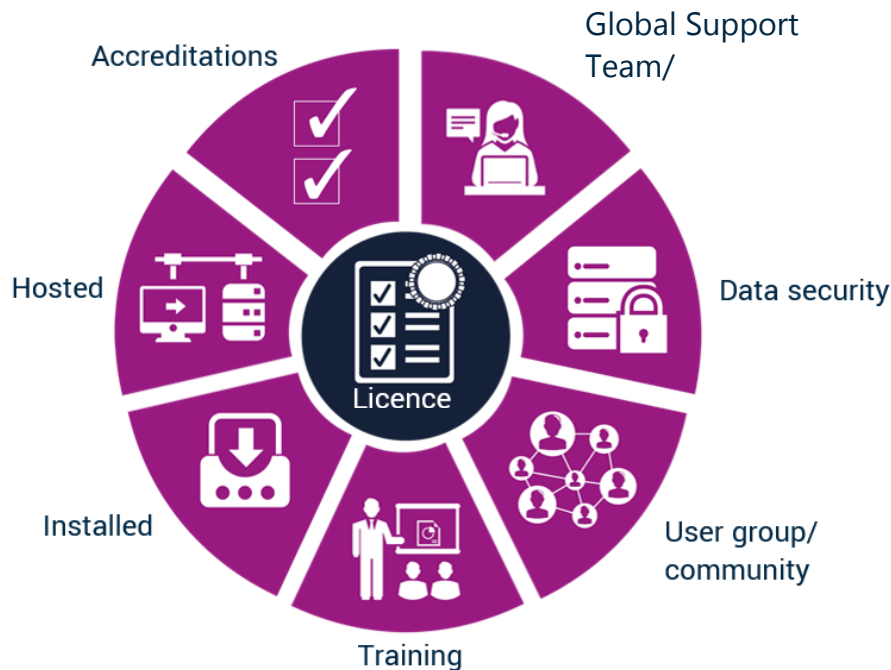
The AWARD® service has been accredited by UK MOD on 'Secure by Design' to hold information up to and including SECRET.

Commerce Decisions also has ISO27001 and ISO9001 accreditations for all its business operations and holds Cyber Essentials Plus.



AWARD® SaaS delivery

Various licencing and pricing models are available to match the varying customer scenarios (see Service Definition). These cater for Enterprise adoption (across an organisation), large programme adoption or individual project usage. Further options exist dependent on the customer requirements and constraints. The pricing covers annual AWARD® user licences, provided as SaaS, payment annually in advance. Other options are available (e.g. project licensing, shorter term) – our account managers will recommend the best approach for bespoke customer adoption.



AWARD® modules are priced based on length and scope of the requirement.

Information Assurance

- The AWARD® service is hosted within Oracle Cloud Infrastructure¹ data centres based in the UK (London and Newport, Wales).
- Administrators operating the service carry UK SC clearance - clearance numbers and expiry dates can be supplied on demand. Administrators comply with operational policies in relation to the management of the service, covered by policies such as Incident Management. Key data elements and all documents are stored securely and cannot be accidentally viewed by system administrators.
- Commerce Decisions is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to comply with the Data Protection Act (including the requirements of GDPR). We treat our customers as the Data Controllers and ourselves as Data Processors under the definition of the Act. Whilst the AWARD® service does not hold sensitive personal data (other than any such data uploaded by our clients), it does contain audit trails which define the actions of its users and such data is treated as covered by the Act. Sensitive/protected data uploaded into AWARD® by customers is their responsibility – the customer is the Controller and we are the Processor.

The AWARD® service conforms fully with respect to provision of a system to OFFICIAL.

¹[Cloud Compliance | Oracle United Kingdom](#)

UK Government Marking Schemes

The AWARD® service is accredited to hold OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE data (as defined by the Government Security Classifications policy).

The handling of documents and information by end users and the systems they use is the responsibility of the local security officer/team and should take into consideration the classification of the data as well as the risk. Commerce Decisions is only responsible for the storage of information on our servers and secure delivery to the user's device.

It remains the responsibility of the customer to determine if AWARD® can be used for their specific data, marking and sensitivity. Customers typically reach that decision by risk assessment, balancing the use of AWARD® and its ready access to industry (for which purpose the accreditation exists), against sensitivity of information.

Security

- Commerce Decisions holds ISO/IEC 27001 and Cyber Essentials Plus certifications
- The AWARD® service undergoes an annual IT Health Check conducted by an NCSC CHECK authorised organisation.
- Data is stored in the UK, in a highly protected and secure data centre with servers and data access being controlled through strong username/password-based access mechanisms.
- Administrator access is restricted to a limited group of operators, all of whom have SC level clearance.
- All user transactions are logged via audit trails and database binary logging with logs identifying individuals by unique ID, allowing for forensic level analysis of user actions if necessary.

Confidentiality

- A data protection policy exists to ensure protection of data held relating to the actions of individuals. Commerce Decisions is registered with the ICO (Information Commissioner's Office) and complies with Data Protection guidelines. A copy of the registration can be made available on request.
- An Incident Response Plan exists to respond to any perceived or real threat to security or related incident on the AWARD® service. All key staff to which the plan relates have undergone training. A copy of the plan can be made available on request.
- An intrusion detection system and routine monitoring of log files are used to identify any attempted attack or threat of attack.

Availability

- The Data Centre and hosting environment behind the AWARD® service provide

a 99.9% uptime guarantee backed by service level agreements with the data centre supplier.

- The Data Centre provides multiple availability zones with server anti-affinity to ensure that virtual servers are spread over unrelated hosts to minimise the impact of physical hardware within the data centre. In the event of a hardware fault, any affected server migrates to a new host.
- The Data Centre provides redundant power supplies and redundant internet connections to guard against loss of service by localised power telecommunications failure. Uninterrupted Power Supplies will ensure that servers cannot go down, and diesel-based power generators exist to provide long-term power in the event of a lengthy power shut-down.
- The infrastructure providing the service is built with redundancy in all hardware elements, and we make use of the resilience features to help maximise availability.
- The AWARD® service is delivered in a multi-tier environment. Users connect to the AWARD® service via a Web Application Firewall, which in turn connects to the AWARD® application servers via a Load Balancer. Each service is separated by Network Security Groups and Access Controls. Outbound traffic from the AWARD® servers is controlled by Network Security Groups and URL Whitelist access controls.
- To ensure against disruption or loss, data is stored on redundant disks with SLAs. Loss of a single disk cannot lead to loss of data. Data is also replicated to disaster recovery systems with the same levels of redundancy.
- The primary data centre is built on highly resilient infrastructure.
- A Disaster Recovery instance of the service is in a data centre in a different physical location (Newport, Wales) from the UK-based Primary data centre (London), to handle a once-in-a-lifetime event such as loss of an entire data centre or infrastructure. A dedicated and encrypted network link between the two data centres ensures both protection of data in transit and their real-time replication.
- The above is backed up by a documented Business Continuity Plan (BCP) which identifies roles and responsibilities and tasks to be undertaken to ensure continuity through an incident which may include disaster recovery. The BCP also covers plans for other elements of the AWARD® Service; for example, continuation of Help Desk and consultancy support services in the event of disaster affecting other parts of the business.
- Data is backed up incrementally and through a programme of daily and weekly backup points stored in line with our data retention policy. Backups are stored to resilient storage containers. Backup data is replicated to the Disaster Recovery data centre.

Monitoring and Audit

- The AWARD® platform is designed with an extensive array of activity logging features ensuring that every element of activity is properly accounted for. Tracking is performed on a continuous basis for all system activities as well as user actions recorded by unique user ID.
- A time stamp is associated with each record being logged. All logs are compressed and archived indefinitely providing our team and our clients with the capability of re-tracing system activities for the entire life of the service.
- Access to system logs is strictly controlled and limited to SC-cleared administrators who are authorised to view and analyse the information following a written request by a claimant. Administrators will adhere strictly to CDL's internal code of conduct for these procedures.
- The extent and nature of the logs, including database level binary logs, replication and access restrictions on logs ensure that no one person can alter the accounting log files.
- Database binary logs and incremental backups ensure that data transactions can be forensically examined if necessary.
- Log files are regularly monitored, primarily for the purpose of identifying unusual behaviour such as attempts to breach or bypass system security.
- All systems are automatically and continuously synchronised through Network Time Protocol (NTP) to GMT. This is critical in ensuring the effectiveness of our pervasive logs to the extent that the company can efficiently and accurately determine cause-and-effect diagnosis. This is also a requirement in certain Government regulations to the extent that the service must guarantee accurate synchronisation with an "official" third party time provider.

Data Centre

AWARD® data is stored in an Oracle Cloud located in London, England and Newport, Wales. This has the following attributes:

- The Data centres align with Uptime Institute and Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) ANSI/TIA-942-A Tier 3 or Tier 4 standards and follow an N2 redundancy methodology for critical equipment operation.
- The data centre carries ISO/IEC 27001/27017/27018/27701 certifications.
- Access to the data centre is restricted to authorised personnel who must provide appropriate photo-id based credentials to gain access. Physical access to the data centre is monitored and a register of access maintained.
- Access to restricted areas within the data centre is controlled by security access cards and codes.

- The data centre carries 24x7x365 on-site staffed security with closed-circuit camera systems both outside and within the data centre.
- The servers and racks that deliver the AWARD® Service are not labelled and are not identifiable except to limited set of personnel responsible for the management of the service.
- There is a fully redundant power supply with full balancing of the lines to guarantee power supply continuity in case of critical path failure through two 2MVA generators in N+1 configuration.
- Oracle monitors server rooms closely for air temperature and humidity, and fire suppression systems are in place.
- The Data Centre has multiple internet connections with redundancy built in against failure of any single internet connection or provider.

Data Integrity

The integrity of the AWARD® Service and all data held within is provided as follows:

- To protect against compromise by virus, all servers carry anti-virus protection using latest technologies, updated multiple times each day.
- Application whitelisting is used on the servers to ensure that only approved applications will execute on the servers.
- Outbound traffic from the servers is only allowed to a whitelist of approved destinations. System administrators cannot browse the internet, access email or perform other standard user activities on the servers.
- Management of the AWARD® system is limited to an identified set of individuals, all of whom carry SC clearance in line with Impact Level 3 requirements. These individuals access the system via a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to the data centre.
- Authentication for management of the servers and infrastructure is via MFA.
- All key pieces of information that might identify the decisions being made by AWARD® are stored in such a way in the database such that no operator can gain knowledge of the purpose of that data whilst performing management and maintenance activities.
- All documents held in the system have their names obfuscated such that it is not possible to determine the purpose of a document.
- Access to the applications provided by the Service is controlled through secure HTTPS/SSL based access and users are authenticated through use of unique

usernames and strong passwords.

- The use of HTTPS/SSL ensures that all data is encrypted whilst in transit and only authenticated users will be able to access the service and the data within it.
- An authenticated user's access is further controlled by application security logic based on the user's role within the system.
- All logs from servers are streamed to a SIEM log management system which is used to drive real time alerting of potential emerging issues.
- The AWARD® Service carries an array of activity logging features whereby every action or operation performed by any user is tracked and logged with a timestamp and ID of the user performing that operation. This information is archived in line with our data retention policy and can be used to trace historical activities. Access to logs is strictly limited to SC-cleared administrators who will analyse the information behind a written request by a claimant whilst strictly adhering to Commerce Decisions' code of conduct on the matter.
- The AWARD® Service has a minimal external system exposure. A Web Application Firewall ensures that only those components (web servers) strictly needed for interaction with the outside world are accessible from the public internet and applies security rules to incoming requests to minimise the risk of web-based attacks. All other ports and servers cannot be directly accessed. Internal firewalls further protect application and database servers from intrusion.
- The AWARD® Service undergoes regular IT Health Check penetration testing by a CHECK accredited organization
- A high level of physical security exists within the data centre to protect against physical access to the servers housing the data. The data centre carries 24-hour staffed security and closed-circuit monitoring systems. Only Oracle authorised persons are granted physical access to the servers and the secure areas of the data centre.
- The hosted environment is built on encrypted storage, protecting customer data from unauthorised access in the event of the theft/loss of drives and when decommissioning failed drives.
- All storage is encrypted using AES-256 for full data encryption. All data encryption is handled at the drive level, and no external software or hardware is needed to encrypt data.
- The passphrases and lock keys are held offsite and stored in separate encrypted password databases.

Technical Policies and Procedures

The AWARD® service is operated through a set of policies and procedures which are part of a formal ISO/IEC 27001 certified Information Security Management System (ISMS). This includes the following elements:

- Access to the IT infrastructure of the service is restricted to identified individuals with clear roles and responsibilities, all of whom carry SC-Clearance in line with Impact Level 3. Every person who enters a data centre must pass through security checkpoints at the site entrances. Anyone who doesn't have a site-specific security badge must present government-issued identification and have an approved request that grants them access to the building.
- In addition to the above physical measures to protect against the loss of services, a Business Continuity Process exists for ensuring continued delivery of the AWARD® Service in the event of disaster. This covers both the application platform (for example loss of the primary data centre) as well as all aspects of our service delivery model.
- An Incident Management Plan exists to ensure that CDL and its subcontractors deal effectively with any security or other incidents identified by, or reported to, Commerce Decisions.
- Commerce Decisions routinely monitor all elements of its IT Infrastructure for patches, particularly those related to security improvements or new industry standards, and these are routinely applied to ensure continued integrity of the service.

Backup and Disaster Recovery

- The AWARD® Service is delivered via UK-based data centres aligned with Uptime Institute and Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) ANSI/TIA-942-A Tier 3 or Tier 4 standards. This is the highest level of data centre provision with complete redundancy and fault tolerance. The data centre also carries ISO27001 and ISO14001 accreditations; the latter indicating compliance with Environmental and Carbon Trust Standards for power usage and environmental impact.
- The primary data centre houses the AWARD® Live system and has built-in resilience using Fault Domains, ensuring that different components of the infrastructure are distributed across equipment to minimize the impact in the event of a fault.
- A physically separate Disaster Recovery (DR) site is in a separate UK-based Tier 3 data centre. This site also carries live replication of data via a secure network connection. In the event of the unrecoverable loss of the primary data centre, the DR site can be activated with minimal loss of data (one day at the most, with a probable-case scenario of zero to one hour loss).

- Data backup includes the backup of the binary database log files that record every action in the service life – this is retained in line with our data retention policy. In addition, a daily and weekly backup and retention cycle is used to provide specific backup points. Backups are held electronically, and offsite backup is achieved by replication to the DR site using a secure network connection. Data never leaves the secure data centres and there are no tape backups. All backups are 256-bit encrypted.

The AWARD® SaaS web-based application is delivered through a tried and tested technological infrastructure that has a proven track record as a highly stable, scalable and secure service. The solutions are centrally hosted and managed providing the following benefits:

- No need for risky, costly infrastructure setup and roll-out which often result in delays and technical incompatibilities.
- Scalability due to optimal dimensioning of all subsystems and components (storage, web- servers, bandwidth etc.) within the service delivery architecture throughout the life of the project.
- Increased overall security of infrastructure and procedures since all potential security threats are constantly monitored and preventive/corrective action taken accordingly.
- This method of delivery of software applications is commonly referred to as “Software as a Service” (SaaS) deployment.

There is no requirement for customers choosing our AWARD® solution to invest in any resource in additional hardware, software or IT staff to install, run, manage or upgrade the software solution. CDL is responsible for the following activities in relation to AWARD® and in accordance with contractual service levels:

- System setup and configuration
- Hosting (hardware and connectivity)
- System maintenance
- All AWARD® software upgrades
- Backup using an incremental, daily and weekly backup cycle
- Usage logs tracking all end user and administrator activities
- System performance monitoring
- Business continuity and disaster recovery (tested annually)
- Security (all relevant security protocols with yearly third-party penetration testing).

AWARD® is delivered via a highly secure multi-tenant application delivery capability. Our customers can leverage the true benefits of SaaS while also benefiting from the highest standards of service in terms of security, availability and performance.

There are no technical capacity constraints on the use of computing resources. Technical infrastructure envisioned for the project provides all necessary technical resources to adequately address the customer requirements for global deployment of the solution.

The table below outlines some of the key characteristics of our Software as a Service (SaaS) offering:

Storage Limitations	None
System availability	99.9% (minimum monthly measure – excludes planned maintenance window). Refer also to our standard terms: https://commercedecisions.com/policies-terms/license-terms/
System response time	Less than 4 seconds in 95% of typical use cases with a broadband level connection and no client induced lags
Back-up and recovery	Included
Encryption	SSL 256
Encryption in transit	Minimum TLS 1.2
Maintenance/Patches/Upgrades	Conducted outside of normal business hours – minimum 2-week notification to customers for planned maintenance

Please also take note of the **Data Centre** and **Availability** topics in the Information Assurance section of this document.

In addition to the technology itself, Commerce Decisions provides the following:

- The service is administered by Commerce Decisions staff, all of whom carry SC clearance. Management includes setting up new customers and, where requested, managing the user accounts and password resets. It is also possible for customers to self-serve once they have been configured for access.
- Customers have access to a Help Desk that operates 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday excluding UK public holidays. We offer telephone support backed up by a dedicated support email address.
- Customers also have access to our online Knowledge Base, which contains a wide range of articles and videos covering all aspects of the AWARD platform. It is fully searchable and supported by our self-serve answer bot, Minerva. If a user cannot find the solution they need, they can submit a support ticket using the online form.
- The service operates in Data centres aligned with Uptime Institute and

Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) ANSI/TIA-942-A Tier 3 or Tier 4 standards with at least 99.9% uptime Service Level Agreement. CDL aims to exceed 99.5% uptime during business hours and 99% uptime outside of business hours. These levels have been maintained consistently since commencement of the service in 2003.

- The data centres provide high specification internet connections. Backed up with modern virtualised cloud-based infrastructure and optimised software. The design aim is to provide end-user response times of a maximum of 4 seconds for all key software operations with AWARD®. Note this will be highly dependent on the action being performed; for example, in relation to customers uploading/downloading documents, document sizes will play a key part in response times.
- The service is monitored by in-house and third-party monitoring software that sends administrators email and SMS text alerts of issues. These include any failure or inability to connect to the service and performance degradation.
- Our Quality Assurance process ensures software is rolled out to our Cloud service consistently. All software updates are fully tested using an extensive set of automated, manual and performance tests to ensure that there is no degradation in customer experience.
- All updates to the service infrastructure are tested in our DR site prior to live rollout.
- Our software has been designed to be easy to use, and we receive very few helpdesk tickets, either by phone or email, from customers. Our performance response times consistently meet and exceed those required by government frameworks. It is our policy to resolve any queries/issues as soon as possible following receipt of a ticket. Generally, calls are resolved within that initial contact. All tickets raised with our Helpdesk are triaged and assigned a priority level, for which we work to internal Service Level Objectives. The customer will be updated of progress on a regular basis, and any issue not resolved within the assigned SLO will be escalated to our Customer Success Director.

Service Constraints

- The software is available 24x7x365 except for planned maintenance periods.
- The software is updated several times per year. For this and any other maintenance work, customers receive a minimum notice period of two weeks, and all work is undertaken during weekends to ensure minimal disruption to the service.
- Typical system downtime for planned maintenance is 2 to 4 hours.
- Software changes are designed and planned in consultation with our customers and services teams via account managers directly working with customers and via customer user groups. We have an internal product roadmap in which we identify technology and governance changes that need to be reflected in AWARD® as well as general product improvements based on feedback from customers and our services team. Release-specific roadmaps are planned and shared with customers with

roadmap targets refined in consultation with customers and internal stakeholders.

- Our policy with software updates is to ensure there is no negative impact to the customer's experience, nor degradation of the service when an upgrade is applied. All new feature improvements are built to be additive, and customers can opt to start using them at a time of their choosing.
- A release note is issued to all customers on request, outlining the additions and changes.
- In the event of a release with significant new functionality we will run awareness programmes and training sessions well in advance of the release date.
- We also routinely apply security patches to our infrastructure, and this is verified annually via internal and external penetration tests.

Please refer also to Commerce Decisions' standard terms': [Licence Terms | Commerce Decisions](#)

Financial Recompense

Unless otherwise agreed, our standard terms and conditions apply, see [Licence Terms | Commerce Decisions](#)

On-boarding

AWARD® is a specialist service and Commerce Decisions has over 25-years track record in delivering the Service and supporting consulting, training and account management to our customer base in the UK Public Sector.

On-boarding

- A customer wishing to place an order will be contacted by an AWARD® account manager. On agreement of the level of service required, an order may be placed via the catalogue. If appropriate, an implementation plan will be agreed to include the necessary training or support services.
- Service activation occurs on receipt of a valid order, unless otherwise requested – the customer nominated points of contact are issued with username(s) and password(s), and given access to the service in a dedicated account. Licence extension or modification is also agreed via the account manager and licence changes can be applied within minutes.
- Upon activation of the service, customers have the option of administering the service themselves or using the Commerce Decisions Help Desk for basic administration tasks. An enhanced ExpertAssist service is available for support with features such as templates and reporting (see bullet point below). Support/training services can be purchased for assistance in the management of the system whilst executing projects.

- Where consulting has been purchased, an agreed plan of work will begin with the appointment of the lead consultant and, if required, a kick-off day to initiate the project. The nature of the support required by customers is wide-ranging and varied. Customers can choose from a set of available training, support and consulting programmes (see training section above). Alternatively, we can put together a bespoke programme of support to address any specific requirements of the customer.

User Support



*For our Professional Services – please see the AWARD® Cloud Support Listing or speak directly with us at Commerce Decisions.

Support Offerings

Helpdesk

- Email: support@commercedecisions.com

Our standard Helpdesk support is included with your AWARD® subscription and provides email support from 09:00 – 17:00, Monday – Friday, excluding public holidays.

The Helpdesk will answer your AWARD® software queries and offer non-project-specific guidance. You will have access to our support portal, where you can log in, raise support tickets and view progress against any submitted tickets.

All AWARD® users also have access to our Knowledge Base, which includes searchable help, guidance and short explainer/functionality videos.

Support Offerings	Standard Support (Technical Support)	Expert Assist	Expert Assist+ / Managed Builds	Fully Managed Service
LICENSES				
Licenses	1-50 users	1-300 users	Unlimited users	Unlimited users
Data volume fair usage	25Gb	25Gb + 1Gb per annual licensed user	1TB	POA
UPTIME				
Uptime SLA	99.90%	99.90%	99.95%	99.95%
SUPPORT AVAILABILITY				
Email Support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Phone Support	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Availability Hours	UK 9am to 5pm	UK 9am to 6pm	UK 8am to 6pm	TBD
Response SLO	8 hour	4 hour	3 hour	3 hour
Support of authority users	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Support of supplier users	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Knowledgebase	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tickets	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Support Ticket Reporting on Request	No	No	Yes	Yes
Success Review Calls	Bi-annually	Quarterly	Monthly	TBD
TRAINING				
eLearning	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Feature Training	Paid extra	Public webinars	Organisation specific	Organisation specific
Best Practice Training	Paid extra	Paid extra	Organisation specific	Organisation specific
Bespoke Training	Paid extra	Paid extra	Yes	Yes
FEATURE SUPPORT				
Integrations	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Evaluation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Datarooms	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Communications	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Supplier Interaction	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Supplier Self Registration	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Weighting	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Multi Lot	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Advanced Lot	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Standard Reporting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Custom Reporting including Results & Assessment Summary Templates	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
VFM Module	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
SCD Module	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Negotiated Procedures	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Thresholds	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
PA2023 Notices	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
PA2023 Batch Notices	No	No	Yes	Yes
PROCUREMENT SUPPORT				
Procurement advice & guidance	No	No	Yes	Yes
Technical Project Configuration Review	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Template Maintenance and Updates	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reporting Template Library	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
COMPLIANCE SUPPORT				
Answer security related questions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Complete your specific compliance (e.g. DART)	No	No	Yes	Yes
Security Tenant Isolation (EAR/ITAR Project tenant)	No	No	Yes	Yes

ExpertAssist

- Email: support@commercedecisions.com
- Telephone (ExpertAssist only): +44 (0)1235 313 551

ExpertAssist delivers an enhanced support service, offering email and phone support from 08:00 - 18:00, Monday- Friday, excluding public holidays.

In addition to the Helpdesk service, the ExpertAssist team is on hand to offer advice and guidance in relation to your AWARD® configuration, project templates, use of our expert modules and advanced functionality/processes. ExpertAssist also includes a bi-monthly check-in with a customer success specialist.

This is ideal for customers who have trained super users with their organisation but want some additional support from us to enable their users to use the AWARD® software independently. Think of ExpertAssist as

Breakdown Cover for your AWARD® users - we're there when you need us and are on hand to provide useful hints and tips to keep your procurement on the road and get the most out of the system.

Included:

- Technical guidance on the use of AWARD® relating to the customer's specific project configuration
- Technical configuration of and amends to existing AWARD® project templates
- Technical configuration review of the AWARD® project
- Development of Report templates using standard AWARD® report components
- Bookable support at a time convenient to you

Excluded;

- Training of new users. Expert Assist is intended to build upon existing training and develop the user's capability and confidence in the system. It is not intended as a substitute or replacement for training.
- Evaluation design or advice
- Assurance of the AWARD® design against the tender documents
- Completion of tasks in AWARD®
- Bespoke Excel report templates

ExpertAssist+

- Email: support@commercedecisions.com
- Telephone (ExpertAssist only): +44 (0)1235 313 551

The ExpertAssist+ phone/email support service is available from 08:00 - 18:00, Monday – Friday, excluding public holidays.

In addition to the ExpertAssist service outlined above, ExpertAssist+ gives users access to an AWARD® Expert who is on hand to assist with completing configuration tasks on your behalf or to help with completing administrative tasks such as creating users.

It is designed for customers who have some in-house AWARD® skills but require additional resource to help with completing their configurations. Think of EA+ as your local maintenance engineer, you get on with using the system but we are there to assist when the job gets too big or you have a tight deadline to work towards. There are a host of other benefits including exclusive Best Practice Insights and webinars, and access to our AWARD® Insights analytics platform.

Included;

- Completion of ad-hoc configuration tasks on the customer's behalf. Examples include -
 - eSourcing import (Questions/Evidence items and Supplier Responses),
 - Configuration of scoring measures
 - Assigning users
 - Creation of Document Groups
 - Creation of users
 - Development of Excel report templates

Excluded;

- Evaluation design or advice
- Assurance of the AWARD® design against the tender documents

Managed Services

The AWARD® Managed Service is designed to remove the operational and technical burden of configuring, maintaining, and evolving the AWARD® platform. Customers can focus on delivering their core work, confident that the system is being built, maintained, and governed by AWARD® specialists who work with the platform every day.

This service provides not only execution, but ensures consistency, quality, and resilience across all technical and functional changes.

We take full responsibility for configuring and maintaining AWARD® in line with agreed requirements, including:

- System configuration and ongoing changes
- Workflow, rules, and process setup
- Environment management and controlled releases
- Configuration documentation and standards alignment

All builds are delivered using established best practices developed through continuous work on AWARD® across multiple customers and use cases.

We manage user administration end-to-end to ensure secure and efficient access to AWARD®:

- User onboarding, role assignment, and deactivation
- Permissions and access reviews
- Alignment with organisational policies and compliance requirements

This ensures users have the right access at the right time, without placing administrative overhead on customer teams.

The Managed Service includes structured user enablement to support adoption and effective use of the platform:

- New user onboarding and role-based training
- Refresher training following system changes
- Guidance on best practices and efficient usage

Training is delivered by practitioners who design and configure AWARD®, ensuring practical, real-world guidance rather than generic instruction.

We act as an extension of the customer's team, managing requests and changes in a controlled, predictable way:

- Intake and prioritisation of configuration requests
- Impact assessment and change planning
- Controlled deployment with validation and rollback planning
- Ongoing optimisation and continuous improvement

A core component of the Managed Service is structured peer review of technical builds.

- All significant configurations and changes are reviewed by a second AWARD® specialist
- Peer reviews validate design decisions, technical correctness, and alignment to standards
- Knowledge is shared across the team, reducing dependency on any single individual

This approach significantly reduces risk, improves build quality, and ensures continuity even as requirements evolve.

Off-Boarding

Termination/Off-boarding/Exit Plan

- Customers can sign up on a project specific or time-expiry based licence with a given number of users.
- On expiry or termination of a licence, the customer data is held within the service in read-only format, generally for the duration of the relevant contract. Additional read-only access may be agreed beyond framework/contract termination, subject to relevant

regulations – actual terms and applicable costs to be agreed on a case-by-case basis. Additional charges may apply.

- Customers have the ability to export data in Excel or HTML format and extract documents from the service if they wish for backup or archival processes.
- Where a customer wishes to contract the work, Commerce Decisions provides a chargeable data archival service that customers can contract for as part of initial contract or on termination.
- As allowed for by GDPR, customer data will be deleted on request as far as is practicable given the robust failover, DR, audit nature of the AWARD® system (noting that any remaining archived data that cannot reasonably be deleted would be obfuscated and impossible to recover) – cost dependent on the volume of data to be deleted.

Data Restoration/Service Migration

- See Backup section above for Commerce Decisions' backup policies. In the event of data loss Commerce Decisions is able to restore data to any point in time using the data backup and archives outlined above. Data is recovered in the DR site and then transferred to the live site.
- A charge may be levied for the data restoration service should extensive recovery work be required as a result of the data being lost through the action of the customer.
- Should the customer wish to transfer data to an alternative service, they are able to extract documentation held within AWARD® via ZIP based export and extract other data in either HTML or Excel format. This service can be performed by Commerce Decisions and will be charged on a time and materials basis (dependent on the volume of data involved and the complexity of the structure).

Technical Requirements

- Customers require only a supported browser and an internet connection to use the service. All modern browsers are supported. A supported browser list is published with each version of the software and any withdrawal of support is notified six months in advance.
- AWARD® makes no use of plugins such as ActiveX or Java – AWARD® is an HTML-based application. AWARD® also allows a 'script free' option that excludes all scripting for highly locked-down environments.

Trial Service

- During account initiation (see On-boarding) a trial service can be set up for the purposes of proving infrastructure, technology, accessibility and testing. There would be no charge for this.