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Andrew Green, Director of Faithful+Gould and Lead Technical Author of BS 8544

How publication of BS 8544 will enable more cost-efficient maintenance and renewal of buildings and bring other benefits

"There was an overwhelming need for a solution that would enable a more structured and robust way to work out building maintenance costs, which is why a new standard for the life cycle costing of maintenance, BS 8544, was created," explains Andrew Green, Director of international construction consultancy Faithful+Gould and Lead Technical Author of BS 8544, which was published in September 2013.

"Without the standard, the process is fragmented and plans focus on the short term, not necessarily making the most cost-efficient choices for the medium or longer term. It's difficult to control a budget, too, because you don't have overall visibility of costs, and you can't predict future costs."

Cost-saving benefits

As Green explains, BS 8544 enables users to collect data so that joined-up maintenance and renewal cost planning can be carried out. "You can make better decisions about how and when to target your maintenance and renewals. BS 8544 enables you to set and defend budgets, target your investments and optimize the value of your maintenance spend. You can also decide whether to invest in your assets or not, keep using a building, use space in a different way or move to a more cost-efficient option. There are numerous cost-saving benefits."

The standard's 'plan-do-check-act' principles enable users to identify assets, standardize how they look at them and break them down so they can work out the best maintenance strategy. Green adds: "You don't have to keep on doing it, nor need to pay to call out surveyors every time, because you already have the necessary asset knowledge."

Real world tests

During its development, the standard was applied to the 131 prisons operated by the Ministry of Justice, comprising 6,000 buildings and some six million assets. "We were able to establish an asset database for the whole Ministry of Justice custodial estate, in line with RICS and other standards," explains Green, "then determine what maintenance and renewal was required to ensure legal and statutory compliance, and that assets remained fit for function and not over-maintained."

The standard was also tested at Heathrow Airport. Green adds: "We looked at how assets were structured; broke that down into 23 types, such as lifts, escalators, fire mains and so on, to which we planned 'keep-out-of-jail' and 'fit-for-function' maintenance. Heathrow also has ageing assets worth billions of pounds. Using the standard enabled us to calculate savings worth 20 per cent of their allocated capex funding for replacement works, as well as reduce their opex running cost budgets significantly. "

BS 8544 allows users to establish almost a "*Haines Manual*" view of maintenance for every building type, which makes things much simpler," says Green. "And data can be used to determine maintenance costs for new buildings, which can help you decide how they should be built and handed over to be operated and maintained. Because it provides robust, detailed whole life cycle maintenance costs, the standard is a key enabler to make BIM [Building Information Modelling] workable."

Industry collaboration

Kathryn Bourke was the standard's other Lead Technical Author. Green and Bourke were part of a BSI technical committee featuring lead practitioners in buildings maintenance, professional organizations such as the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers and the Building and Engineering Services Association, and client organizations such as the Ministry of Justice and Heathrow.

"It was a highly collaborative process," Green recalls. "Involving the right professionals, experts and clients helped to ensure a robust, 'real-world' solution. You standardize good practice — not theory and concept."

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