Lessons Learned

You should review your activities to understand which areas of your bid and contract were performed well and where there are areas for development. Lessons learned should be undertaken throughout the procurement process i.e.:

- after a contract has been awarded, whether your bid won or not, to review your bid process and understand the areas that need to be amended for future bids
- during the lifetime of the contract in order to incorporate any best practice/problem solving identified or implemented
- after the contract has ended.

All personnel involved with the bid and/or contract, both in your organisation and the buying organisation, should be asked for feedback. This could include a variety of roles e.g. contract managers, buyers, logistics, estate managers, etc.

Areas which could be considered are:

- what worked well, what didn’t work well?
- were any innovations delivered (if so, what improvements resulted?) or do you now have ideas for some improvements for future contracts?
- what areas of the contract were most important to the buyer?
- what issues/costs occurred which were not anticipated?
- were there processes/practices used that could be improved upon or are not needed at all?
- can ICT (Information and Communications Technology) systems be used in any way to improve performance?

Any lessons learned throughout the bid process and the life of the contract should be included and acted upon. Some of these ideas may provide new business opportunities for your organisation.

A Summary of Key Points to Remember

Zone A - Prepare

- register on Public Contracts Scotland and set up a Supplier Finder Profile, to ensure that buyers can find you, and select product categories to receive email alerts. Ensure this information is kept up-to-date
- analyse your business in a public sector context - understand what parts of the public sector seek your business, and how much is usually spent per year
- attend 'Meet the Buyer events' and use other means e.g. advertising, trade shows, etc. of making your business known to your target market
- understand whether your business has the resources to commit to high value and complex procurement procedures (formal tendering process) or whether the lower value quotations route is more suitable for your business - or a mixture of the two.

Zone B – Bidding

Key points to consider before tendering or preparing a quotation:

- analyse the Contract Notice and/or procurement documents - can you match the technical, skill and experience requirements?
- how much will it cost to prepare your bid? Does the potential profit from the contract justify your interest?
- would the work fit in with your strategy and positioning of your business? If the contract is very high value the procurement could take the best part of a year to be concluded - does this timescale fit with your existing business commitments?
- assess how the contract would affect your other work, staffing and ability to take on other new business;
- how important the customer is to your business?

Quotations

A quotation should cover the following:

- a breakdown of the requirements as understood by the supplier - this is to ensure that any misunderstanding in the requirements are identified and clarified early on
- a description of how you have the skills and experience to deliver the requirements

- practical details of how the requirements will be fulfilled
- any guarantees, after sales service or warranty period
- price.

Tendering for Contracts

- note interest in the contract
- access the procurement documents
- ensure you fully understand the requirement - ask the buyer for clarification on any point if required
- ensure you have sufficient capacity to resource 1) the bidding process 2) delivery of the requirement if the bid is successful
- describe how you have the skills and experience to deliver the requirements
- offer practical details of how you will meet the requirements
- state any guarantees, after sales service or warranty period
- detail your price.

Zone C – Decision and Award

- if you are unsuccessful, request feedback through a debriefing session with the buyer
- if you have a concern about a specific procurement exercise contact The Single Point of Enquiry (SPoE).

Zone C - Contract & Supplier Management

When delivering the contract:

- ensure timescales are met
- respond quickly to queries or problems
- submit invoices on a regular basis, in accordance with the conditions of contract
- do not be afraid to suggest new products/solutions. Innovation is frequently welcomed
- understand the performance criteria you are expected to meet when delivering the contract
- speak to your customer regularly to ensure that you are both getting the maximum benefit from the contract.