

Bidding Hints & Tips

Outlined below are some hints and tips to consider when bidding for any public sector contract.

Quickfire Guide

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Preparation

- Investigate your sector and only bid for work that you are sure you can do;
- Ensure that you have registered on [Public Contracts Scotland \(PCS\)](#) by setting up a company profile. This will ensure you are notified of potential or current opportunities that are of interest to you;
- Research other procurement exercises which have been carried out, including who the winning supplier(s) were. This will help increase your market knowledge, including when future opportunities will be renewed.
- Keep your PCS Supplier Finder profile up-to-date with current information/keywords so that procurement officers can find you to directly invite you to quote for low value contracts;
- For PCS we recommend that you use a general email address for your organisation and establish an internal process to allocate responsibility for picking these up and actioning (including cover for sickness/leave, etc.);
- Investigate [what training is available](#) e.g. register with the Supplier Development Programme, if you are a micro, small or medium business and Scottish Enterprise/Business Gateway or Social Firms Scotland if you are supported business, etc.

Further preparation information can be found in [Analyse your Business](#).

All procurement exercises are different so ensure you fully read (and reread) the procurement exercise documents to understand:

- What requirements you have to meet and when?
- What documents you need to complete, and in which format, to bid?
- What are the tender timescales e.g. the timescales for being able to raise questions with the procurement officer? the tender deadline?
- Are supplier days, site visits and/or presentations included in the process?

Some Contract Notices include the estimated budget for the contract: use this information to help you decide if your organisation should bid or not.

When completing your bid documents

- Remember that your bid will be evaluated only on the information you provide as part of your bid. Previous supply, dealings, etc., with the buying organisation cannot be taken

into consideration. As a result you must ensure you provide all relevant information in your bid i.e. do not assume that the procurement officer already knows information;

- Do not make assumptions. If you are unsure of anything raise a query with the procurement officer in good time i.e. per the timescales and methods communicated by the procurement officer. Please note: do not include information which can identify you or your organisation e.g. company name, as this query may be rejected by the procurement officer.
- Understand the weightings for each Award criteria. The higher the criteria weighting, the more important the criteria and more time should be allocated to this;
- Allow enough time to complete and respond to the procurement exercise, (including some extra time in case of issues). Do not leave working on your bid until just before the tender deadline in case of unforeseen issues: what if you encounter an unexpected delay or technical issue?
- Familiarise yourself with the system being used e.g. Public Contracts Scotland;
- If you are using a team for the bid, make sure they prepare, collaborate and are clear on their respective roles and the timelines involved;
- Plan and cost the full extent of delivering the contract to ensure that you have taken full account of overheads and resource implications;
- If you have any questions, ask these of the procurement officer early enough in the process to be able to incorporate the response into your bid;
- Read and understand the question. Do not assume. If you are unsure about something raise a question with the procurement officer;
- Write your responses in the format the procurement officer lists in the procurement exercise e.g. if the procurement officer asks for the response to be no longer than 2 sides of A4 in Arial font size 12, ensure that you follow these instructions. If the procurement officer provides a pricing schedule (spreadsheet) for you to complete, use this spreadsheet and do not submit your responses in another format;
- Double-check all of your responses to make sure you have not made any mistakes, missed questions or answered questions in the wrong place;
- Check spelling (use a spell checker), grammar and overall appearance of your bid;
- Ask someone to proof read your submission. Does your bid make sense? If you or your colleagues don't understand the bid then how will the procurement officer?
- Keep a checklist of actions/documents that are to be included in the bid (if one is not provided by the procurement officer) and tick these off as they are included in your bid document and/or as a separate uploaded bid attachment;
- Ensure all documents provided are readable, meeting the format requirements of the procurement officer (if they have been stated);
- Ensure you allow enough time to upload and submit all of your bid documents before the tender submission deadline. If you encounter any technical issues you should contact the PCS (or PCS-T if appropriate) Helpdesk to highlight the issues being encountered as soon as possible to avoid a late bid;
- If your bid is unclear, and the procurement officer asks you to explain something (normally called a clarification) respond within the timelines provided by the procurement officer;
- Make sure you meet all requirements set out by the procurement officer e.g. accreditations, qualifications;
- Try not to use general or marketing information in your bid. Tailor your response to the requirement.

After your bid has been submitted, please ensure that you have key individuals available from your organisation to answer any questions (clarifications) the Procurement Officer may raise about your

bid.

Repeat Tendering

- If you have bid before, you can re-use your bid documents for another procurement exercise **but only** if they are relevant to the new exercise. All of the checking steps above still apply e.g. understand the requirements, proof reading, etc.;
- Proof read your bid documents to ensure they do not include any previous bid information e.g. incorrect procurement officer names.
- You can set up a shared documents library where all relevant documents e.g. insurance certificates, are stored and are easily accessible for the next procurement exercise;
- Ensure all of your bid documents are kept up-to-date by checking them on a regular basis (it's a good idea to set standard calendar reminders for checks and before the expiry of documents e.g. insurance certificates);
- Whether you win or lose a procurement exercise it is good to have a lessons learned session with your bid team. All learnings - positive and negative – should be logged and made available for future procurement exercises.