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Successfully supplying the public sector can change your business

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09 January 2020

Supplying to the public sector can offer new, exciting and profitable business opportunities for a vast array of business types. But regardless of whether you are looking for your first public sector contract or are an experienced public sector supplier, everyone must navigate the public procurement regime.

Public sector spend is tightly controlled, and as a result public bodies must undertake certain processes when letting a contract. Here are a few practical tips to navigate this.

Get on the radar

There are a number of buying portals in the South West used by the public sector, and by signing up to these in advance you can receive customisable notifications when contracts relevant to your business are advertised.

Make a quick start

Make sure to review the published information as soon as possible. Each public procurement will be governed by strict timelines and a failure to meet these is likely to invalidate your bid.

By reviewing the information and timescales upfront you can plan your time to submit a considered response and increase your chances of success.

Ask questions up front

The window for asking questions, obtaining additional information or getting ‘clarification’ of the information published will start from publication but will end approximately 10 days before the submission deadline. Therefore it is important that you send any questions to the authority as part of your initial review of the documents giving enough time to incorporate any response in to your bid.

Understand the evaluation process

All process should set out their intended evaluation process as part of the published documents. Bids are evaluated against their achievement of various criteria, usually the quality and cost of the solution proposed by the bidder. By understanding how the bids will be evaluated you can make sure that your bid is tailored to focus on the high scoring elements.

Innovation and variant bids

If, on reviewing the published information, you can see an opportunity to innovate or provide the service in a different way to meet the same need more efficiently, do not be afraid to speak up and asked the authority if they would consider alternative solutions.

Bids offering alternative solutions may be rejected unless the authority has decided in advance that these will be acceptable. It is also worthwhile seeking this approval before submitting your bid to avoid disappointment.

First published on BusinessLive on 6th January 2020.

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Related expertise

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