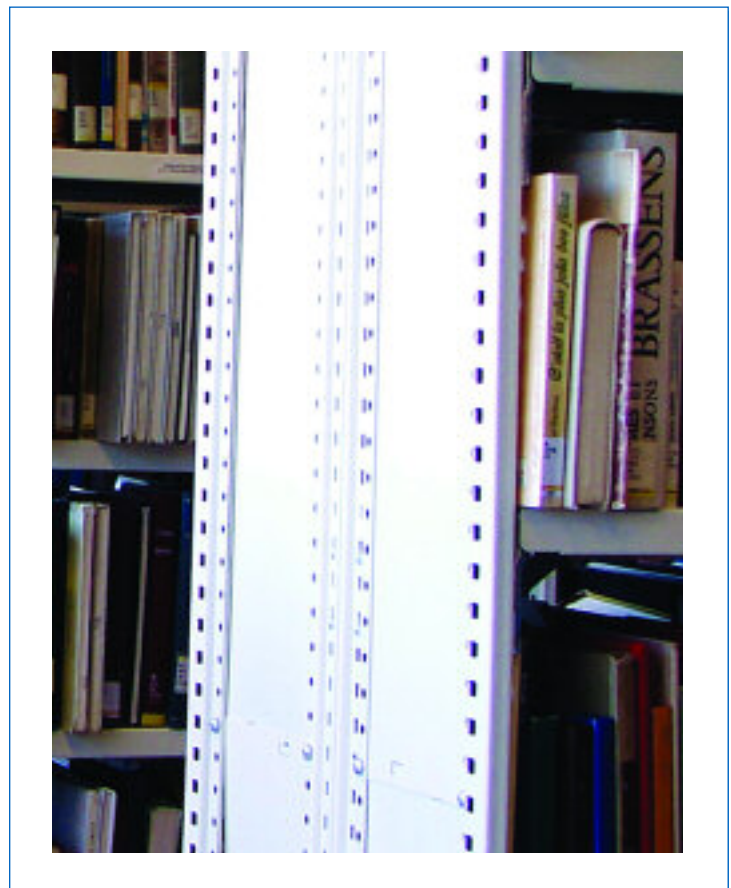




## SELLING TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS

**T**he tender proposal is the only means at your disposal to put forward the case for your organisation in a competitive tendering exercise for the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). Unless you get it right first time, it can become a lost opportunity leaving you exposed to failure, with a cost but no return.



## PREPARING AN EFFECTIVE TENDER

How you prepare and present your tender proposal can be a crucial factor in securing a contract with the DfES.

*The following general guidance may help you to understand what can turn a tender into a winning tender:*

- Read the ITT properly – preparation is the key, so understand fully what is being asked of you.
- Respond in the required format – follow the layout requested, keep to the order for documents if one is given, send it to the person named and get the address right.
- Full answers good, part answers bad – it's your only chance so offer solutions rather than create more questions which may never get asked. Answer the question but be concise: if people have to work too hard to find the answer, it creates a poor impression.
- Be up front – DfES' ITT will be as honest about the requirement as possible. In return, the Department looks for honest bids with no hidden costs. Organisations that 'make the money' through contract variations have a short shelf life in DfES.
- If the answer to the invitation is no – please inform DfES. The Department can then learn from that for its future requirements.
- Time is of the essence – planning ahead to ensure you meet the deadline is essential. In DfES timing can be critical and if you can't meet the bid delivery deadline, what else can't you meet?
- Debrief or not debrief – if you don't quite make it this time, ask why. We can all learn from failure, but in a positive way. Start your preparation for next time now.
- Bulky bids equal freebie advertising – don't use the bid as a vehicle to issue glossy but meaningless brochures about your organisation. It's a waste of your money and our time.

Like all government departments, DfES' procurement exercises have no hidden agenda. All that DfES wants is to identify suppliers who can work with the Department to help it achieve its business objectives. Starting off on the right foot is a positive signal which won't be missed.

## TENDER EVALUATION

Your bid will be successful if it is the one that offers the Department the best value for money. You will, under normal circumstances, be informed of the broad evaluation criteria used for assessing bids. Rest assured that all bidders are assessed against the same criteria.

DfES would aim to award a contract as soon as possible after the assessment process has been completed. This might involve you attending an interview where you will be given the opportunity to present your bid in more detail and will be questioned by a panel of officials on certain aspects of it.

## DEBRIEFING

Within the limits of some commercial confidentiality, DfES will always offer unsuccessful tenderers the reasons why their bid failed. Such debriefing can be by letter, by phone or face to face.

This should be viewed as a two-way process. The comments from the Department should be viewed as constructive. They are aimed at making unsuccessful tenderers aware of certain weaknesses (and strengths) and enabling them to compete better for future work.

## DFES CONTRACT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Due to the complex nature of the majority of the Department's requirements, contract terms and conditions are compiled on a case-by-case basis. However, most contracts are based on the Department's standard terms and conditions.

If you are interested in bidding for a particular contract and would like to know which terms and conditions will apply, please contact the person named in the advert and tender documentation for further information.



## CURRENT CONTRACTS

### ADVERTISED BY THE DEPARTMENT

The DfES website ([www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)) lists the Department's current requirements advertised via the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) since January 2006. From time to time DfES may also publish adverts here for requirements not advertised in OJEU, although you should not rely solely on this site to identify potential contracts of interest to you. Due to the nature of the Department's requirements, it also advertises its contracting opportunities in specialist publications, trade, national and local press.

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## DISCLAIMER

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# Expert public procurement consultancy for Buyers and Suppliers at your service



## PASS – HELPING YOU MEET KEY OBJECTIVES

The key objective of public procurement professionals is to ensure that the most suitable supplier is selected to provide goods and services on terms which are likely to offer the best value for money. The PASS service helps you meet this requirement and deliver contracts that offer best value-for-money terms with suppliers who will execute them efficiently.

## PASS CONSULTANCY

BiP's *Procurement Advice and Support Service (PASS)* provides organisations with access to experts in public procurement practices and procedures, thus helping you develop and deliver effective and efficient procurement. Our team offers a range of services to meet your specific needs. Whichever area you wish evaluated and improved, we have the experts to help.

*The PASS consultancy's mission is to help you deliver the best in government procurement through:*

- Practical solutions to improve procurement performance
- Innovative approaches to knowledge transfer within government
- Joined-up government
- Improved performance indicators
- Strategic direction and performance
- Opportunities offered by e-government
- Capacity to deliver change to meet identified needs
- Continuous improvement of services and challenging poor performance
- Sustainable development within decision-making processes and delivery of services
- EU-compliant processes
- Best practice procurement training

## PASS TRAINING

Our consultants can provide you with bespoke training packages to suit your needs. Consultancy and training is available for the following: environmental purchasing, partnering, evaluation, e-government, supplier debriefing, UK legal processes and precedents, contract management, EU-compliant tendering and much more.

## PASS ONLINE GUIDANCE

The PASS service provides online guidances on all aspects of the public procurement process and legal requirements: [www.bipsolutions.com/html/briefing.php](http://www.bipsolutions.com/html/briefing.php)

## PASS – EFFECTIVE DISPUTE MANAGEMENT

Contractual and procurement-related disputes are time-consuming, expensive and unpleasant. They can destroy client/contractor relationships, can add substantially to the cost of the contract, and can nullify some or all of its benefits or advantages. They can also have an impact on value for money. It is therefore in everyone's interest to work at avoiding disputes in the first place. Inevitably, however, disputes do occur and when they do the importance of a fast, efficient and cost-effective Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) procedure cannot be overstated. If a dispute arises, it is important to manage it actively and positively and at the right level in order to encourage early and effective settlement. Unnecessary delays and inefficiency can lead to rapid deterioration in relations and entrenchment of opinions. ADR through PADRE mediation involves the use of a trusted expert third party and is an effective alternative to litigation. PADRE mediation is provided by experts in contracting and public procurement. If you would like more details on how PADRE can help your organisation and become your mediation service of choice, telephone the PASS team on **0845 270 7055** or email [pass@bipsolutions.com](mailto:pass@bipsolutions.com).

## PASS HEALTH CHECK

The PASS service can help your organisation examine its current procurement organisational structures, strategies, processes, practices and related strengths and weaknesses. It delivers a detailed *PASS Mark Health Check Outcome Highlight Report (OHR)* that outlines areas of strength as well as those requiring further attention, and provides an outline *Project Initiation Document (PID)* designed to deliver a more effective and efficient tendering process that will help you achieve optimum performance and better value-for-money procurement.

## PASS IN-HOUSE PRESENTATIONS

PASS consultancy can provide you with in-house presentations directed to buyer or supplier. Each presentation will be bespoke to your requirements, whether they be with regards to improving your tendering practices or your procurement strategy or processes. Contact: [pass@bipsolutions.com](mailto:pass@bipsolutions.com)



The *PASS Mark Health Check* is a process-based evaluation technique that helps identify how your company can develop more effective processes when tendering for public sector contracts.

For further information on the **PASS** service, contact our **PASS Team** on **0845 270 7055**, email [pass@bipsolutions.com](mailto:pass@bipsolutions.com) or visit [www.bipsolutions.com/pass/](http://www.bipsolutions.com/pass/)