

“Thousands of companies have benefited from attending BiP's tendering events – Now you have direct access to that tendering expertise.”

The PASS Mark Health Check considers your company's current organisational structures, strategies, processes, practices and related strengths and weaknesses in relation to public sector procurement. It delivers a detailed PASS Mark Health Check Outcome Highlight Report (OHR) that outlines your areas of strength as well as those requiring further attention, and provides an outline Project Initiation Document (PID) designed to deliver your company a more effective and efficient tendering process that will help you achieve even greater tendering success.

After the PASS Mark Health Check is completed and your OHR is delivered, you are free to choose whether to progress with the recommendations it contains and implement the next stage with the support of the PASS team, or to implement the proposals yourself without making further use of PASS. The choice is entirely yours.

The PASS Mark Health Check reviews your:

- resources for identifying tendering opportunities
- knowledge of public sector tendering legislation
- tendering process controls
- practices for responding to “Expressions of Interest”
- weaknesses in any of your current mandatory policies (health and safety/environment/equal opportunities, etc)
- presentation of tender response documentation
- knowledge of your clients' processes and practices, including their evaluation techniques
- understanding of when and how to address government initiatives



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 Customer Services Team on +44 (0)141 332 8247, email pass@bipsolutions.com or visit www.bipsolutions.com/pass/

SELLING TO THE OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS

BACKGROUND

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is the government department that provides UK statistical and registration services.

ONS is responsible for producing a wide range of key economic and social statistics which are used by policy makers across government to create evidence-based policies and monitor performance against them.

The Office also builds and maintains data sources both for itself and for its business and research customers. It makes statistics available so that everyone can easily assess the state of the nation, the performance of government and their own position.

The Office also incorporates the General Register Office for England and Wales (GRO). The GRO is responsible for ensuring the registration of all births, marriages and deaths in England and Wales, and for maintaining a central archive dating back to 1837.

INTRODUCTION

This information, developed from the ONS is intended for all businesses which may be interested in supplying goods or services to the ONS. We recognise that suppliers have some key questions – what does the department buy? What are the department's procurement strategies? How will suppliers be informed of business opportunities? Can we have details of current contracts? Can we register as a potential supplier? Who are the contact points?

As a result, this guide:

- gives a brief description of the ONS purchasing structure
- explains our key purchasing policies and procedures
- lists the range of goods and services we buy and how we buy them
- provides contact points for further information

PROCUREMENT STRUCTURE

All of ONS's purchasing activities are the overall responsibility of a dedicated, professionally qualified in-house team. The procurement function is centralised in Newport, South Wales and provides a procurement service for each of the four main ONS sites – London, Southport, Titchfield, and Newport itself.



Purchasing activities are split into three discrete categories:

- centralised purchasing
- the central unit in Newport undertakes executive responsibility for the purchase of goods and services (IT and non-IT) with a contract value over £10k excluding VAT
- devolved purchasing

Some level of non-strategic, decentralised purchasing has operated since the creation of ONS in 1996. A formal Devolved Purchasing System (DPS) delegates purchasing authority to business areas for the purchase of one-off goods and services under a contract value of £10k excluding VAT (strategic areas such as consultancy and IT goods and services/software licensing are excluded from such devolved arrangements). The central unit oversees the system and, indeed, has developed the training and advisory framework under which the system operates.

PROPERTY/CONSTRUCTION

Under devolved arrangements, the responsibility for property/construction falls to the ONS Property Management Unit (PMU). Its responsibilities include construction work, specialist property-related reports and inspections, and estate services (including leases). Hard and soft facilities management services are also managed by the PMU under a centrally negotiated contract.

KEY SUPPLIER POLICIES

As a public sector organisation, ONS operates within a regulatory framework and its procurement activities comply with UK purchasing policies, government accounting and European Public Procurement/GPA Regulations.

Within this framework, ONS proactively seeks to ensure that effective supplier relationships are in place. The key principles are enshrined in the ONS Supplier Charter (see below).

MINIMISING BURDENS

To minimise bureaucracy and burdens on suppliers, ONS supports the following objectives:

- specification of requirements will not be overly prescriptive or excessive, and will encourage innovation through outcome- or output-based business needs; where appropriate, suppliers will be invited to comment on draft specifications to ensure clarity and improve the quality of the end product
- tender and contract documentation will be easy to understand/fit for purpose, and tailored to the specific needs of the contract
- evaluation and selection processes will be open and transparent, with publication of selection criteria
- the bidding process will minimise timescales as far as possible, within the framework of public accountability, whilst ensuring that suppliers have every opportunity to submit their best bid
- ONS procurement procedures and processes will be reviewed (and where necessary improved) in consultation with suppliers, via regular supplier surveys
- comprehensive feedback/debriefing will be provided on supplier performance

SUPPLIER BASE RATIONALISATION

ONS regularly reviews its expenditure patterns to ensure it is getting best value for money for the taxpayer. Against a background of competitive tendering, this has resulted in some supplier rationalisation which has helped to reduce fragmentation of expenditure. In 2003-04, around 90 suppliers comprised 80% of total spend; this was over 90% of expenditure with about 340 suppliers (based on a minimum spend per supplier in excess of £10k).

SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES (SMEs)

While seeking aggregation opportunities in terms of demand and supply, ONS procurement strategy is on a case-by-case basis. This recognises the important role played by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in meeting business needs. Due to the nature of its activities, ONS uses the services of a variety of statistical specialists/consultants, either as individuals or via small, niche organisations.

In addition, the Devolved Purchasing System mentioned above is a vehicle used by ONS business areas to contract with a variety of small and medium-sized organisations.

ONS procurement policies reduce entry barriers to SMEs by:

- ensuring a level playing field through emphasis on an objective, risk-based approach rather than solely on financial turnover



- simplifying relevant, pre-qualification documentation and tender processes, particularly for lower-value contracts
- considering division of contracts into lots
- listing details of prime contracts, to make potential sub-contracting opportunities more transparent

In addition, ONS will be monitoring the outcome of central initiatives by the Office of Government Commerce (OGC), such as SME web portal pilots, as well as other third-party initiatives, eg the Welsh Assembly's web-registration of company profiles and automatic routing of contract notices.

ENVIRONMENT

In line with government policy, and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) guidelines, ONS is committed to integrating relevant, sustainable development issues into its procurement processes. Guidance is available at www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sdig/improving/contextf.htm

SOURCING STRATEGIES

ONS uses a variety of sourcing strategies to meet its business needs.

These include:

- Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) advertisements for major contracts over £100k which are subject to European advertising regulations
- central purchasing agencies – eg OGC framework agreements (G-CAT and S-CAT catalogues) for IT hardware, software and consultancy; OGC's hotel reservations/conferences agreement (via Expotel); OGCbuying.solutions for utilities; Central Office of Information (COI) for marketing and communications
- collaborative inter-departmental framework agreements – eg HM Prisons (non-specialist staff recruitment); MoD (photocopiers); HM Treasury (payroll); Inland Revenue (IT consultancy). Other arrangements under review include car hire (Department for Work and Pensions)
- selective competitive tendering from existing market knowledge
- industry sources such as specialised trade journals, trade directories, supplier catalogues, advertisements, mailshots, supplier enquiries, internet (included in Devolved Purchasing System guide)

ONS uses BiP Solutions Ltd to place its OJEU notices and this increases accessibility through BiP's advertising network. For wider tests of the marketplace, tender opportunities may also be advertised on the ONS website at www.statistics.gov.uk

APPROVED SUPPLIER LISTS

ONS does not operate its own 'approved' register of potential suppliers, but you can register your details with us for future reference. ONS's use of framework agreements provides access to 'contracted' suppliers, arising from ONS-run competitive tenders or external government-wide arrangements.

EXPENDITURE PROFILE

Excluding major programmes such as the 2001 Census, ONS expenditure with third-party suppliers is typically less than £100m a year. However, it is anticipated that IT spending will rise as ONS develops its statistical modernisation programme (due to be completed by 2006).

WHAT THE ONS BUYS

Purchasing activities cover the following 27 main commodity groups:

- IT hardware
- IT software
- IT services
- consultancy
- agency workers
- training services
- statistical surveys
- data collection and supply
- research services
- printing/design
- office machinery

- marketing/advertising
- facilities management
- car hire
- hotels/conferences
- health care services
- stationery/IT consumables
- auditing services
- legal advice
- travel services
- payroll services
- pensions administration
- relocation services
- banking
- furniture
- vehicles
- utilities

HOW TO CONTACT THE ONS

If you would like further information on ONS purchasing policies and procedures or forthcoming business opportunities, or you simply wish to introduce your company to the ONS, your first approach should be to the Customer Services Team.

The contact point is:

Procurement Unit Customer Services
ONS Procurement Unit
Government Buildings
Cardiff Road
Newport
South Wales NP10 8XG
Tel: 01633 813025
Fax: 01633 813358
Email: pu.customer.services@ons.gov.uk

SUPPLIER CHARTER

ONS will follow this statement of good practice in all dealings with suppliers and potential suppliers.

The principles are:

- to preserve the highest standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity
- to be fair, efficient and courteous
- to define and publicise contact points
- to achieve the highest professional standards in the award of contracts, usually by means of a competition, in order to maximise value for money while conforming to international obligations
- to make available as much information as suppliers reasonably need to respond to the bidding process
- to manage the bidding process to avoid putting excessive burdens on suppliers, while preserving genuine competition and avoiding discrimination
- to provide clear specifications of requirements which encourage innovation and refer, where appropriate, to relevant technical and other standards
- to make available the intended criteria for the evaluation of bids whenever appropriate, to evaluate bids objectively, and to notify the outcome promptly
- within the bounds of commercial confidentiality, to debrief winners and losers on request on the outcome of the bidding process and the reasons for not being selected to bid or losing
- to achieve the highest professional standards in the management of contracts
- to pay promptly in accordance with the terms of the contract
- to respond promptly, courteously and efficiently to suggestions, enquiries and complaints

Preparing Perfect Tenders



A one-day seminar in a semi-workshop environment that takes you through the whole tendering process and provides you with expert guidance and useful tips.

AUDIENCE – GUARANTEED LOW NUMBERS FOR PERSONAL INSTRUCTION



10 MARCH LONDON BONNINGTON, BLOOMSBURY

13 APRIL BIRMINGHAM, BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT

27 APRIL GLASGOW MARRIOTT

26 MAY LEEDS NOVOTEL

16 JUNE LONDON BONNINGTON, BLOOMSBURY

Learn how to draft and present successful tender responses that give your tenders the winning edge.

NOTHING BEATS PROPERLY PREPARED AND RESEARCHED TENDERS

We also highlight many of the common mistakes bidders make, so that your tenders gain that winning edge.

Preparing Perfect Tenders will help you increase your company's tendering successes by taking you through the preparation, evaluation and presentation stages of tendering to aid you in developing your responses.

THE EVENT FOR PUBLIC SECTOR CONTRACTS

Sessions focus on:

- the legal process
- perfecting your expression of interest
- understanding the public procurement evaluation process
- developing your responses to Invitations to Tender (ITTs)

WE GUARANTEE SMALL NUMBERS, SO YOU ARE GUARANTEED HIGH VALUE

You will also have an opportunity to discuss your own tenders with our expert instructors, so bring along documentation from recent tenders for expert advice.

PASS Instructors for this Event

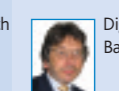
Your lead instructor is Gareth Jones, with other presentations from either Digby Barker, Colin Cram, Eddie Regan or Peter Howarth.

LEAD PRESENTER



Gareth Jones

GUEST PRESENTERS



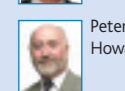
Digby Barker



Colin Cram



Eddie Regan



Peter Howarth

TO BOOK YOUR PLACE OR IF YOU WOULD LIKE FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CALL 0141 332 8247 OR EMAIL customerservices@bipsolutions.com

