

# Steps in the bid process

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Each year, Organs of State invite the Private Sector to submit competitive bids for the supply of goods and services. Organs of State bid requests attract SMME's and large businesses across a wide range of sectors - from office supplies to major construction projects.

Here is an overview of 10 steps you should take to prepare a competitive bid.

## 1. Register your interest

Follow the instructions in the bid document to register your interest with the purchasing agency. This crucial step will help keep you up to date on any bid information sessions.

## 2. Attend briefing sessions

If you registered through a bid website, monitor the website for updates about bids. Attend any bid briefing sessions offered. These are valuable opportunities to ask questions and make contact with Organs of State. They may also give you a chance to meet potential subcontractors or make contacts that could participate in a consortium. Organs of State are also usually under no obligation to otherwise make available copies of information, presentations, etc., that may be given at a briefing session.

## 3. Develop your bid response strategy

If you are bidding for a high-value bid, plan your bid carefully and consider the requirements and resources involved. For example, ask yourself:

- a) How much will it cost to prepare the bid?
- b) What information do we need to gather?
- c) What resources will we need to fulfil the contract?
- d) Who will manage the bid project?
- e) How will we plan the workload, assign the work required, schedule the meetings?
- f) Who is our competition and what are our chances of winning?
- g) What is our plan for marketing our products and services and pitching our business?

## 4. Review recent awarded contracts

If you are unclear about any requirements in the bid request, contact the bid coordinator to seek clarification. What type of companies won similar bids in the past? What does the contracting Organ of State look for? What can you do to match their expectations?

## 5. Write a compelling bid

Prepare your bid response. This includes planning, drafting, and refining it. Make sure that you use the response forms provided and answer all questions. Stick to any word/page limits that there may be, and (generally) do not go altering things like fonts and font sizes and numbering unless expressly permitted. Be clear about your structure and propositions. Decide on several key propositions you can use to set your bid apart from others. Review the evaluation criteria to gain a better understanding of what things the government agency is particularly looking for and will be evaluating your offer against. If you are not a strong writer, think about engaging a professional (a range of businesses offer bid writing services).

## 6. Understand the payment terms

When putting together your bid response, make sure you are aware of the payment schedule specified. Organ of State payment schedules will vary from entity to entity and procurement to procurement. You may

not get paid as soon as the job is finished, or goods are delivered. If you require payment different to that specified, you should detail this in your offer.

## **7. Provide References**

Provide References who know your business and can attest to your work.

Give your References clear information about the bid request so they know what points to emphasise in their reference. If you have previously supplied goods or services to an Organ of State, ask them for a reference.

## **8. Check and submit your bid**

Make sure you check your proposal carefully before submitting it. Use a checklist to make sure your bid meets all the requirements (some bids will include a checklist that you can also use).

## **9. Present your bid**

Bid panels responsible for high-value contracts may request a formal presentation from bidders. If you need to present your offer to an evaluation panel, stay focused on the key messages in your proposal. Most importantly, prepare. Plan your presentation carefully, rehearse and, if you do not feel you are a strong presenter, get some coaching in presentation skills.

## **10. Request a debriefing**

You can request a debriefing on the bid after the process, especially if your bid is unsuccessful. Feedback from the evaluation committee can be extremely useful in understanding how your offering can be improved and can assist you in preparing for your next bid. Look for ways to improve your next bid.

To learn more about this and many other bid conditions please attend one of our HowtoTender workshops. For more information on the tender courses please email Werner at [werner@how2tender.com](mailto:werner@how2tender.com).

To learn more about this and many other tender conditions attend our “Become a Tender Expert” 2-Day workshops presented in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, Port Elizabeth, and Cape Town. Book and pay online at <https://howtotender.co.za/tender-expert-form/>

Contact us at [estelle@howtotender.co.za](mailto:estelle@howtotender.co.za) should you require more information.

*You can also purchase a Tender Manual (Handbook) on our website <https://howtotender.co.za/> which is a step by step guide how to respond to a South African Tender. It includes examples of completed SBD forms.*