

Overview

Bids are prepared and submitted in response to a purchaser, which may be a single organisation or collaborating organisations, wishing to award a contract or contracts for the supply of goods, services and/or works. For Hinkley Point C contracts, suppliers will sometimes need to successfully navigate a pre-qualification process prior to being given the opportunity to tender via an Invitation to Tender (ITT). The Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) should be seen as part of the bidding process.

This information sheet sets out introductory information on the following:

- ◆ Deciding to bid
- ◆ Compiling a bid
- ◆ The benefits of attention to detail

We also explain how the Hinkley Supply Chain Professional Services Group can assist you in bid management and bid writing.

Relevance

Hinkley Point C is a nationally critical infrastructure project, the construction of which will last for over 10 years. Service and construction contracts will run for many years and hence the opportunities for the supply chain are likely to exist and persist for much longer than in a typical construction project. The opportunity to benefit and grow from the catalyst provided by Hinkley Point C is a 'once in a generation' opportunity which should be grasped.

As such, a competitive environment is expected and those that are able to clearly and comprehensively articulate an offering which matches the client's needs and wants will be the ones to benefit from the opportunities which such a project offers.

Managing and writing bids to the timescales and demands of EDF Energy and their Tier 1 partners will take good planning and a systematic approach.

Approaching the bid

Deciding to bid

Information from the purchaser

The bid documentation (PQQ and ITT) issued by the purchaser will, during the process, include details of their requirements, including eligibility requirements and information about the proposed contract. The document should also tell you how bids will be evaluated and the timetable for completion of the bid process.

An informed bid/no bid decision

First you'll need to answer the question, to bid or not to bid? The following may be helpful to consider:

- ◆ Be clear about your strategy and in particular the work you want.
- ◆ Do you have an existing relationship with the purchaser?
- ◆ Do you have the resources to deliver the bid within timescales?

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- ◆ Will the bid be profitable in terms of the resources it will take to deliver the contract?
- ◆ Do you have the technical competence to deliver the contract and sector experience and reputation to evidence this?
- ◆ How can you stand out from the competition?
- ◆ Is there an opportunity to collaborate with other suppliers to improve the offering?

Compiling a bid

Preparation

- ◆ Read the submission instructions in full.
- ◆ Understand and follow what the purchaser is asking for.
- ◆ Research the purchaser and the current market.
- ◆ Contact the purchaser to ask any questions you have about the bid, ensuring compliance with instructions and deadlines for submitting clarification questions.
- ◆ Pull together a bid team of key individuals to deliver the bid.
- ◆ Brainstorm ideas and your approach within the bid team.
- ◆ Allocate specific tasks with clear deadlines to members of the bid team.

Writing the bid/providing evidence

- ◆ Assume the purchaser knows nothing about your organisation.
- ◆ Make sure you clearly explain what you do, how you do it and why your approach will add value to the purchaser.

Whilst ensuring that you comply with the submission instructions:

- ◆ Provide evidence for your answers – use case studies, statistics, testimonials from clients, awards and accreditations to add credibility to your submission.
- ◆ Use diagrams and photographs to evidence your approach.
- ◆ Collate submissions from the bid team and other colleagues and re-write so the entire bid is presented in the same ‘voice’.
- ◆ Keep within word limits.

Presenting yourself in the ‘best light’

- ◆ Pay attention to detail. Read the submission instructions carefully and follow them to the letter. It takes concentration, time and resources to put together well written bid responses.
- ◆ Make your bid clear, concise. A confusing or dull message is rarely compelling, mainly because people don’t pay much attention to it.
- ◆ Reflect the purchaser’s language in your bid. Use similar terms and analogies to speak to them the way they speak.

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- ◆ Remember – your bid is a written sales document. It needs to speak clearly and concisely and reflect the image of your organisation throughout. Work with your marketing team/individual to ensure that it reflects your brand.
- ◆ Ensure the conduct of your bid team and employees is beyond reproach. A purchaser will generally exclude a bid where there is evidence an organisation has canvassed the purchaser(s) in connection with the award of a contract and/or colluded with another organisation(s) in terms of price fixing.

Final stage

- ◆ Re-read your bid and check it against the purchaser's evaluation criteria to ensure that every point is covered.
- ◆ Ask a colleague to proof read the bid to ensure there are no grammatical or other errors in the submission.
- ◆ When you submit your bid, always ensure that it is submitted in good time, this negates any potential issues you may come across in the submission process with the portal or your e-mail for example.
- ◆ Ensure you get some form of confirmation that it has been received.

Getting the bid right

The benefits of attention to detail

Success in competitive tendering relies on achieving the highest marks possible in the evaluation, whilst ensuring that your bid honestly reflects your capability and experience. Every point in the evaluation makes a difference, and it is attention to detail in both the wording and the process that will encourage these final points to flow.

The following advice may help in realising the benefits and advantage:

Key bid techniques

- ◆ **Get to know the purchaser.** To accurately and efficiently respond to an invitation to bid start by doing some research into the purchaser, their company and the individuals in key positions, their challenges, goals, and preferences. In other words, create a persona for the purchaser. As a result, you'll amass an abundance of invaluable information that you can then use to attract attention and inspire action.
- ◆ **Add value.** One of the key ingredients in the bid writing process is including added value aspects. This is important so that you can show that you will not only deliver on the requirements of the bid but in fact offer some additional value to go above and beyond the base requirements. This could include ensuring that products are sourced locally in any contract or that there will be a commitment to local apprenticeship schemes.
- ◆ **Check, re-check and check again.** Ensure that you and your team thoroughly check your response to see that:
 - ◆ You are adequately addressing the questions raised by the purchaser.
 - ◆ Your bid clearly and effectively sells your organisation and services.

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- ◇ There are no spelling, grammatical nor content errors.
- ◇ You have not missed an opportunity to differentiate yourself from your competitors.

Understanding scoring and methodology

- ◆ Bids should include a guide on how they will be assessed. Evaluation criteria is not standardised and will differ depending on each purchaser's needs. The scoring can range from simple percentage splits to complex weighting systems.
- ◆ The price/quality split is the first thing to look at. It gives you an immediate guide to how the procurement process is being viewed by the Purchaser. There could be a split of Price: 30%/quality: 70%. This will tell you the most important element to consider in pulling together your response.
- ◆ The bid evaluation methodology will explain how each quality written response will be assessed. This can vary from a generic 'excellent' to 'not eligible.'
- ◆ The difference between the top score and the next best (e.g. excellent vs good) shows you what to write to get top marks. To achieve an excellent mark, you need to meet, and in some cases, exceed their requirements, add value and innovate. Similarly, you can look at what constitutes a poor response and take that as a guide of what not to do.

Lessons learned

Always request feedback whether your bid was successful or unsuccessful. This feedback can be used to inform future submissions.

Store all your bid information in a structured central point so you can utilise the information for future bids.

Where next?

The Professional Services Group is a **collaborative group of key professional service providers** in the region that have been briefed on the project and understand the processes involved in the bidding, winning, mobilisation and delivery of contracts, either with EDF Energy or Tier 1 contractors.

The Professional Services Group, **co-ordinated by the Hinkley Supply Chain Team**, is able to offer critical services to suppliers seeking support, through their collective expertise in: **Accounting and Finance, Legal Services, Human Resources, and Project Management.**

We have experience of assessing capability and developing a strategy with action plans to grow organisations and assemble winning teams, and can assist you with information and advice that you will need to develop your capability and readiness to deliver.