

Winning
Public Sector
Business

Understanding Pre-qualification Questionnaires

Larch Consulting 2009



First things first

- Introductions
- Housekeeping
- Timetable
- Please remember to switch your mobile phone to silent

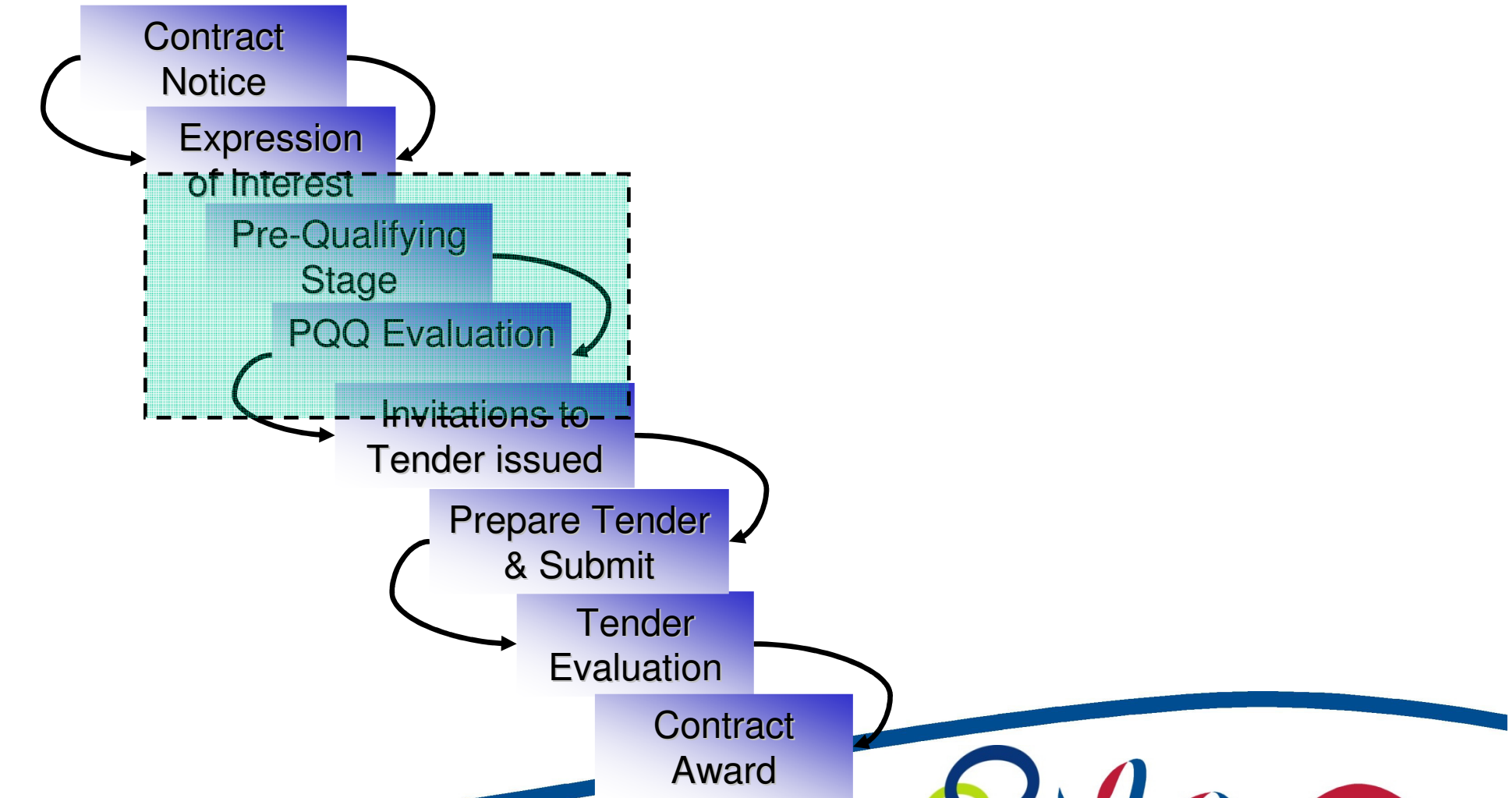
What we will cover today

- Tender process overview
- Understanding pre-qualification
- Completing a PQQ including:
 - Submitting a compliant PQQ
 - Administrative information
 - Financial standing and business probity
 - Policies - business benefits
 - Technical ability - selling yourself

Understanding pre-qualification

- You might need to 'pre-qualify' to:
 - Reach the second stage of a 2 stage tender
 - Be admitted to an approved supplier list
 - Gain supplier accreditation
 - Be admitted to a Framework Agreement
 - Register on an online supplier portal

Tender process overview



Approved supplier lists and frameworks

- Internal approved supplier lists
 - There is often a pre-qualification process
 - Can be rotating
 - Can be open or closed
- 3rd party supplier accreditation
 - Assessment of suppliers is carried out by an external organisation
 - There is a cost attached for both procurer and supplier
- Frameworks
 - Often tendered under OJEU
 - In place for several years
 - Establishes terms under which seller will supply
 - Not a commitment to purchase

Online portals

The screenshot shows the homepage of supply2.gov.uk. At the top, it says "supply2.gov.uk supplier route to government" and features the Business Link logo. A navigation menu on the left includes links for home, about, suppliers, buyers, site map, information, contact us, interoperability, and register free. The main content area is titled "Welcome to the Supplier Route to Government Portal" and contains a news item about an official report, a "Login" section with username and password fields, and two columns for "Suppliers" and "Buyers" with "REGISTER NOW" buttons.

The screenshot shows the homepage of Sell2Wales. At the top, it says "cynewidcymru | Sell2Wales" and "xchangewales". A navigation bar includes links for home, contact us, terms & conditions, accessibility, sitemap, and cymraeg. A search bar is present. Below the navigation, there are links for search notices, search purchasers, search suppliers, My Sell2Wales, news, events, and FAQ. The main banner features a red background with a door icon and the text "OPEN THE DOOR TO BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR". Below the banner, it says "Welcome back Sell2Wales" and provides a welcome message. At the bottom, there are buttons for "My Sell2Wales", "Business Benefits", and "News".

The screenshot shows the homepage of CompeteFor. At the top, it says "CompeteFor - giving businesses unique access to London 2012 and other major contract opportunities". The main content area is titled "Welcome To CompeteFor - London 2012" and contains a "REGISTERED USERS LOGIN" section with a "User Login" form (username and password fields) and a "Keep me logged in" checkbox. Below the login section, there are two columns: "WHAT IS COMPETEFOR?" and "HOW TO REGISTER". The "WHAT IS COMPETEFOR?" section includes a description of the service and a "HELPDESK" section with contact information.

Understanding pre-qualification

- Purpose and evaluation

Understanding pre-qualification

- The contracting authority use a “pre-selection” process and invites a limited number of respondents to tender
- Pre-qualification does not evaluate the quality of your offer
 - PQQ = Past
 - ITT = Future
- Are you a safe and appropriate choice?

Understanding pre-qualification

- Evaluation - 3 key areas:
 - Business probity
 - Financial standing
 - Technical ability
- Mix of pass/fail and qualitative criteria
- Often a “fail” in some areas will disqualify you from proceeding further
- Uses a ‘relative’ marking system.

Pass/Fail criteria

- Common issues:
 - Banking arrangements
 - Payment of creditors and staff
 - Accounts
 - Business and professional standing
 - Insurances
 - Staffing levels
 - Staff turnover

Sample PQQ

- Document review
 - Take 10 minutes to review the sample PQQ.

Challenges and barriers

- Group discussion:
 - What do you think the challenges are for small businesses in completing a PQQ?

What is the most common reason for failure?

Submitting a compliant PQQ

- Read the instructions!
- Take note of:
 - Submission date
 - Other deadlines
 - Clarification process
 - Submission format
 - Blank spaces
 - Appendices
 - Hard/soft copies

Understanding pre-qualification

- Take note of the evaluation criteria

Scoring/weighting model	%
Basic details of your organisation	
Economic and Financial Information	
Business Activity	
References	
Quality Assurance	
Staffing and Resources	
Professional and other qualifications/training	
Total	

Understanding pre-qualification

- Most common reasons for scoring poorly
 - Failing to follow the instructions
 - Missing out sections
 - Weak supporting information
 - Grouping questions together
 - Answering specific questions with generic blurbs
 - Pitching general capability rather than specific services.

Pre-qualification

- Completing the questionnaire

Completing the PQQ

- PQQ formats
 - Hard copy
 - Word document
 - Excel spreadsheet
 - Online
 - Form
 - Tick list

Completing the PQQ

Public Vs Private sector:

COMPANY x Pre Qualification Questionnaire - Question Sheet 3 of 4

5.8.0 **SECTION H - HIV / AIDS**

5.8.1 * H1 - Do you have an HIV/Aids policy? Yes
 No

5.8.2 If yes, please enclose a copy and go to Question H2. File Name containing HIV Policy (if attached)

5.8.3 If no, would you like assistance in constructing a policy? Yes
 No

5.8.4 H2 - What is the stage of implementation? HIV Policy Implementation
 All employees aware of policy
 Still at early stages of implementation

5.9.0 **SECTION I - QUALITY ASSURANCE**

5.9.1 * I1 - Name of Director, Partner or person responsible for the implementation of the company's Quality Assurance Policy.

5.9.2 I2 - Please include a copy of your quality assurance policy as a separate file. File Name containing QA Policy

5.9.3 * I3 - Have you acquired Quality Assurance registration to EN29000 (ISO9000 or BS5750)? Yes
 No

5.9.4 I4 - If yes to I3, is this in relation to the range of work specified within this contract? Yes
 No

Question Sheet 1 / Question Sheet 2 / **Question Sheet 3** / Question Sheet 4 / Service I

4. Corporate Responsibility

4.1 Does your company have a Corporate Responsibility Policy? Yes/No - If so please provide a copy?

4.2 Does your company have a policy and set of guidelines in place for the provision of good employee working conditions? Yes / No

4.3 Does your company have a policy on equal opportunities and or diversity? Yes / No

Supplier Evaluation Questionnaire	Confidential	Issue No: 3
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Completing the PQQ

- Remember:
 - All PQQs regardless of format are evaluating whether you are a safe and appropriate choice of supplier.

Collaborative bidding

- Often suggested as a way for small businesses to overcome capacity issues
- Common for each part to have to complete a PQQ
- Advisable to confirm requirement with the contracting authority.

Completing the PQQ

- Company information
 - Administrative information
 - Business probity/Professional conduct
 - Company history

Completing the PQQ

- Group discussion:
 - Why do you need to demonstrate business probity?

Completing the PQQ

- Business probity: Public Services Contracts Regulations
 - Sets out the grounds on which service providers may be deemed ineligible to tender for or be awarded a public contract.
 - Bankruptcy, insolvency, compulsory winding up, administration, receivership, composition with creditors or any analogous state
 - Criminal offence related to business or professional conduct
 - Grave misconduct in the course of business
 - Social security contributions
 - Payment of taxes
 - Guilty of serious misrepresentations in supplying information
 - Not in possession of a licence or not a member of the appropriate organisation where the law of that State requires it.

Completing the PQQ

- Group Exercise:
 - What would you include in company history?

Information checklist

Administrative information (e.g. company registration /VAT number)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Organograms	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Certificates of incorporation/name change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Relevant licences or membership details	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Company profile	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Completing the PQQ

- Economic and financial standing
 - Financial statements
 - Banking information
 - Insurances

Completing the PQQ

- Key issues:
 - These sections often link to pass/fail criteria
 - Supporting information must be robust, up to date and accurate.

Completing the PQQ

- Group discussion:
 - Why do you need to demonstrate appropriate financial standing?
 - How could you overcome some of the challenges?
 - Audited accounts
 - Turnover
 - Insurance levels

Information checklist

Financial statements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Bank details	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Insurance certificates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Completing the PQQ

- Policies
 - Equality and Diversity
 - Health and Safety
 - Environment and Sustainability
 - Quality

Policy benefits

- Exercise:
 - What are the business benefits of adopting policies in the areas of:
 - Equality and Diversity
 - Health and Safety
 - Environment and Sustainability
 - Quality

Help and guidance

<p><u>Equal Opportunities</u> Equality and Human Rights Commission http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/</p> <p>DirectGov http://direct.gov.uk/en/Employment</p>	<p><u>Health and Safety</u> Health & Safety Executive: http://www.hse.gov.uk/</p> <p>Contractors Health and Safety Assessment (CHAS) http://www.chas.gov.uk/favicon.ico</p>
<p><u>Quality</u> Business Link www.businesslink.gov.uk - Quality management standards</p> <p>Quality Standards www.standardsinformationservice.com</p>	<p><u>Environmental</u> Environment Agency http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/</p> <p>Envirowise http://www.envirowise.gov.uk/</p>

Information checklist

Policy statements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Supporting processes and procedures	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Certificates of accreditation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Completing the PQQ

- Technical and professional ability:
 - Business activities
 - References
 - Quality assurance
 - Professional credentials/Staff competencies

Completing the PQQ

- Key issues:
 - More than just a form filling exercise!
 - Parts of these sections need to be specially written for this opportunity, as opposed to providing generic information
 - Develop your company's USPs in relation to a current opportunity you are pursuing.

Spot the difference

Larch Consulting is a consultancy practice specialising in Business Infrastructure and Facilities Management. Our experience over the last decade has encompassed numerous similar commissions for high profile commercial organisations including Barclays, De Beers, ABN Amro, Microsoft, Standard Chartered Bank and Lloyds TSB as well as a wide range of public sector bodies such as Home Office, British Museum, Kings College, Land Registry and the Greater London Authority. We have four specialist areas:

- Business Infrastructure and Support Services Management
- Estates Portfolio Management
- Change Management
- Sourcing Strategy and Procurement Consultancy

Larch Consulting Limited is a successful independent management consultancy practice which has been actively involved in public sector procurement consultancy for the past 13 years, and Lucy Jeynes for 5 years before that. Our client list includes well-known organisations in the public and not-for-profit sectors (Ashfield District Council, Sheffield City Council, Metropolitan Housing, East Midlands Development Agency, Groundworks) as well as a range of high profile commercial clients. We build constructive and collaborative working relationships with our clients to help them achieve their goals. We have four specialist areas:

- Sourcing Strategy
- Procurement Consultancy & Training
- Business Infrastructure
- Change Management

Why choose you?

- Common misconceptions about SMEs:
 - Not value for money
 - Perceived as ‘unreliable’ or ‘unprofessional’
 - Lack of quality or credibility
 - ‘Too small to provide scale of service needed’
 - Lack of awareness of examples of successful delivery

Selling yourself in a PQQ

- Exercise:
 - What are the selling points of local and small businesses?
 - List three possible benefits to a potential client.

Why choose you?

- Possible advantages:
 - Specialists in your area
 - Innovative solutions based on clearer understanding of needs
 - Improved quality through better customer care
 - Service user/needs led approach to service delivery
 - Access to hard to reach groups/community links
 - Social impact track record.

Selling yourself in a PQQ

- Local suppliers:
 - ‘Local’ by itself is not an advantage, but how about:
 - Fast response time leading to better service
 - Allows customers to change their requirements at short notice
 - Improved environmental impact of shorter travel distance
 - Specialised knowledge of local issues or local communities

Demonstrating track record

- Key questions:
 - How has your company contributed toward continuous improvement?
 - What innovative solutions have you been able to bring to this contract?
- Exercise:
 - Draft an outline answer to one of the above outlining features, advantages and benefits.

Selling yourself in a PQQ

- Ask yourself:
 - Why is my company the most appropriate and safe choice for this contract?
- Be very clear about:
 - Advantages of your approach and benefits to client
 - Evidence of previous success.

Information checklist

Client reference contact details	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Capability statements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Case studies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
HR information (personnel files/training records)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

PQQ checklist

Administrative information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Certificates of incorporation/name change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Relevant licences or membership details	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Company profile	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Financial statements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Insurance certificates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Policy statements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Supporting processes and procedures	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Certificates of accreditation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Client reference contact details	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Capability statements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Case studies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
HR information (personnel files/training records)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Asking for feedback

- Legal rights regarding feedback:
 - Supplier has 15 days to ask for feedback in writing and the contracting authority shall tell them of:
 - Why they are unsuccessful and will include details of why it did not meet the technical specifications
 - Characteristics of the successful tender
 - Name of successful tender.

Asking for feedback

- General hints and tips:
 - Explain why you need the feedback
 - Ask at the right time
 - Give them a chance to prepare a helpful answer
 - Be specific in what you want to learn.

Points to ponder

- Which parts of the public sector are of interest to my business?
- What do I have to offer?
- How would I persuade them to choose my organisation over the competition?
- How do I shape up in terms of challenges and barriers?
- Keep asking for help!

Further information

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