

Bid Writing for Small Businesses

REASONS FOR WRITING BIDS

Across many organisations in both the public, private and voluntary sectors there is often a need to draft a bid to apply for a contract, project or funding to enable your organisation to achieve their goals.

This guide is aimed at giving you some key tips about preparing and putting together your own applications, however it is a guide and not to guarantee your success in an application.

The first thing to say is that writing a bid just because it is there is not necessarily the best thing to be doing. i.e. don't chase the money!

THINGS THAT NEED TO BE IN PLACE BEFORE BIDDING

- Clear Vision
- Clear Mission
- Be a registered organisation
- A business plan
- Good financial records
- The resources to provide what you are bidding for
- A method of measuring outcomes and impact
- Insurance
- Policies like Health & Safety, Prevent (differs according to organisation and bid requirements)
- Charitable Trusts
- Foundations
- Banks
- Local Authorities
- National Government
- European Government
- Large Companies
- Agencies

WHERE TO FIND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

There are many different organisations that offer opportunities for organisations to bid for funds and projects including:

USEFUL WEBSITES

- <https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>
- <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx>
- <http://governmentfunding.org.uk/default.aspx>
- <http://www.grantfinder.co.uk/>
- <https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/>
- <http://www.constructionline.co.uk/static/suppliers/>

THE TENDER PROCESS

- The commissioning issues a tender
- Organisations complete a pre-qualification questionnaire
- If successful organisations invited to tender for project
- Commissioning organisation scores your tender
- You are notified that you are successful or not
- If successful you may be asked to go through extra due diligence
- Project starts

CLEAR AIMS AND OUTCOMES

CES Planning Triangle (adapted)



COSTS

Most projects are not there for you to make money – never chase money.

Full cost recovery – some funders allow you to build in all costs related to delivering the project -

<http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/full-cost-recovery-2/>

Full Cost Recovery = Direct Costs to deliver the project + a portion of all other costs in the organisation

Specific costs - Other projects will be very specific i.e. No infrastructure such as IT, buildings etc.

Consider Exit Strategy – i.e. how you maintain project after funding has gone

WHAT BIDS USUALLY REQUEST - THE 5 M'S

Mechanics:

What? Where? When? Aims and Objectives?

Market:

Why? For whom? Scale of demand and local support?

Management:

Who will manage the project? What track record do you have?

Money:

How much will it cost to set up and run? How much money will be raised locally? From whom do you expect to get other funding?

Monitoring:

How will you measure the project's success? What targets will you set?

PREPARING THE DOCUMENTS

- Make sure you have completed expression of interest, ITT, or PQQ before hand
- Download and read all information
- Attend the briefing meeting
- Make sure you fully answer the question
- Always provide an answer to the question
- Ask for clarification on a question if don't understand
- Be clear and articulate
- Be accurate in your pricing – list any assumptions
- Have a well produced delivery plan
- Explain fully how you will monitor
- Allow plenty of time to complete your response

REJECTION

- Applicant not eligible
- Applicant fails to meet the criteria
- Projects are poorly planned
- Applications are not clear and concise
- Exceeding the word limits
- Lack of clear and demonstrable outcomes
- The Budget
- A retrospective application or Application missed the deadline
- No monitoring and evaluation plans not provided
- Application incomplete or ineligible

WHERE TO GET MORE HELP?

From the commissioner – not trying to catch you out
Funding sites – Big Lottery and others – lots of guidance on websites
Previous bids – although not trying to copy use evaluation reports
Training courses available
Signposting from BEST Growth Hub

