

SME Procurement Case Study Pro-Forma.

Reference No. (to be added by SME Team)			
Dept:	Department of Health.	Contact:	Lavina Gunamal
Contract Title:	The Provision of Nutrient data for Chinese and Italian Foods		
Award Date:	7/10/2011	Contract Value:	£70K
Spend Category:	Professional Services		
Procurement Route:	Other (please circle)		
If 'Other' please give details:	Below OJEU (DH Formal)		
PIN used:	N/A	Won by SME:	Y
Company Name:	Connect Research and Consultancy (Chinese) Govindji foods (Italian)		
Background	Please give details of the requirement, any information on how it had previously been delivered, what changes had been made for this procurement exercise and why? E.G. if it was previously a large contract that has now been broken into multiple smaller components.		
<p>This contract was for a new research requirement covering nutrient information in both Chinese Food and Italian food. The initial plan was to let it as one large contract estimated to be around £70,000 in value. However, this would have meant only organisations which had both Mandarin speakers and also Italian speakers would have been able to participate in the tendering process ruling out more smaller more specialised organisations.</p> <p>After reviewing the requirement and understanding the expertise required in delivering the outcomes, it was recommended that the requirement should actually not be awarded as one large contract but actually be broken into two separate contracts which would cover the two language segments, Chinese and Italian.</p> <p>By doing this, it would open up an opportunity for smaller and more specialised organisations interested in one element but not the whole requirement to put forward proposals.</p> <p>Suppliers were also given the opportunity to bid for both elements should they wish.</p>			
Details	Please give details of the process itself, noting any key decisions and milestones that took place. Please also give details of the outcome.		
<p>The procurement process started in July 2011, with the development of the contract strategy and tender documents. It was at this early stage in the process whereby it was recognised that the market would be in a better position to respond to the requirement if the contract was not just one contract but was broken down into the two specialist language areas. As a result, the business case and tender documents were developed accordingly.</p> <p>In consideration of the supplier market and the potential specialist nature of it, the requirement was clearly set out in the tender documents along with the evaluation process and all deliverables making it clear to what needed to be done. The documentation was kept relatively simple and straightforward so suppliers would be able to easily respond to it.</p> <p>A range of potential suppliers were identified and they were informed early on in the procurement of the up and coming opportunity. Due to the specialist nature of the requirement, many of these suppliers fell within the definition of a Small to Medium Enterprise (SME)</p> <p>The Department published the final tender documents, on its Business Management System (BMS) and an advert was placed on the government portal, Contracts Finder, inviting any potential suppliers to respond. This advert included details of the procurement along with supporting documentation and contact details. A note was issued to all suppliers registered on related categories on Contracts Finder informing them of the opportunity.</p> <p>Suppliers were asked to respond to the tender within three weeks. There was a need to award the contracts quickly, however, it was recognised that the suppliers needed sufficient time to understand the deliverables and respond to the tender documentation. The Department wanted to ensure that they received a reasonable selection of high quality bids of which they could evaluate and be confident that the supplier would be able to deliver. One of the main areas that our suppliers comment on, is the lack time to respond to opportunities.</p> <p>A number of SME's registered their interest in this opportunity. The Department made sure it was accessible throughout the tendering period to answer questions and to support all suppliers with the BMS system especially for those suppliers who had not used the system before.</p>			

All the bids were evaluated and all suppliers who had submitted bids were provided with written feedback, whether they were successful or unsuccessful. Feedback from suppliers was that they would hope to tender with the Department again.

The two lots were awarded to two separate smaller organisations who had successfully evidenced in their tender proposal their experience, expertise and capability in delivering the requirements and outputs required in this tender. Because of their individual specialisms and expertise in the language areas, evidence showed the evaluation team that they would be in a better position to be able to deliver the contract and obtain the data required.

Success Factors	Please provide details of why / how this was a success. Was the procurement run quicker or at less cost than normal? Did the competition result in better VFM than had been delivered before? What benefit is there to SMEs? What lessons can be learnt for use by other depts.?
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- The Department, have recognised a number of successes from this tender exercise
- Two smaller organisations, who because of their size had greater specialist expertise, were awarded the contract
 - A number of smaller organisations who have not previously expressed their interest in working with the Department have now done so.
 - The Department reviewed and amended its contracts strategy
 - High quality bids were received from the bidders which made evaluating them easier
 - Financial savings were made on both elements of the contract
 - The contract was delivered to time and to cost
 - Some of the smaller suppliers which the Department had previously worked with were not aware of the Contracts Finder website and are now registering for further opportunities
 - The policy area within the Department leading on the tender welcomed the opportunity to advertise the requirement and also the range of suppliers that participated in the tender process.

Has this Case Study been subject to any media attention / FOI requests etc?	No
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Please provide details	
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