

Guidance Note on how to complete a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ)

Introduction

The PQQ is used to identify potential suppliers that are the most capable of providing the required goods or services. This is done by assessing the financial status and technical or professional ability of a potential supplier, considering areas such as the experience of the potential supplier and the qualifications of their employees.

The composition and assessment of the PQQ follows the EU Procurement Directive principles of transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment.

Completing a PQQ can often be seen as a time consuming and difficult process. This guide has been put together to make this stage of the tendering process as clear and easy as possible in an attempt to support suppliers when expressing an interest in working with SQA.

1. Compile the required documentation

Before starting to complete the PQQ it is advisable to have a preliminary scan through the document to ascertain what information you will require, allowing you time to answer the questions enclosed. As a minimum you will require the following information:

- ◆ your company registration details (and your parent or holding company — if applicable) plus your company VAT number
- ◆ copies of two years audited accounts for your company
- ◆ your bank account details including the address of your branch
- ◆ copies of your insurance certificates for public/employers liability and professional indemnity (if applicable)
- ◆ a copy of your company health and safety and equality policies
- ◆ two references for similar types of contract to the one that you have expressed an interest in

2. Read the overview of the requirement

The overview of the requirement in Section 3 of the PQQ is intended to provide you with information on the contract that you have expressed an interest in. This will allow you to complete the required information with a clear idea of what the contract will require from a prospective supplier.

If you have any questions regarding the PQQ, please submit them via the Public Contracts Scotland advertising portal where the PQQ was downloaded.

Please also take note of the submission deadline.

3. Fill out the required information

Complete all Parts of the PQQ, as detailed below, providing a reasonable level of detail.

Please ensure that the information you provide is clear and relevant to the contract requirement. The evaluation team can only evaluate your response using the information given.

4. Check your submission

It is advisable, once you have completed your PQQ submission that you check through to ensure there are no significant omissions, mistakes or areas of confusion. Errors at this stage could potentially lead to your organisation failing to meet the shortlist criteria for the tender stage.

Please remember that your submission may be one of many PQQs that will be evaluated and the clearer your submission is, the easier it is to score.

5. Send off your PQQ submission

Once you are happy that your submission contains all the information requested in a clear, detailed and informative format, submit your electronic and hard copy submissions as instructed within the time and date stated in the PQQ.

It is essential that all PQQ documentation is returned by the date and time stated as documentation received after the deadline may be disregarded.

Please make sure that all documentation is attached and uploaded in the correct manner via the Public Contracts Scotland advertising portal.

Guidance for completion

Part A — Background Information

Basic contact details and background information is required for each potential supplier.

Part B — Financial Status

Financial information from suppliers is used to establish that the supplier is financially stable and that they have the necessary financial resources to deliver the contract requirements.

Suppliers are asked to submit financial accounts for the past two years of trading, or for the period available if trading for less than two years. PLC and LLP companies should submit full accounts as registered with Companies House. Where these are not available, we require a statement of the organisation's turnover, profit and loss and cash flow position for the most recent full year of trading and an end period balance sheet.

Part C — Conviction of Criminal Offences/Business Probity

This is required to ensure that potential suppliers have no outstanding issues. Satisfactory answers are required before a supplier can progress in the process.

Part D — Service Operation and Quality

This information is crucial to demonstrate a potential supplier's principal business activities and relevant experience in relation to the contract requirement. This is a key area in the evaluation process and should be completed in detail.

Part D — References

Suppliers are asked to provide details of similar contracts worked on over recent years as well as providing contact details of referees. References should not be SQA staff.

Part D — Technical Capacity

The response to these questions will be used to initially assess whether suppliers have the required level of resources, skills and abilities to tender.

This will also demonstrate if the supplier has sufficient resources to perform the contract in house or intends to sub-contract. Part A of the PQQ asks for details of sub-contractors.

Part D – Insurance, Standards and Policies

Insurance

Copies of the requested insurance certificates must be provided as part of the response. Relevant insurance cover must be in place before a supplier can commence work for SQA.

Health and Safety

SQA must consider a potential supplier's system for controlling health and safety within their organisation, so a copy or statement of the policy specific to the organisation must be provided.

By law, if you employ five or more people you must have a written health and safety policy. If you employ fewer than five people, less formal documentation is usually acceptable, although SQA still need to be sure of the commitment to health and safety and understanding of legislation.

Equality and Diversity

SQA must ensure that suppliers do not discriminate in the employment practices. We may also ask potential suppliers about their equal opportunities policy, which should clearly detail the procedures and practices in operation designed to secure equality of opportunity.

Environmental

All procurement decisions must take into account the impact of today's decisions on people and the environment, both now and in the future. The organisations from which we buy our goods and services, must share our commitment to sound environmental performance and improvement.

Quality

SQA will normally request a copy of the potential supplier's quality assurance process. Depending on the contract specific accreditation may be required.