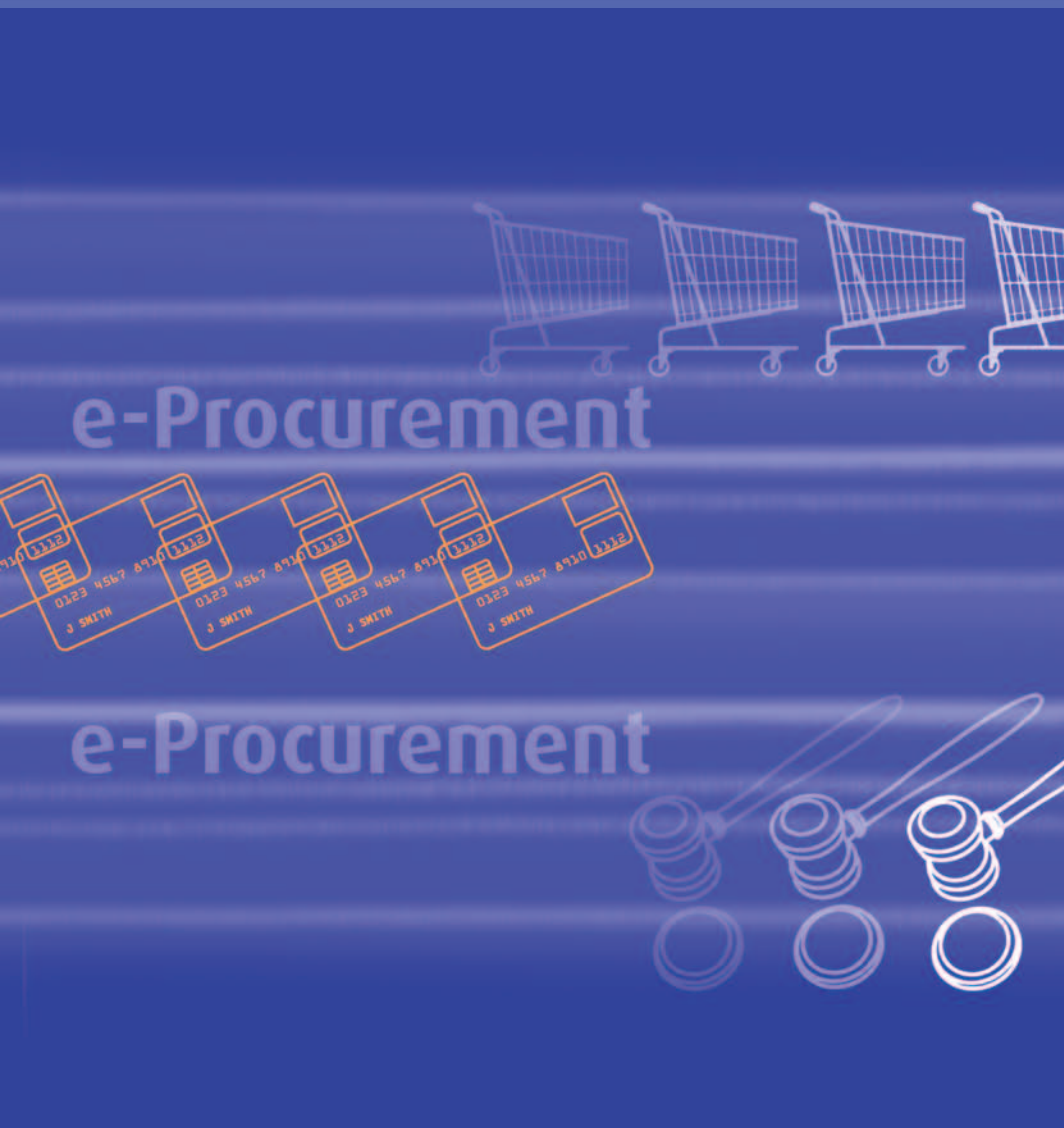




National e-Procurement Project

Delivering e-Procurement

Desktop Guide to e-Procurement
Part 4: What is e-Tendering



1. Introduction

Background

The National e-Procurement Project (NePP) is working to support and enable councils to meet their e-Government targets and to gain the benefits available from e-procurement. As part of this work, the NePP has developed entry-level guidance notes for use by councils as they work to implement e-procurement. These 'How to' guidance notes are designed to cover the basic steps that councils need to take to implement e-procurement. The notes can be found at www.idea.gov.uk/knowledge/eprocurement and cover the following topics:

- Part 1: Overarching Guide to e-Procurement
- Part 2: Purchase Cards
- Part 3: e-Auctions
- Part 4: e-Tendering
- Part 5: e-Marketplace
- Part 6: e-Procurement Business Case
- Part 7: Spend Analysis
- Part 8: Selling to the Council
- Part 9: e-Procurement Guide to Suppliers.

Structure

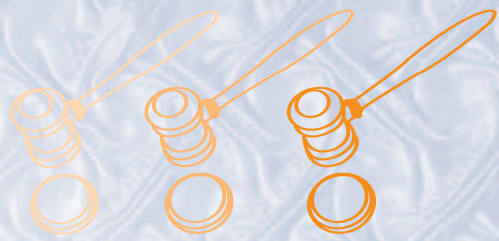
This document is concerned with e-tendering and has the following structure:

- Section 2 - What is e-tendering?
- Section 3 - Why does e-tendering matter?
- Section 4 - Why should councils be interested?
- Section 5 - The stages of an e-tendering project
- Section 6 - Where can I get further information?
- Section 7 - Checklist
- Section 8 - Frequently asked questions.

This document contains a number of terms that may be unfamiliar and therefore the following table provides a glossary.

Table 1: Glossary of terms used in this document

| Term | Definition |
|----------------------|--|
| Benefits realisation | The actions taken to identify where benefits should come from, assessing whether benefits are being achieved and taking steps to ensure that cashable and non-cashable benefits are achieved. Further information on benefits realisation can be found at: www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=82701 |
| Business case | A business case is the document used to obtain management commitment and approval for investment in business change, such as e-procurement, which changes the way that suppliers are selected and goods and services are purchased. The business case provides a framework for planning and management of this change and ongoing identification of risks. The viability of the project will be judged on the contents of the business case. |



| Term | Definition |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Cashable benefits | Cashable benefits result in a reduction in expenditure. For example, less money will be spent with suppliers but the volume or quality of goods or service will remain the same, or fewer staff will be required to deliver the same level of service. |
| e-Procurement website | The area of the council's website used for issues relating to the purchase of goods and services. It could include advice to suppliers on how to sell to the council, relevant policies, tender procedures and details of tenders that are currently open to suppliers. |
| e-Tendering | <p>e-Tendering comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertaking the tasks of advertising the requirement for goods or services, registering suppliers, and issuing and receiving tender documents via the internet • automating the evaluation of responses to a tender. |
| Fte | Full time equivalent employees. Calculated by dividing the total hours saved (for example through e-procurement) by the standard hours worked per week (eg 35 hours). |
| Non-cashable benefits | Non-cashable benefits are those that free-up staff from a task (because it is automated or eliminated) but the time saved for each staff member is not large enough to result in a reduction in the number of staff required. Other non-cashable benefits include better management information, a more robust audit trail and increased compliance with regulations. |
| Non-OJEU tender | The selection of a supplier through a tender. The level of expenditure at which suppliers must be selected through a Non-OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) tender will be determined by your financial regulations. |
| OJEU tender | <p>The selection of a supplier through a tender, where the contract value is above the level of expenditure at which EU regulations require the contract to be advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). The current levels of expenditure are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goods and certain services - £153,376 • Public works - £3,834,411 <p>See www.simap.eu.int</p> |
| Process efficiencies | A reduction in the cost of a process or the time taken to complete a process (e.g. processing a purchase order) as a result of automating the process. |
| Request for quotation (RFQ) | The selection of a supplier through a request for quotations from a predetermined number of potential suppliers. The level of expenditure at which suppliers must be selected through an RFQ and the number of quotations required will be determined by the council's financial regulations. Usually, at least three quotations will be required by your financial regulations. |

| Term | Definition |
|------------------------|---|
| Supplier registration | The process by which a supplier registers their interest in receiving tenders from the council. |
| Tender documents | Documents issued by the council specifying what they wish to purchase, the contractual terms and conditions for the tender and instructions for responding with bids. |
| Workflow functionality | The ability of the council to automatically send information or request an action via an e-tendering system. For example, sending an alert to the tender evaluation team that responses to the tender are now available for review. |

2. What's e-Tendering?

Tendering is a method by which councils acquire goods and services and includes the following core activities:

- the advertisement of the requirement for goods or services,
- the preparation of tender documents,
- the registration of suppliers to receive tender documents,
- pre-qualification of suppliers for a particular tender
- the delivery of tender documents between the council and bidders,
- the opening of responses to the tender,
- the evaluation of responses to the tender,
- the award of the contract.

e-Tendering is the carrying out of the tendering process using electronic means, such as the internet and specialist e-tendering software applications.

Tendering covers different types of competitive processes such as:

- Request for quotations (RFQ) - The selection of a supplier through a request for quotations from a number of potential suppliers who have the capability to supply the goods or services included in the tender. The level of expenditure at which suppliers must be selected through an RFQ and the number of quotations required will be determined by the council's financial regulations. Usually, at least three quotations will be required by your financial regulations.
- Non OJEU - tenders that are not subject to EU regulations, either because they are exempt or because they are below the EU expenditure threshold. The level of expenditure at which suppliers must be selected through a Non-OJEU tender will be determined by your financial regulations or contract standing orders; and
- OJEU - tenders that are subject to EU regulations and involve publishing a notice through the Official Journal of the European Union. The contract value is above the level of expenditure at which EU regulations require the contract to be advertised in the OJEU.

Tenders are typically raised for higher value purchases of goods and services. The NePP's assessment is that councils typically undertake the following number of tenders per year:



| Average number of tenders | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|------------|------|
| | RFQ | Non - OJEU | OJEU |
| County | 4,000 | 350 | 30 |
| Unitary | 1,000 | 100 | 25 |
| District | 200 | 50 | 10 |

3. Why does e-Tendering matter?

Tendering is an important activity because it is the means by which a Council ensures that the suppliers providing goods and services are offering value for money. Tendering includes request for quotations, non-OJEU tenders and OJEU tenders. The tendering process should be efficient, cost effective and transparent.

e-Tendering is the carrying out of the tendering process using electronic means. e-Tendering enables suppliers in different geographic locations to be notified of an opportunity, to express an interest, to pre-qualify, to download tender documents and to submit a response. This promotes competition for the tender, and provides a process that is efficient for both the council and suppliers and a selection process that is transparent to bidders.

The table below explains how the use of an e-tendering solution promotes recognised procurement good practice.

Table 2: Examples of good procurement practices and support from e-tendering

| Good procurement practice | e-Tendering Support |
|---|--|
| To have detailed knowledge of your tenders | e-Tendering provides detailed information on all past and present tenders. You can observe and manage responses to the tender through the council's e-procurement website. You will have up-to-date information on how many suppliers have downloaded the tender documents and how many responses have been received. |
| Having a cost efficient tendering process. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinated and organised document preparation • Efficient supplier liaison and document distribution • Efficient tender opening and evaluation. | e-Tendering allows you to automate the tender process. For example, you will be able to compare all submissions for a tender electronically. This can be done by copying and pasting the information given in responses into an evaluation spreadsheet, thereby saving time re-keying information, or in some e-tendering solutions, by using an automatic scoring and evaluation capability. This allows officers to evaluate tender responses when and where they want, rather than having to arrange evaluation meetings. e-Tendering also enables councils and suppliers to avoid overhead costs such as printing and postage. |

| Good procurement practice | e-Tendering Support |
|--|--|
| <p>To standardise the tender process across the council</p> | <p>e-Tendering can ensure that a standard process is applied to all tenders. This enables the council to devolve the tender process to officers, whilst maintaining control over the award of contracts.</p> |
| <p>To have contract awards that are objective and clear to bidders</p> | <p>e-Tendering allows suppliers to see the progress of their bids. You will be able to issue responses to queries directly and suppliers via email rather than receiving written questions and issuing written responses.</p> <p>e-Tendering ensures that communication to all suppliers is standardised, so that suppliers all receive the same information. If a problem does arise, then e-tendering systems can provide a full history of the events leading up to contract award.</p> |
| <p>To have information available on contracts that are in place and when contracts are due for renewal</p> | <p>Some e-Tendering solutions can support elements of contract management by maintaining a database of contracts that are in place and the contract renewal dates. Councils are then able to plan ahead to re-tender.</p> |
| <p>To collaborate with other public sector organisations</p> | <p>Other councils can share the same e-tendering system, so that there is wider participation in a tender and hence economies of scale and the elimination of repetition (individual authorities separately issuing tenders for the same goods or services). Increased volume, more attractive opportunities for suppliers and security of supply encourages competition and hence the opportunity for the council to achieve better prices and service.</p> |
| <p>Securing & Probity</p> | <p>Tenders are received into a secure vault, so that they cannot be accessed until an agreed opening time and by authorised personnel. The Council knows who has accessed what and when, providing a robust audit trail.</p> |



4. Why should councils be interested?

The traditional approach to tendering is often characterised as time consuming and expensive. This is because:

- advertisements for the required goods or services are placed in newspapers and journals, incurring publication costs,
- tender documents are issued in hard copy format, incurring printing, copying and postage costs,
- tender responses are returned in hard copy, so that bidders incur printing, copying and postage costs,
- further copies of the tender responses are often made by councils, to ensure that all officers involved in the evaluation of the tender, have the responses from bidders,
- tender responses have to be opened by designated officers,
- responses have to be processed and data collated for comparison and evaluation,
- meetings have to be arranged to bring officers involved in the tender evaluation together.

e-tendering can deliver savings and benefits to a council by enhancing efficiency and control around major purchases of goods or services. Savings and benefits can be categorised into cashable and non-cashable.

Cashable benefits

Cashable benefits result in a reduction in expenditure. For example, less money will be spent with suppliers but the volume or quality of goods or service will remain the same, or fewer staff will be required to deliver the same level of service. In terms of e-tendering, cashable benefits are largely process efficiencies (time saved that results in headcount savings and hence reduced expenditure) and reductions in overhead costs incurred during the tendering process. These savings are achieved through automation of the tender process.

Process efficiencies

The NePP has estimated the process efficiency savings potentially available to a council by considering the number of tenders that a council issues during the year, the costs involved with a traditional, manual tender process and the costs involved with an automated e-tendering process. These savings are in a range of low, average and high, depending upon the degree of change from a manual to automated tender process.

Process efficiencies are a reduction in the cost of a process or the time taken to complete a process (e.g. processing a purchase order) as a result of automating the process and may be cashable or non-cashable. Cashable process efficiencies result in a reduction in expenditure (fewer staff required because of automation of the purchasing process). Non-cashable process efficiencies are those that free-up staff from a task (because it is automated or eliminated) but the time saved for each staff member is not large enough to result in a reduction in the number of staff required. Other non-cashable benefits include better management information, a more robust audit trail and increased compliance with regulations.

Reduction in overhead costs

The NePP has estimated the average reduction in the overhead costs of a tender to be up to £50 per tender document.

The main elements of overhead cost savings are printing, copying, paper, postage and stationery which will mostly be avoided because tender documents and tender responses will be issued / received electronically. This is also environmentally friendly since it reduces the use of paper. It is important to note that realisation of these benefits is dependent on certain cultural changes, such as the evaluation of tenders being performed through electronic media (such as email) rather than tender responses being printed out for evaluation.

e-Tendering can also release additional office space as contract documentation (required to be kept for at least the length of the contract period) can be stored online.

e-Tendering can also reduce the amount a council spends on advertising tenders. This can be achieved by aggregating all announcements into a small regular posting in a newspaper, and directing suppliers to the council's e-procurement website for further information. The e-procurement website is the area of the council's website used for issues relating to the purchase of goods and services. It could include advice to suppliers on how to sell to the council, relevant policies, tender procedures and details of tenders that are currently open to suppliers.

Indicative savings

For an average council, the savings could be as shown in the following table.

Table 3: Process efficiencies and overhead cost savings

| Sourcing | District | Unitary | County |
|-----------------------------------|----------|---------|--------|
| e-Tendering process efficiencies | 0.9 Fte | 2.4 Fte | 7 Fte |
| e-Tendering overhead cost savings | £6k | £27k | £105k |

Fte means "full time equivalent member of staff". It is calculated by dividing the total hours saved (for example through e-procurement) by the standard hours worked per week (eg 35 hours).

An alternative way of expressing the process efficiency savings opportunity is as a reduction in the costs associated with the RFQ, non-OJEU and OJEU tender processes. The NePP has estimated the average savings in the cost of the tender process to be:

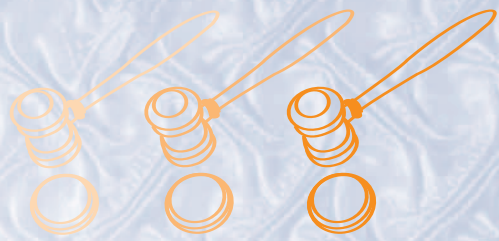
- 15% for a RFQ
- 25% for a non-OJEU tender
- 28% for an OJEU tender.

Further information on how these indicative savings were calculated is contained in the document "How to Realise the Benefits from e-Tendering" which can be found at <http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/aio/70859>

Non-cashable benefits

e-Tendering can provide a range of non-cashable benefits:

- e-Tendering can lead to better management and/or co-ordination of the tender process. This is due to information on who is working on each stage of the tender, such as preparation of the tender documents and evaluation of the tender responses, being accessible from the reports available from the e-tendering system. More sophisticated systems may include workflow functionality which allows users in different departments (legal, audit and finance, for example), to create, view and edit sections of tender documents simultaneously. The system can also create email alerts that inform a user when a colleague has made a change or when a supplier has posted a response.



- e-Tendering enables a consistent tender process. Council tendering policies and procedures (eg approval authorities) can be built into the e-tendering system to enforce compliance. Having one system shared across the council or councils ensures that anyone involved in the tender process will work within a consistent and unambiguous framework.
- With e-Tendering, all documents for a particular contract can be held electronically in a logical structure for ease of retrieval.
- The time spent analysing numerical information (such as costs) is reduced, using e-tendering because parts of the tender response can be automatically loaded into a spreadsheet format ready to compare, saving time re-keying information. Sophisticated e-tendering systems have functionality that can immediately send out an email notification to suppliers who fail to provide all expected information.
- The e-tendering system usually has the ability to create a summary report on each tender, including information such as the number of suppliers that have expressed interest, details of suppliers that have not downloaded the tender documents and details of when suppliers have responded to the tender.
- It is important for the tendering process in the public sector to be fair and for that fairness to be documented. e-Tendering provides a secure history from advertising the tender to awarding a contract. This history is a full audit trail that encourages openness and integrity in all contractual decisions. The need for an audit trail to be secure and reliable is a requirement of the Audit Commission.

A full audit trail can help councils if they face requests for information from the public, but can also support the council if they face legal action over the award of a contract.

- With a traditional tendering process, responses arriving late due to courier delay or incorrect addressing would have been disqualified from the tendering process. e-Tendering ensures this does not occur because suppliers receive an immediate confirmation by email that their tender has been received by the council, thereby avoiding potential disputes and ill feeling.
- Less time taken to process responses for evaluation; means that less person time spent administering but also responses can be evaluated faster, so end-to-end tendering time is reduced.
- Other more general non-cashable benefits include improved management information, better audit trail / records and increased compliance with processes or legislation.

Supplier benefits

In addition to the savings and benefits for the council, the following benefits are also available for suppliers:

- A single website gives potential suppliers 24 hour a day access to view all tender opportunities including contract renewal dates, tender deadlines, status of tenders and the rationale for the eventual contract award. This can be achieved without a specialist e-tendering system - simply posting the information and copies of tender/ OJEU adverts on a council's website will start a council moving towards this and get suppliers familiar with looking for opportunities online before the council invests in a specialist e-tendering system.
- Early notification of tendering opportunities, giving advance warning to suppliers so that they have more time to prepare responses.

- All suppliers will be notified in a standardised way, ensuring no bias to individual suppliers.
- Suppliers can submit tender documents electronically, thereby using the time that would otherwise have had to be allowed for postal delivery to complete the response.
- Where e-Tendering systems are used collaboratively, suppliers may gain access to larger markets.
- As e-tendering is internet based, suppliers can easily view and engage in tendering opportunities without being constrained by location.
- e-Tendering systems typically maintain an approved list of suppliers that have responded to previous tenders and categorises them by set criteria, such as location and goods or services offered. You can then view lists of suppliers that may be interested in a certain area of work, to establish the level of market interest. This gives officers confidence that the tender will be successful i.e. a sufficient number of suppliers will be interested and competition will be achieved. Suppliers could then receive an email, pre-warning them of a tendering opportunity, which is the first step to encouraging a good response to the tender.

5. The stages of an e-Tendering project

An e-tendering project typically follows the stages shown in the diagram below.

Figure 1: Stages in an e-tendering project



Gain support of senior management

Implementing e-tendering requires an investment and therefore, councils will have to make sure that they have a sound business case for implementing e-tendering. However, before you write a business case you need to be sure that your senior management team understands what e-tendering is and what it can do for your council. The government targets for e-procurement may well have created a good deal of interest at senior management level, but do not assume that they know what e-tendering is or why they should invest in it.

The best way to get the interest of the senior management team is to show them what would be different in the council if they have an e-tendering system. To do this you need to get some information together about your current tender processes.

Initial data gathering

Initial data gathering will be required to demonstrate why e-tendering should be a priority. This data should include:

- the number of annual tenders, analysed by type (RFQ, non-OJEU and OJEU),
- the characteristics of the tender process (eg is the process manual or automated)
- the typical costs of a tender process within the council



This information will give the senior management team a view of the way in which tenders are currently handled and the costs associated with that process. By applying the NePP benefits metrics referred to in Section 4 above, an initial estimate of the process efficiencies and overhead cost savings available to the council can be made.

Having completed the initial data gathering, you can now approach the senior management team, but be warned! Although you may think that e-tendering will be of real benefit to the council, the senior management team may take some persuading. Below are some examples of the reasons you may be given for not investing in e-tendering; alongside are some responses you could use to make a case for e-tendering.

Table 4: Key challenges

| Challenge | Response |
|--|--|
| <p>"How do I know that the benefits you suggest from e-tendering are achievable for this council?"</p> | <p>We will prepare a detailed business case that will demonstrate in detail what savings are achievable for this council.</p> |
| <p>"We have a tendering process that works. Changing will be expensive and chaotic."</p> | <p>Councils are required to become more efficient and this will require investment to make sure that we change. A lot can be done to prepare for change so it won't be chaotic and a business case will be prepared to explain both the costs and the benefits.</p> |
| <p>"I'm not convinced by the security and robustness of this technology"</p> | <p>e-Tendering systems are successfully in use in a number of councils. It is of the highest priority for software companies to design systems that are secure and reliable and it is in their best interests to ensure that systems run smoothly and operate with a maximum level of security. Councils should also ensure that virus protection measures are in place to maintain the integrity of the e-tendering system.</p> |
| <p>"There are a lot of e-tendering systems available, how will we know that we are choosing the right technology?"</p> | <p>If we write a good specification for the system we require, we will be able to both evaluate alternative systems and understand what we are getting. This will give us confidence that we are buying a system closest to our needs. Remember, this isn't just about buying a system but a service partner who will be providing us with implementation, training and other services.</p> |
| <p>"Won't smaller suppliers be disadvantaged by an e-tendering system?"</p> | <p>Suppliers only need access to a computer and the internet to respond to an e-tender. We will work with suppliers to ensure that they understand how we wish to process tenders and what they need to do.</p> |

Sponsorship

Assuming that you've been successful in gaining the support of your senior management for e-tendering, the next step is to create a business case. However, the job of creating a business case is time consuming and will require some investment of resources (at the very least). If you are to get the commitment you require to create the business case, it will be necessary for the board to appoint a sponsor for the project. Sponsorship is critical at this point both to raise e-tendering onto the agenda of the senior management team but also to manage the work and funding required to develop the business case. Clearly, sponsorship will be required during the later stages of the project as well. An ideal sponsor could be the Director of Finance.

Evidence that effective sponsorship has been achieved includes:

- there is a nominated sponsor for the project,
- that the sponsor is at a senior level,
- that the sponsor is actively seeking advice and progress reports from the project manager and is championing the project and getting buy-in from peers.

Build the business case

When you are preparing your business case you need to be aware that the business case is an on-going piece of work and that it might change as you progress. During the writing of the business case you will learn more about the tendering process at your council, the opportunity for partnering with other public sector organisations and the software solutions available. All of these factors will affect your business case and result in revisions to your work.

A business case will include the following information:

- the options available to the council - e.g. buying an e-tendering software system, opting for a hosted model or even developing an in-house system,
- the proposed plan for implementing e-tendering - e.g. which departments will use e-tendering first?
- the expected cost of buying or developing the e-tendering system, training staff and working with suppliers,
- the expected benefits that the council will gain from e-tendering, both cashable and non-cashable
- the key performance indicators that will be used to measure the delivery of the expected benefits
- the challenges that you expect the council to face
- identify project risks and mitigating actions
- define the resources required to implement e-procurement.

The guidance note "e-Procurement Business Case" provides advice on the content and completion of the business case for e-procurement, and can be used to help you develop a business case for e-tendering.

Commit resources

Now the real work begins! Once the business case has been approved, the next task is to select and implement an e-tendering system. All of this work will require resources (project team) to complete and therefore, we've called this part of your project "commit resources". The key tasks that you must complete are:



- an investigation of your options for an e-tendering system
- the procurement of a service partner (provider of an e-tendering system) to work with you to implement and roll out e-tendering
- to take steps to secure the benefits from e-tendering.

Implement e-tendering

The implementation approach will be advised by the service partner you have selected. They are likely to have their preferred implementation methodology; ensure that you draw on their previous experience to make best use of the time they spend on implementing e-tendering in your Council. A critical aspect of implementation will be a supplier engagement and adoption programme to ensure that they have the necessary practical advice and support. A big barrier for suppliers is fear of using technology. They will need to be informed why the council is introducing e-tendering, the mutual benefits and how they can receive support and information. For further information see the guide for suppliers document at:

<http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=82717>.

Deliver and measure the benefits

Councils should focus on simple, key measures that track progress on delivering the benefits expected from e-tendering. Benefits tracking is necessary to ensure that expected benefits are actually achieved. Four Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are proposed:

Table 5: Key performance indicators

| Type of benefit | KPI |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Time savings | Reduction in time spent to tender |
| Advertising cost savings | Reduction in advertising costs |
| Overhead cost savings | Reduction in total overhead costs |
| Making use of the e-tendering system | % of corporate spend through electronic sourcing, such as e-tendering |

The work done during the “Build the Business Case” stage will identify current performance and set future targets. Councils will need to:

- identify who is accountable for delivering the expected benefits,
- specify a reporting mechanism and format to capture progress on benefits delivery,
- establish a review process to monitor benefits delivery.

6. Where can I get further information?

A more detailed “How to” guidance note has been prepared by the NePP and is available at <http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=82701>. This contains fuller information on the benefits available from e-tendering (including benchmarks), how to identify your benefits opportunity and how to deliver that opportunity.

Other NePP guidance notes address core issues around the delivery of benefits - technology, change management and supplier adoption. These guidance notes can also be found at www.idea.gov.uk/knowledge/eprocurement

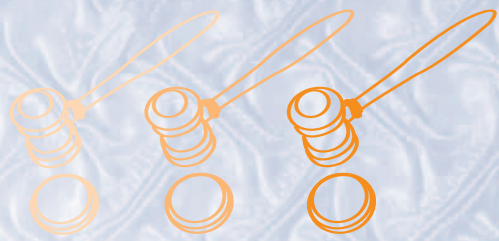
For information on the requirements for the publication of tender notices in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU), including other useful information and facilities for buyers: www.myTenders.com

7. Checklist

The following checklist sets out the key tasks to be undertaken throughout each stage of an e-tendering project.

Table 6: Checklist

| Activity | Done? |
|---|-------|
| <p>Gain senior management support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the initial data capture been completed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Number of tenders <input type="checkbox"/> ii) Characteristics of the tender process <input type="checkbox"/> iii) Process costs <input type="checkbox"/> • Has effective sponsorship been attained? <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| <p>Build the business case</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the business case been completed? The business case needs to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Why e-tendering is being proposed? <input type="checkbox"/> ii) The current situation within the council <input type="checkbox"/> ii) Potential benefits of e-tendering to the council <input type="checkbox"/> iv) Costs involved with implementing and maintaining e-tendering. <input type="checkbox"/> v) Risks <input type="checkbox"/> • Has the business case been approved? <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| <p>Commit resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have your options been investigated? <input type="checkbox"/> • Have you selected a service partner to work with you? <input type="checkbox"/> • Have you implemented and rolled out e-tendering? <input type="checkbox"/> • Have you started to gain the benefits from e-tendering? <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| <p>Implement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the service provider explained their implementation methodology? <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| <p>Deliver the benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits tracking mechanism defined: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Who will be accountable for achieving the benefits <input type="checkbox"/> ii) Key performance measures <input type="checkbox"/> iii) Specification of reports to measure progress against the savings <input type="checkbox"/> iv) Monitoring arrangements, such as quarterly review meetings <input type="checkbox"/> | |



8. Frequently Asked Questions

Do suppliers need expensive technology to participate in an e-tender?

No - suppliers only need access to a computer with an internet connection to participate in an e-tender.

Are there security risks in receiving tenders electronically?

All e-tendering solutions should have security measures to detect potential viruses from all users. Regular back-up and frequent virus patch updates are recommended. Councils are recommended to seek specialist advice on virus protection.

Are e-tenders compatible with financial standing orders?

Standing orders may need to be amended to cover the issue, receipt and evaluation of tenders electronically. You will need to review the existing regulations and compare them with how you wish to deal with tenders.

Is e-tendering consistent with EU directives?

Yes - the EU procurement directives have been updated so that:

- e-tendering can be used for goods, services and works
- e-tenders are permitted if there is sufficient security and confidentiality (between suppliers and the council) arrangements in place.

What if staff are unwilling to use the e-tendering solution?

It is highly likely that you will encounter some resistance to the changes you are making, and this is extremely common. There are a number of steps that can be taken to ensure that the implementation is as smooth as possible and that users adopt it - practical Change Management guidance and case studies by Councils who have gone through e-procurement implementations are available at www.idea.gov.uk/knowledge/eprocurement

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Further sources of e-Procurement Best Practice Guidelines

- OGC e-Procurement guidelines for the public sector - www.ogc.gov.uk
- Buy IT Best Practice Group e-Procurement guidelines - www.buyitnet.org

e-Government National Projects aim to ensure that all councils have access to key electronic services and building blocks, without having to build them from scratch. The 22 National Projects have developed products and services, by authorities, for local authorities. National Projects are the heart of local e-Government and are designed to help local councils to improve services, increase efficiency and to help create sustainable communities.

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