



Supply Nation

Winning!

A guide for Indigenous suppliers
on how to win corporate and
government contracts.

Supply Nation
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Introduction

This guide has been developed by buyers and Indigenous suppliers to help more Indigenous businesses win more contracts with government and corporate buyers.

This guide sets out all the things Indigenous suppliers need to know when selling their goods and services to government and corporate buyers. While every buyer has its own systems and processes for procuring goods and services, there are some common language, processes and protocols that Indigenous suppliers can understand which can help them to be more successful in finding, winning and executing contracts.

For Indigenous suppliers – both new and existing – who want to grow their business, this guide steps out:

- Key terms to help de-mystify the procurement lingo.
- Useful ways for working effectively with government and corporate buyers.
- Tips and tricks for selling in and up to government and corporate buyers at every stage of the procurement process.
- A checklist of the essential things every business can do to set themselves up for contract winning success.
- Resources to help grow your business, find opportunities and strengthen your bids.

It is hoped that Indigenous suppliers will refer to this guide as they journey through the process of selling to corporate and government buyers. In this guide, useful information can be found on how to:

- Find opportunities.
- Prepare a bid (or proposal).
- Negotiate and agree contract terms.
- Deliver on the contract.
- Expand beyond the current contract.

While this guide is for Indigenous suppliers, it can also be a useful resource for buyers in helping them understand what Indigenous suppliers expect from them and how they procure goods and services.

Finally, this guide exists as part of suite of information and resources aimed at helping buyers and suppliers do more business with each other including Supply Nation's Code of Conduct <https://supplnation.org.au/terms-and-conditions/code-of-conduct/>

Attributes of successful Indigenous business owners

In addition to the actions that Indigenous suppliers can take to win more contracts, there are certain ways that highly successful business owners behave which helps their business win more and more contracts in addition to being recognised as a respected representative of the Indigenous business community. These are the attributes of Indigenous business owners who are leaders in their field.

They:

- Bring together their Indigenous identity and commercial understanding to do business well.
- Deeply understand every aspect of their business including what it does and doesn't do.
- Are prepared to graciously turn-down an opportunity if it doesn't fit with their business offering.
- Learn from failure by turning it into future success.
- Are an active member of industry associations.
- Build and maintain strong working relationships with prospective and current clients.
- Seek feedback from client in a constructive way and act on this feedback.
- Develop and maintain a deep understanding of the industry they are working in including their competitors, and their clients and their needs.
- Are discrete. They keep ATMs, proposals and projects confidential.
- Actively seek – at all stages of the relationship – positive and constructive feedback from their clients.
- Are constantly thinking about ways to solve problems for their clients.
- Are ethical. They understand probity requirements of their clients and respect these boundaries.
- Always deliver what, when and how they say they will.
- Have their finger "on the pulse" by regularly scanning the market for opportunities.
- Present well. They are professional, punctual and organised.
- Live and work by Supply Nation's Code of Conduct.

The important steps for Indigenous business

- 1 Getting ready**
Ensuring your business has everything in place to start selling
- 2 Finding (and creating) opportunities**
Ensuring you get access to the right opportunities for your business
- 3 Preparing your bid**
Ensuring you prepare a competitive and compliant proposal
- 4 Agreeing the contract**
Setting up your business for execution and commercial success
- 5 Delivering the contract**
Ensuring your business successfully fulfils the contract requirements
- 6 Beyond the contract**
Successfully closing out the contract and setting up new contracts

1

Getting ready

Ensuring your business has everything in place to start bidding and winning contracts.

"Understand what you're offering and why it's better than what your competitors are offering. Help your clients to want what you're offering over and above anything your competitors are selling."



Important things to do

- Ask yourself - is being in business right for you?
- Get Supply Nation certified or registered. Ensure do everything to maintain certification or registration.
- Define what makes your business unique. This is your USP. Being Supply Nation certified or registered is not your USP.
- Check which insurances (including level of cover) your business needs.
- Your website is your capability statement. Set up your website or make sure your current website is up-to-date. Have a downloadable capability statement on your website too.
- Know who your ideal customer is. Research which organisations they are, check out their website, understand what goods and services they sell and understand what they need.
- Ensure your business contact details are up-to-date and buyers can easily find you.
- Complete a business readiness checklist and make sure you have the basics in place: ABN, domain name and business name.
- Know your business model including pricing and where you want your business to be in the supply chain.
- Identify your capital needs, start building equity and get financial advice (e.g. IBA's Business Support).
- Identify a mentor who can support you through the selling journey.
- Add your Indigenous Business Directory link to your business card.
- Build and maintain relationships with clients and prospective clients.

Things to remember

For particular industries:

- For building and construction: check your business has the right certifications (ISO and QMS), insurances and pre-qualifications.
- For consulting: apply to be on government panels.
- For information technology services: managing security and cyber-risks are important issues.
- For aviation and defence: security clearances are required – check what level you need.
- Director's guarantee may be required for the supply of certain goods and services.
- More and more corporates require their suppliers to adhere to sustainable and ethical practice requirements. Check what your current and prospective clients require.
- Know the right pricing model for your industry. For example, hourly or daily rates? Or fixed price?

For government:

- Know the details of the Indigenous procurement policy for federal, state / territory governments.
- Read the Federal Government's Guide to Selling
- Register with government tender websites.
- Ensure you understand and comply with contract conditions (for the relevant government agency).
- Understand your security clearance requirements.

2

Finding (& creating) opportunities

Ensuring you get access to the right opportunities for your business.

"Patience is your friend. See finding and creating opportunities as an exercise in building relationships with the right people at the right time. Eventually opportunities will come from these relationships."



Important things to do

- Develop a specific pitch (i.e. unsolicited proposal) to potential or existing clients.
- Promote your business through tradeshows.
- Build your / your business identity as a subject-matter expert in particular area. Share and promote your knowledge and expertise via blogs and posts on LinkedIn, your business website and social media channels.
- Celebrate your wins on social media, especially LinkedIn.
- Register for, and frequently search, tender websites.
- Be visible on Indigenous business directories such as Supply Nation's Indigenous Business Register.
- Be visible in industry directories such as the ICN.
- Meet with procurement managers and business owners within buyer organisations.
- Work with other suppliers. Be a sub-contractor to larger Indigenous suppliers. Form a consortium or a strategic partnership.
- Network with your ideal customers.
- Use Austender (and other government tender sites) to research upcoming procurements, competitors and the types of goods and services your current and prospective clients are buying.
- Build and maintain relationships with clients and prospective clients.
- Add your Indigenous Business Directory link to your business card.
- Build and maintain relationships with clients and prospective clients.

Things to remember

For particular industries:

- For the corporate sector: Private and publicly-listed companies generally invite suppliers to tender, rather than listing on a tender website for the open market to respond. Therefore, building relationships with the right people (the business owners) before the procurement starts is important.
- Know the right pricing model for your industry. For example, hourly or daily rates? Or fixed price?

For government:

- Open tender opportunities are advertised on government tender websites.
- Not all government opportunities are offered by way of open tender. Some opportunities are offered as limited tender this means they are not advertised on the tender website for that government. The best way to get access to these opportunities is for your business to be pre-qualified, be a member of the relevant panel and to have relationships with the business owner.
- Think about getting on panels / standing offer arrangements.
- Be front and centre of the government client's mind.
- If long term contract are already in place look to join supply chain of existing contracts. Sub contracting opportunities – go to head contractor.

3

Preparing your bid

Ensuring you prepare a competitive and compliant proposal.

"Not following the specification, complying with the mandatory criteria or addressing the evaluation criteria are the most common reasons businesses are unsuccessful in their bids."



Important things to do

- Take the opportunity to ask questions to clarify what the client wants.
- Attend any briefing sessions.
- Read any addenda to the ATM.
- Review the draft contract terms and propose alternative terms if required.
- Ensure your proposal complies with any mandatory requirements or tender requirements.
- Communicate clearly in your proposal that you understand what the client requires.
- Talk about how you do things differently and how this can benefit the client.
- Respond directly to the evaluation criteria and the response template / form.
- Submit your proposal:
 - » by the deadline
 - » in the format required e.g. using the response template if provided.
 - » in the method required e.g. by email, online or hardcopy.
- If your bid was unsuccessful, request a de-brief to get feedback on your bid and how to improve for the future.
- Build and maintain relationships with clients and prospective clients.

Things to remember

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4

Agreeing the contract

Setting up your business for execution and commercial success.

"Know what you will and won't agree to in a contract. As a buyer, I prefer to negotiate terms rather than a company signing up to terms that they can't comply with."



Important things to do

- Obtain legal advice to review the contract terms.
- Negotiate contract terms. Remember, negotiating contract terms is ok.
- Understand the contract terms regarding intellectual property ownership.
- Understand the following contract items against your accepted proposal:
 - » Scope of work.
 - » Deliverables.
 - » Contract price (both GST inclusive and exclusive amounts).
 - » Payment schedule.
 - » Supplier details – ABN, contact person and details, postal address.
 - » Payment terms.
 - » How performance will be measured.
- Be aware of your responsibilities under the contract including:
 - » What you must deliver by when.
 - » When you can raise an invoice.
 - » Where to send an invoice and what information the invoice must contain.
 - » Confidentiality regarding the project.
 - » Use of the client's logo.
 - » How to terminate the contract
 - » Who can authorize contract changes and whether they need to be done in writing.
 - » Build and maintain relationships with clients and prospective clients.

Things to remember

For particular industries:

- Where you need to scale-up your business to deliver or if you need a guarantee in place to deliver, ensure you have the balance sheet before signing the contract.

For government:

- Most government agencies will provide the draft contract with the tender documents. This enables tenderers to submit changes to contract terms as part of their proposal. So it's best to address any contract term issues at the proposal stage and before your business has been awarded the contract.
- Some contract terms, like intellectual property ownership, liabilities and warranties maybe harder to negotiate with government clients.
- Seek legal advice before agreeing to contract terms, if necessary.

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Delivering the contract

Ensuring your business successfully fulfils the contract.

"As a buyer, I want to know if there's a potential problem. Let's discuss any emerging or potential challenges and risks openly and honestly. Before it turns into a problem."



Important things to do

- Establish a clear contract management protocol from the beginning. This includes:
 - » Performance KPIs.
 - » Regular meetings.
 - » Providing progress updates.
 - » Identifying and managing risks.
 - » Protocols for managing disputes.
 - » Agreeing all variations will be in writing.
- Focus on delivering on quality, time, in scope and on budget.
- Follow the rule of no changes to the scope, budget or timing without agreement by you and your client's authorised representative. All variations should be in writing.
- Mutually agree upfront the frequency and nature of contact throughout the relationship. Know who the key client contacts are and keep these details up-to-date.
- Respond to the client promptly.
- Seek feedback from the client on how you're delivering. What is working, what is not working. Take feedback on-board.
- To receive payments:
 - » Confirm process for submitting invoices.
 - » Confirm an invoice can be raised.
 - » Only invoice for the amount agreed in the contract.
 - » Provide a GST compliant invoice.
 - » Ensure payment terms match what was agreed in the contract.
- Build and maintain relationships with clients and prospective clients.

Things to remember

For particular industries:

- Financial services: maintenance of confidentiality and client data security is critical.
- Building and construction: safety and managing sub-contractors is critical.

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Beyond the contract

Successfully closing out a contract and setting up follow-on contracts / work.

"Remember, your business is as good as its last contract / project. If you have successfully fulfilled a current contract, this quality work will be taken into account when the client awards future contracts."



Important things to do

- Throughout the life of the contract maintain a trusted relationship with the client.
- Identify further opportunities to expand the contract or start new contracts well before the current contract ends.
- Seek feedback from the client at the end of the contract. Capture lessons learnt.
- Return any assets / materials / access passes provided by the client.
- Capture client testimonials.
- Record a description of the project / work undertaken including the client, timing, description and value in a register of projects. You can draw on this to show your business's track record and experience.
- Ensure intellectual property is managed appropriately.
- Note any ongoing liabilities, warranties, insurances that are required to extend beyond the end of the contract.
- Build and maintain relationships with clients and prospective clients.

Things to remember

For government:

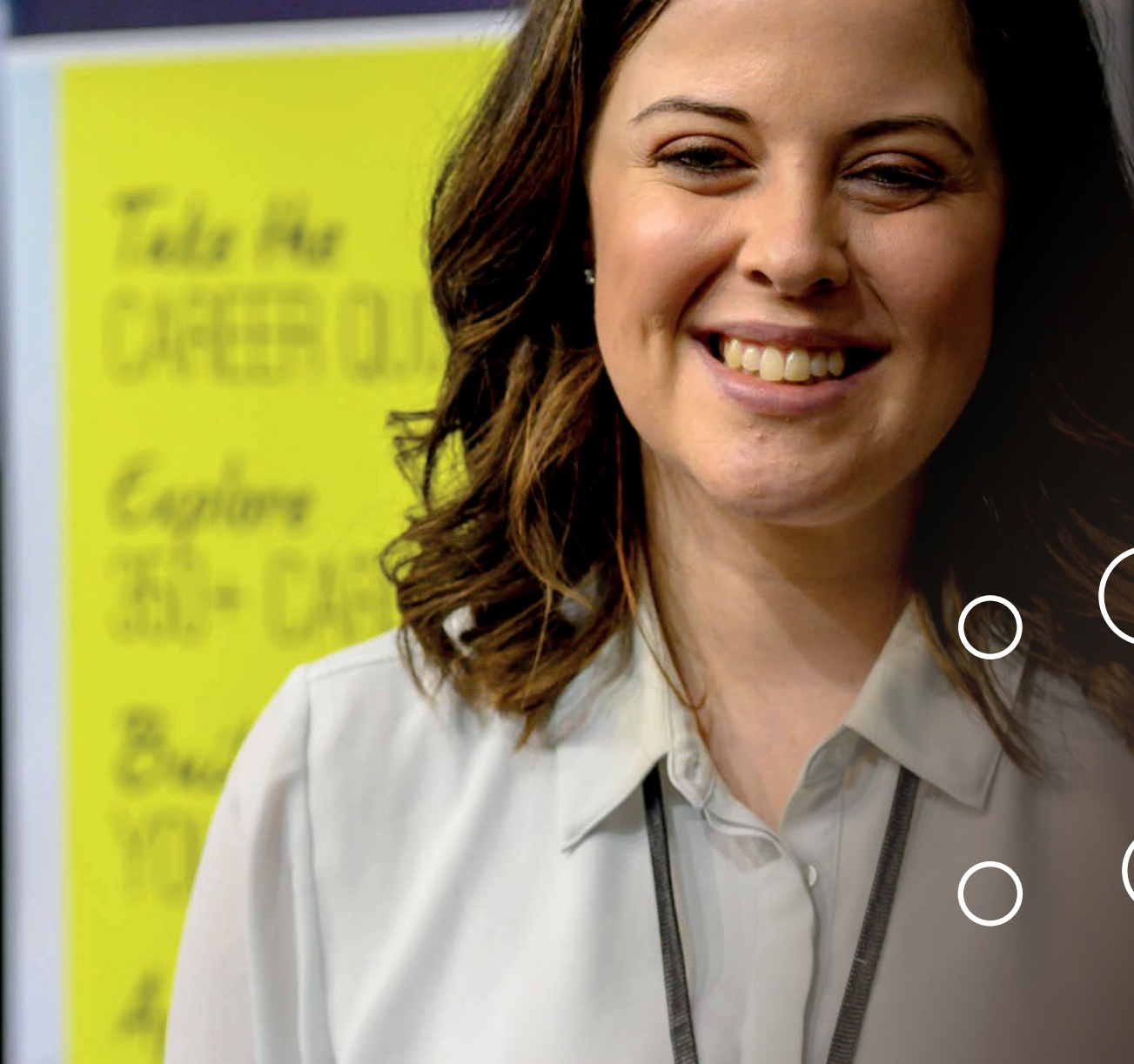
- Return all government supplied materials.
- Maintain confidentiality as required.

Checklist

Complete this checklist every six months to ensure your business is always ready to contract.

- Supply Nation certification / registration for my business is current.
- My business website is live and up-to-date.
- The Indigenous Business Directory listing for my business is current and accurate.
- Buyers know how to contact me. My business contact details are accessible and correct.
- I am registered on the government tender websites and have subscribed to tender alerts.
- My team and I know my business's unique selling / value proposition.
- My business has meetings planned with business owners within companies / organisations we want to do business with.
- My business knows what trends and issues are affecting our current and prospective clients.
- My business's subscriptions are current e.g. listing on Supply Nation's Indigenous Business Direct.
- My capability statement is current.
- My business is financially healthy:
 - » It is solvent – the business can pay its debts when they fall due
 - » Tax and super payments are up-to-date
 - » I know the balance of business bank account
 - » The business has no bad / doubtful debts
 - » The business has very few aged debtors
 - » The business has at least two months working capital
 - » Business and personal expenses are kept separate.
- My business keeps all records as required by legislation.
- I know why a client would choose to do business with me / my company.
- I know when a desired client is under contract, who the supplier is and when the contract is up for renewal.





Key terms

Addendum	An additional information about tender or any change or clarification to the tender document. This is provided to all respondents (potential suppliers) who have registered with the buyer during the time between issuing the tender and the closing date.	Certification (Supply Nation)	51% or more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander owned, managed and controlled.
Approach to Market	Any notice inviting potential suppliers to participate in a procurement which may include a request for tender, request for quote, request for expression of interest, request for information or request for proposal.	Commonwealth Procurement Rules	The basic rule set for all Commonwealth procurements and govern the way in which Australian Government entities undertake their own processes.
Authorised person	See Business Owner	Compliance	Requires that all material conditions of the invitation to tender must be complied with.
Best and final offer	The detailed and fully-priced offer submitted by a respondent for a contract, which represents their lowest price.	Confidential information	All trade secrets, know-how, business and financial information, and other proprietary information or data disclosed to one party by the other, or incorporated in material other and marked or indicated to be confidential.
Bid	An offer in response to an Invitation to Bid or an offer in response to an electronic auction.	Consortium	A group made up of two or more individuals, companies, or governments that work together to achieving a common objective.
Business owner	The person in a company who is responsible for authorising the purchase of certain goods and / or services.	Contract manager	Contracts managers can draft, evaluate and execute any type of contract that is negotiated between the business and client, such as short term, formal or annual contracts. They often work with the legal and/or finance department to monitor adherence and potential risks to the business or client.
Buyer	The organisation purchasing goods and / or services from an Indigenous supplier.	De-briefing	The act of informing suppliers, contractors or service providers that were not selected during a particular procurement process, of the reasons why they were not selected. Debriefing can be done orally or in writing. It may be mandatory or at the request of the bidder.
Category	Groupings of similar goods or services with common supply and demand drivers and suppliers.		

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Category	Groupings of similar goods or services with common supply and demand drivers and suppliers.		

Key terms

Evaluation criteria	Standards or system to analyse or to rank importance. These are used to assess offers and compare alternatives put forward by respondents to a request. The evaluation criteria is an important part of a response to tender as the buyer will make a shortlist based on this.	Open tender	Involves publishing an open approach to market and inviting submissions. This includes multi-stage procurements, provided the first stage is an open approach to market.
Indigenous Business Direct	Supply Nation's one-stop-shop for anyone looking to buy from an Indigenous business and is mandated by the Federal Government as the first reference point for government buyers when fulfilling their targets under the new Indigenous Procurement Policy. Indigenous Business Direct is equally valuable as a resource for any procurement professional or buyer.	Panel	See Standing offer
Joint venture	From 1 January 2019, incorporated Indigenous joint ventures must register with Supply Nation and be at least 50% Indigenous owned and demonstrate 50% Indigenous involvement in the management and control of the joint venture. In addition to the new requirements, the Joint Venture must also have in place (1) a strategy to build the capability and skills of the Indigenous business partner and; (2) an Indigenous workforce strategy.	Potential Tenderer	An entity or person who may respond to an approach to market.
Limited tender	Involves a relevant entity approaching one or more potential suppliers to make submissions, when the process does not meet the rules for open tender.	Pre-qualification schemes	Such schemes help agencies find suppliers prequalified to work with government.
		Probity	Evidence of ethical behaviour, and can be defined as complete and confirmed integrity, uprightness and honesty in a particular process.
		Procurement	The acquisition through purchase or lease of real property, goods or other products (including intellectual property), works or services.
		Progress claim	Are used to assess and maintain the contractor's claims for work which has been completed to date.
		Registration (Supply Nation)	Businesses that 50% or more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander ownership (caters for equal partnerships with non-Indigenous owners).
		Request for Expression of Interest	An advertisement to identify suppliers that wish to participate in a forthcoming solicitation.

Key acronyms

ABN	Australian Business Number	ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
APP	Aboriginal Procurement Policy	ITR	Invitation to Register
ATM	Approach to Market	QMS	Quality Management System
BCA	Business Council of Australia	USP	Unique Selling Proposition
CCP	Contract Change Proposals	UVP	Unique Value Proposition
CN	Contract Notice	RFI	Request for Information
CPR	Commonwealth Procurement Rules	RFP	Request for Proposal
COT/C	Conditions of Tender / Contract	RFQ	Request for Quote
EOI	Expression of Interest	RFT	Request for Tender
GFM	Government Furnished Materials	SON	Standing Offer Notice
GST	Goods and Services Tax	SOW	Statement of Work
IBR	Indigenous Business Direct		
ICN	Industry Capability Network		
IPP	Intellectual Property		
IPP	Indigenous Procurement Policy		

Other helpful information

Find case studies, examples and links to business support services all via the "Winning" guide on Supply Nation's website.

www.supplynation.org.au
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