



EFFECTIVE PROPOSAL WRITING

Booklet 5

EFFECTIVE PROPOSAL WRITING TIPS & TECHNIQUES

INSTRUCTION BOOKLET

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FORWARD

When you don't already have the experience or haven't written a business proposal in a long time, writing proposals can be an unnerving task. As business professionals and evaluators of proposals with over 60 years of combined experience, we are pleased to share our insights to help you avoid mistakes and effectively write proposals.

We have seen both strong and weak proposals and those that fall in-between. Beyond the supplier's resources, capabilities and offerings, often what makes proposals stand out are the approach taken, a constructive understanding of the purpose of the proposal, a good understanding of the prospective client, its business, and its needs *from the perspective of the client*, as well as demonstrating respect for the procurement process. This information can only be obtained through research. Reading this booklet is a good start to that research. The reality is that suppliers who want a contract have to work for it. While preparing and writing proposals are work, your research will make them less of a chore. Research has two purposes: (1) it will help you to make an informed decision, before investing too much time in preparing and submitting a proposal, if a relationship with the prospective client is the right choice for the long-term success of your business and (2) provide information for developing an effective proposal.

This instructional booklet is unique in that it is written from both the client and the supplier perspectives. Tips and techniques are provided throughout to help you develop an effective approach to writing proposals. The booklet has four parts. Part I includes information that will help you understand procurement and prepare for developing a proposal. This part will address the importance of the approach you take in writing your proposal. You'll be assisted in understanding the procurement process and the different perspectives of the parties involved. For solicited proposals, you will better understand what mandatory requirements are, why they exist, how to identify them within the procurement document, and how to manage them to ensure none are overlooked. You'll also learn to strategize your content in consideration of evaluation criteria and points. At the end of each section you will find a brief summary of tips provided within that section. Part II focuses on technical elements of proposal writing including the types of information to include as well as tips on writing, organizing, and finishing a professional proposal. Parts III and IV respectively are supplementary and provide information on doing business with the mining sector and government. If you are interested in learning how to do business with other business sectors please contact the Greenstone Economic Development Corporation (GEDC).

Our compliments to you for recognizing research, time, and effort are essential in writing effective proposals. The information in this booklet together with your own research should provide a good start and increased confidence in your ability, for effectively writing award winning proposals.

PART I - PREPARATION

INTRODUCTION

You are reading this booklet because you are an entrepreneur who is thinking about using proposals to offer your products, services or works to other organizations and you recognize that effectively writing a proposal is essential for your offer to be considered.

Primarily this booklet is a robust introduction to proposal writing within the context of solicited procurement which occurs when a competitive bidding process is used to request suppliers to submit proposals for providing products, services or works needed by an organization. However, information from this booklet can also be applied when developing and submitting non-solicited proposals.

From the broadest perspective there are three types of purchasing sectors:

- Private For profit businesses, social enterprises
- Public Government: municipal, provincial, federal
- Non-Profit Non-profit organizations (NPOs)

Similarities exist between public and private procurement. In Canada, public procurement is stricter in application of policies, procedures and regulations than in the private sector where application is more subjective and diverse. After all, there are specific laws that hold governments accountable for management of public funds. As well, NPOs that receive government funding to deliver products or services to the public are required to comply with procurement policies or instructions of their funder. Therefore, to help develop your application of best practices when writing proposals for potential private, public, or non-profit clients, the guidance provided in this booklet is from a **general** perspective but with the higher standards of complying with mandatory requirements observed by governments.

Initially writing a proposal may feel overwhelming, however if you consistently practice the tips and techniques in this booklet you will be off to a very good start. Writing proposals becomes easier and better with experience. In the meantime take some pressure off yourself by recognizing there is no such thing as a perfect proposal. Despite the use of criteria for evaluating proposals evaluators subjectively use their judgment when applying those criteria. However, adopting the best practices included throughout this booklet is a good strategy to write compelling proposals and avoid making mistakes that could mean the difference between your proposal being considered and being disqualified for failing to meet mandatory requirements.

There are numerous resources on proposal writing on the internet. However, use caution to verify the accuracy of the information and its relevancy to your particular situation. Considering hiring a business consultant to assist you develop your proposal? We encourage you to ensure the consultant has the qualifications to meet your needs. Employing an under-qualified person may cost you more in the long run. Lastly and importantly, do not forget the specialized non-profit organizations which exist to support you with your business, including the Greenstone Economic Development Corporation (GEDC).

DEFINITIONS

Buyer	a staff member of an organization or service provider hired by the organization responsible for coordinating and carrying out the procurement process
Expression of Interest (EOI)	a non-binding invitation of an organization to potential suppliers to provide written information about their company, their products, services or works, and market price information
Request for Information (RFI)	a non-binding invitation of an organization to potential suppliers to provide written information about something specific
Request for Proposal (RFP)	a legally binding (both parties) document and associated process in which an organization creates a document to solicit, usually through a bidding process, written proposals from potential suppliers concerning goods, services, or works needed by the organization
Proponent	Individual or business who submits a document expressing interest, providing information or setting out their proposal
Supplier	An individual or business engaged or contracted by another organization to provide products, services, or works in exchange for payment

The terms client(s) or organization(s) is used within this booklet to describe prospective clients. The terms solution(s) or deliverable(s) is used to reflect the products, services or works being offered to fulfill the needs and/or solve a problem being experienced by the client.

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- Adopt best practices provided in this booklet
- Apply caution when adopting information from resources on the internet
- When needing assistance seek qualified professionals
- Utilize free support and resources such as those provided by the GEDC

APPROACH

What would you say if asked what is your goal in submitting your proposal? Your response might be *to sell my products/services* or *for my business to make a profit*. From a supplier perspective these are reasonable outcomes to seek as they are means to business survival. However a client may perceive your intention as one-sided. To write an effective proposal you are encouraged to think beyond the current opportunity and set the stage for longer-term opportunities. Imagine how the tone and the words you chose for your proposal might change if you adopt the following goal:

To develop a mutually beneficial, trusting relationship with prospective clients

By adopting this goal, your mindset automatically changes from being one-sided and narrowly focused, (i.e., *sell my products/services, for my business to profit*), to inclusive and mutually beneficial focused because both your and the client's needs are considered. If your ultimate goal is to achieve long-term, sustainable success in your business then developing trusting relationships with clients is essential and looking beyond the current transactional opportunity is strategic. Mutually beneficial and trusting relationships can lead to more business in the future, both directly and through client referrals. When mutually beneficial relationships are not developed, the likelihood of future business is greatly reduced as the client may seek other suppliers. The approach taken when writing your proposal can set you apart from your competitors. Put yourself in the potential client's shoes. If you were the client consider the following:

What are the challenges/opportunities being experienced? In understanding the challenges/opportunities you should also consider the client's underlying needs to address them. Understanding client's needs is essential for gaining insight into what solutions to offer and the best way to provide them.

What are the client's potential risks? Understanding the client's risks helps to identify needs the client may or may not be aware of. This is an opportunity to set you apart from less attentive competitors by including value-added offerings that help reduce the client's risks.

What would you want from your suppliers? Considering client expectations helps to develop and plan the solutions offered in your proposal and the standards to which you promise to deliver. With caution, it is better to under promise and over deliver. Ensure planned activities for over-delivering will be beneficial and do not hinder the client's operations (e.g., providing early delivery when the client is not ready for delivery). As well, the under-promise contained in your offer needs to be equal to or better than what your competitors will offer. Anticipating what your competitors may offer in their proposals requires research of their current practices and extent of their resources, capability, and capacity to deliver on the requirements of the proposal. The answers to these questions will help you to plan the solutions you propose to the client. When writing your proposal, always keep the client's needs at the forefront.

Before getting into more detail about how to write a proposal, it is a good idea to put you in the potential client's shoes to better understand the procurement process from their perspective.

- | | |
|----------|--|
| T | • Move beyond 'me' to a 'we' approach, strive for win-win business outcomes |
| I | • Put yourself in the client's shoes to better understand their business, needs, and risks |
| P | • Understand who your competitors are and consider what they are likely to offer |
| S | • With caution, consider the tactic of under-promising and over-delivering |

THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS

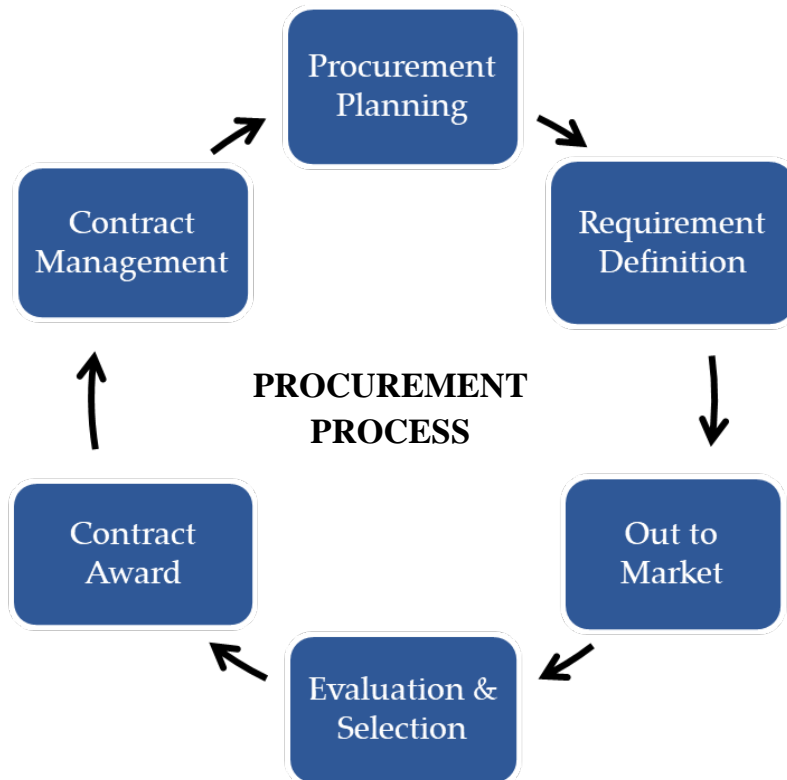
What is Procurement?

Procurement is the process of locating, contracting, and acquiring products, services, or works needed by an organization from an external source.

Many people mistakenly interchange the terms procurement and purchasing. Procurement is a complex process of which purchasing is just one component.

The needs of clients are not always simple. Within organizations the work and projects carried out by different departments can be interdependent. Departments may collaborate to minimize overall costs and risks by purchasing products and services that work for the entire organization (e.g., computer equipment and maintenance agreements, software, security services, building maintenance, cleaning, etc.).

The following image illustrates the critical stages within the procurement process. An error made in one of the stages can negatively impact the work and outcomes of the following stages. Consequently clients need to take great care in making sure the work carried out in each stage is done as accurately as possible.



Stages in Procurement Process

Procurement planning is the stage where the client's needs are explored usually by several of its staff including the Buyer. Identifying needs can be a difficult process especially if the client does not fully understand the problem they are trying to solve, the opportunity they are trying to take advantage of and/or their own underlying needs. Accordingly, this stage may involve seeking additional information from the market through the client issuing an EOI or RFI. Responding to an EOI or RFI is an excellent opportunity for suppliers to start building business relationships by engaging the client through expressing interest, seeking clarification, and supplying information requested.

Requirement Development for the client is the critical stage where all information gathered during the planning stage is used to determine and write out the requirements for the solution it seeks to purchase. These requirements will be specified in the client's procurement document. If

the requirements are not accurately developed, both frustration and costs will increase. If the problem is discovered after the contract is awarded, the client's expectations may increase for suppliers to make in-kind (free) contributions, particularly in the case of complex projects. As mentioned earlier, clients do not always understand their own needs and this can result in the need for amendments to procurement documents or to changes in the provisions of a contract if discovered after the contract has been awarded. This is another reason why considering the client risks are helpful for proponents when planning their proposals. As well, understanding client risks help suppliers develop plans to prevent the undoing of their efforts and success achieved in developing mutually beneficial and trusting relationships. Imagine how appreciative a client experiencing an unexpected problem would be if their supplier provides a good solution to make the problem manageable or disappear, particularly if the solution can be provided at no or minimal additional cost.

Out to market occurs when the client releases the procurement document. Clients may post procurement documents (e.g., EOI, RFI, RFP, and Tenders¹) on their website, in newspapers, with supplier industry associations, by invitation or through an online procurement portal (e.g., Merx) as in the case of many government entities. In some cases the client may even take the extra step of inviting specific businesses they are aware of or are familiar with to respond to their released procurement document. This is another good reason why it is beneficial to develop a good business relationship with clients. The length of time which a procurement document is out to market can vary. Great care must be made to ensure proposals are submitted before the submission deadline and that any communications made with the client about the request document only occur in the ways stated within the procurement document. Attempting to engage clients in ways other than permitted (i.e., back door selling) may result in disqualification.

Evaluation and selection takes place after the deadline for submissions of proposals to an RFP has passed. The first activity in this stage occurs when the Buyer opens and examines each of the proposals received to determine if all the mandatory requirements are met. Mandatory requirements are covered in the next section. If all mandatory requirements are not met, the proponent's proposal may be disqualified, which means that it may not be reviewed by evaluators. Proponents are advised of proposal disqualifications and the reason(s).

Thereafter only qualified proposals are reviewed and considered. Sometimes proponents will be brought in for a meeting or to make a presentation. Sometimes evaluators visit suppliers to look at their operations. There are generally two methods of evaluation, the total sum average method and evaluation by consensus.

¹ Tenders are a different form of procurement document which require a different response than the type of proposal covered in this booklet.

Total Sum Average

In the total sum average method each qualified proposal is evaluated by an individual or individually by members of an evaluation committee selected by the client (e.g., employees or others with specific knowledge, skills or experience related to the RFP project). The strengths and weaknesses of each proposal are evaluated. Evaluations consist of individual scores, usually weighted according to importance, for each evaluation criteria. Individual scores are totalled and totals are added across panel members. The proponent(s) with the highest total average scores are further considered for the contract.

Evaluation by Consensus

In this method the evaluators meet to review the contents of proposals in relation to each evaluation criteria. They agree to the score assigned to each evaluation criteria for each proposal. The proponents with the highest total scores are further considered for the contract.

As a student writing an exam did you focus more of your effort on questions with greater marks? Similarly when the evaluation criteria with the points system are revealed in the RFP, it is wise for proponents to pay particular attention to criteria with the greatest opportunity for earning points. The higher the points allocated the greater the importance of the criteria to the client's project. Caution should be applied however to not overlook sufficiently addressing each of the criteria with lower available points as these points add up. ***When it comes time to awarding contracts all points matter!***

Contract award may not take place right away. Financial and reference checks may be carried out and the proponent will have to provide evidence of mandatory requirements (e.g., insurance, WSIB coverage, etc.). The client may want to negotiate if the budget or pricing proposed for the solution exceeds the client's budget. Sometimes is more than one successful proponent if the size of the scope of work is beyond the capability and capacity of one proponent or the client wants to divide the work into smaller contracts to reduce its risks. If the supplier is relatively new or there has been a problem experienced with the supplier in the past, the client may want to start the proponent off with a small contract or make trial procurements to see how the proponent and its solution perform. Once the contract is awarded the purchasing process is engaged for delivery and invoicing of the solution. If you are unsuccessful ask the Buyer for a debriefing session so that you can learn about the strengths and weaknesses of your proposal as determined by the evaluation team.

Contract management occurs throughout the term of the contract. The client monitors the purchasing process and relationship with the supplier to ensure compliance with the contract. The visibility of contract management activities amongst organizations vary. For example,

communications between the parties may be scheduled or only when a problem arises. Suppliers should provide clients with as much notice as possible if a problem arises that will disrupt the flow of products or services. The client will want details including to be advised when the problem will be resolved. Prior to the date the contract terminates the client will re-initiate the procurement process incorporating lessons learned throughout the duration of the contract. It is very rare for contracts to continue for an indeterminate amount of time.

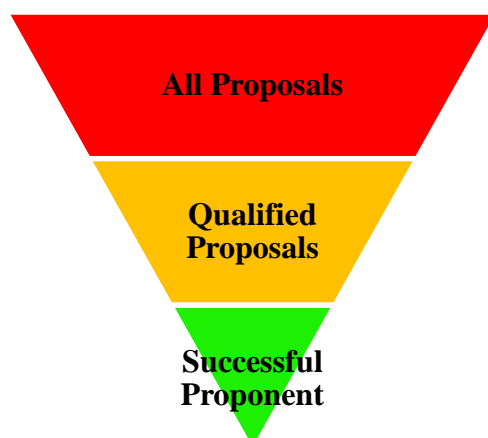
Suppliers awarded contracts have contract management responsibilities as well which include ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the quality of deliverables and compliance with other commitments made including but not limited to delivery schedules. Suppliers are encouraged to make the most of business relationships by creating opportunities to check in and assess the client's level of satisfaction as well as to learn if there are other challenges being experienced that the supplier could assist with. Getting to know the client and building trust throughout the term of the contract is beneficial. These activities are associated with client relationship management which is essential to developing and maintaining long-term business relationships.

Difference in Buyer/Supplier Perspectives

There are fundamental differences in how the Buyer and the Supplier perceive the outcome of the procurement process.

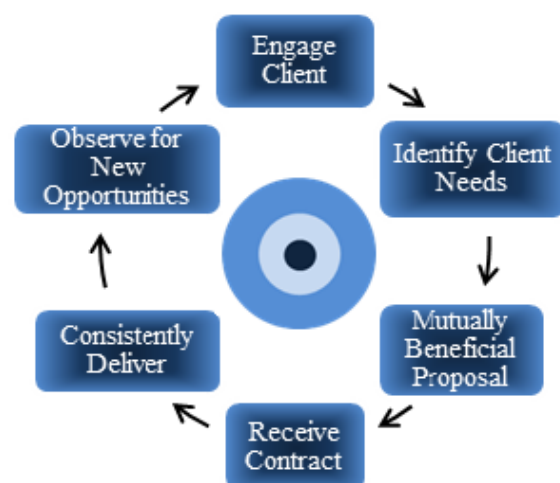
Buyer Perspective

Buyer objective is to funnel proposals through a process to arrive at the successful one(s)



Supplier Perspective

Supplier objective is to grow their business, like in an expanding wheel, through the *ongoing* process of building mutually beneficial business relationships



Develop your proposal by looking at the client's problem or opportunity from multiple perspectives (e.g., client, staff, customer, community, supplier, etc.). You will engage the client's interest by demonstrating you have invested time and resources to get to know them and their needs. Although clients are interested in keeping their suppliers happy, particularly when the availability of products or services is scarce, the primary focus of clients is to achieve the greatest value, which is not necessarily associated with the lowest price. For example, added-value can be achieved through helping the client to mitigate as much of the risks to their business as possible associated with the solution you are offering. Make the process of working with you as easy as possible. Ensure contingency plans are developed in advance to reduce the amount of time needed to resolve problems that are at high risk of happening. Time is money and for each party is one of their greatest resources. Contingency planning is an opportunity to create shared value and mutually beneficial solutions.

Unsolicited Proposals

If you are interested in providing products or services to an organization that has not issued a RFP do not wait as that day may not come anytime soon. Research the client website and the internet for information to gather insight into their mission, values, principles, services, processes, and circumstances. Arrange to meet with the organization's Procurement or Supply Manager, Buyer or other manager within your area of interest. Your objective is to learn about the organization's business, its challenges, opportunities and underlying needs. You need this information to discover how your business could fulfill their needs or bring additional products or services to help the client grow their business.

Go ahead, use the information in this booklet and your research to develop and submit an unsolicited proposal to the client for consideration. Even if your proposal is not accepted, you are marketing your business. Keep in touch with the client and focus on building positive relationships with key individuals within the company. When the time comes that the client is ready to procure the types of products or services that you offer they will be aware of your company. Taking these steps can result in advantage over competitors who do not go the distance to get to know clients or understand their actual needs, and those who wait on the sidelines for prospective clients to issue procurement documents. In proceeding with developing relationships and submitting unsolicited proposals, not only are you getting in the game you are influencing how the game is played and potentially future business!

A more effective method for submitting an unsolicited proposal is within an in-person meeting. Try to arrange a meeting with the supply manager to talk about the client's needs, market your solution, and submit your proposal. If an in-person meeting is physically not feasible, try to arrange a video conference. If the supply manager is not accessible, arrange a meeting with the buyer. If both the supply manager and the buyer are not accessible, try arranging the first meeting

with the manager of the area of interest or an executive of the company. Some companies and organizations do not have designated supply managers or buyers.

Unless otherwise arranged during the submission meeting, follow up over the phone in two to three weeks and then every three to four weeks thereafter. If you must submit your proposal in writing or by delivery, follow up over the phone with the client in one week to confirm that it was received by an appropriate person (find out the person's name if not known). Arrange to meet/video conference with that person to speak about the company's needs and answer any questions about your proposal. Thereafter, make follow-up calls every three to four weeks to check in if there has been a change in circumstances or client needs.

If your follow-up activities have not resulted in any business opportunities after 12 engagements (in-person or telephone conversations) consider investing your time on other organizations. After all you want clients who are interested in what you have to offer and in making mutually beneficial business relationships.

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- Be curious, research the client's website, internet, news articles and engage key people to understand the client's business, needs, risks and any upcoming opportunities
- Understand the procurement process the client uses
- Respond to EOIs and RFIs of clients who can help your business be sustainable
- When a RFP is out to market only communicate as permitted in document
- Always meet the deadlines stated in procurement documents
- Strategize how you will manage your relationship with the client
- Strategize how you will manage risks (both yours and the client's) if you are the successful proponent – engage in contingency planning
- RFPs are a wealth of information! Pay attention to the amount of points allocated to each evaluation criteria but also remember that all points matter
- Develop your proposal from multiple perspectives and, sell your products and services by focusing on how your company and its offerings best meet the client's needs and create shared value
- If you have value to offer a client, engage them before they issue an RFP
- Debriefs are a wealth of information! Obtain and learn from constructive feedback.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

What are Mandatory Requirements?

Mandatory requirements are all the conditions set out by the client that must be followed when responding to an RFP.

Procurement is a costly process for the client. From the information provided thus far in this booklet you have come to appreciate that much of the client's time, staff and other resources is invested in the procurement process prior to and after the call to market. Consequently, the client will take great efforts to find the best suppliers to reduce their risks and increase return on their investments. Just like a company looking to hire the best candidate, the client is seeking out the best proponent for its project and will use mandatory requirements as a *minimum* threshold.

There are two types of mandatory requirements, those which are administrative in nature and those which are written specifically for the RFP. Administrative mandatory requirements arise from procurement policies and law. They exist to achieve fairness, transparency, and legal protection by reducing the risk of lawsuits. Administrative requirements are found in all RFPs. Mandatory requirements written specifically for the RFP exist to let proponents know the minimum requirements they must meet relative to the solutions the client seeks to purchase, as well as other related rules, processes, or conditions that must be met.

As mentioned earlier, a compliance review of mandatory requirements by the Buyer is the first step within the evaluation and selection stage of the procurement process. Consider this compliance review as the gate through which all proposals must pass and the Buyer as the gatekeeper protecting the integrity of the RFP process. Proposals that do not meet *all* mandatory requirements may be blocked by the Buyer. Qualified proposals that meet mandatory requirements proceed to evaluation. Areas for mandatory requirements include:

- **Integrity of the Process and Client Legal Requirements**

The integrity of the client's request process is maintained through the setting of conditions which all proponents must follow or face disqualification (e.g., deadline for questions, contact only through designated Buyer, submission deadline, etc.). In the case of the public sector and use of public funds, governments must ensure they are meeting requirements of the laws that govern their procurement activities.

- **Signature of Authorized Representative**

Recall that a RFP is legally binding upon the client and proponent. This means that the client is bound to make a purchase in accordance with the provisions set out in the RFP and, in submitting a proposal the proponent is bound to provide the deliverables being offered. For the proposal to constitute an offer it must be signed by a legally authorized representative of the proponent, otherwise it is not considered bona fide (genuine). Proposals that are not signed are disqualified because they do not represent a bona fide offer that would withstand legal challenge. Before submitting your proposal, always double check to make sure that your proposal is signed by an authorized signing representative. Proposals cannot be amended or signed after the submission deadline has passed.

- **Verification of Capabilities, Capacity and Financial Performance**

Recall the objective of the Buyer perspective is to funnel proposals through the procurement process. To facilitate this objective the RFP sets out the minimum acceptable supplier resources, capabilities, capacity, financial performance or experience the client is willing to risk working on its project. Often a mandatory requirement relates to experience and/or completion of projects of similar size (e.g., department wide), nature (e.g., technology), or a certain value (e.g., \$2 million), or with certain clients (e.g., hospitals) within a certain period (e.g., within last five years). If the proponent does not meet the client's mandatory requirements it may be disqualified. If your company does not meet all mandatory requirements consider partnering with other individuals or businesses that have the requirements to address all shortfalls and submit a joint proposal.

- **Verification of Supplier Compliance with Legal Requirements**

Mandatory requirements may include declaring and verifying compliance with the laws and regulations which govern the proponent's work and are relevant to their provision of the scope of work described in the RFP, (e.g., membership with professional association is in good standing, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board coverage, compliance with human rights legislation, health codes, etc.). Prior to submitting a proposal ensure that your business is in compliance with all governing laws and be prepared to provide evidence of compliance with the mandatory requirements set out in the RFP when asked for it.

- **Critical Dates**

Mandatory requirements may include specific delivery or completion dates that are critical to the success of the client's project. Proponents submitting proposals must be certain that they have the resources, capacity and capabilities to meet those deadlines. Sometimes the RFP will require the proponent to include a contingency plan within their proposal to ensure critical

delivery or performance dates are met. It is best practice to have contingency planning in place for your business to keep operating in the face of challenges that may arise (e.g., staff work shortage/stoppage, weather, technical problems, etc.) and this extends to contingency planning to ensure you meet all commitments to your clients. If you have contingency planning in place to meet your commitments to the client and the RFP does not ask for contingency plans, be sure to include a statement in your proposal identifying that you have contingency plans to ensure that critical delivery or completion dates will be met. This will raise the evaluators' perception of you as a potential supplier because you are demonstrating that you take the client's needs seriously and incorporated them into your business contingency plan.

If a deadline cannot be met in some circumstances, be prepared to inform the client of the period of delay if asked or during a presentation. Clients understand unexpected things can happen and that suppliers cannot anticipate all problems that may arise. However, contingency planning for conceivable risks and being transparent about delays is best so that the client can use this information when making their contingency plans. Ideally, the client and supplier collaborate when finalizing their respective contingency plans.

- **Specifications and Performance**

Mandatory requirements may include product, services, and/or works and performance specifications that are ***non-negotiable***. These requirements are outcomes of the first two stages of the procurement process and reflect requirements the client determined will meet its needs. For example, if the client is requesting a red, diesel fire truck then the truck you are proposing to provide must be red and its fuel source must be diesel. It cannot be a yellow or orange coloured fire truck or be fueled by gasoline or propane. Upon reading the specifications you may conceive a different solution which you perceive better meets the client's needs; how to manage this type of situation will be addressed in Part II of this booklet.

How do I know which Requirements are Mandatory?

Mandatory requirements can be found throughout procurement documents and accordingly documents must be read carefully to locate each and every one of them. Usually some of the mandatory requirements are set out under a heading of the same or similar name (e.g., mandatory requirements, specifications, design, measures, conditions, etc.). However other mandatory requirements will be inserted throughout the document and can be identified by instructive terms, such as: ***must, shall, will, have to, failure to, etc.***

Although recommendations made within an RFP are not mandatory, it is highly recommended proponents follow through with them. For example, if a RFP invites or recommends proponents

participate in a scheduled tour of a facility proponents should take the tour. Additional information may be gained that helps better understand the scope of work of the RFP or challenges in providing solutions. As well, competitors who participate in the tour will gain insights that you will not if you forego the tour. If a client makes a recommendation in its RFP be confident there is purpose to it. Proponents should take every opportunity to gather as much information as possible to understand the client's needs.

Before a proposal is ever fully read and considered for evaluation, it must pass through a compliance review. If mandatory requirements are not met, the effort and resources that you have invested in developing your proposal may be reduced to an expensive learning experience. Next we'll provide you with one of our best practice tools to help you manage mandatory requirements.

Mandatory Requirements Compliance Checklist (MRCC)

Using a checklist is a best practice technique that can help avoid preventable oversights and disqualification. As well, it can be a useful tool that assists manage the development process of your proposal. We recommend you:

- Develop a checklist that you are comfortable using - one which contains as much instructional detail as you feel you need. Our MRCC is located in Appendix 1
- Develop your checklist electronically so that you can use the copy and paste function when writing your proposal
- Employ the following steps when completing your checklist. While this process may appear time consuming (particularly if the RFP is large) and you may be tempted to combine steps, we strongly suggest that you do not.

Tools: Copy of RFP (this will be your working copy that you will make marks on)
Blue or Black Pen and piece of paper
Red Pen
Document flags – e.g., sticky note flags for bookmarking
Three different coloured transparent highlighters

Step 1: Locate the RFP # on the front page of the RFP and write the words 'Questions for RFP #' at the top of a separate piece of paper. Using your working copy of the RFP, first read the RFP in its entirety at your normal reading speed to get a sense of what the document is about. As you read the document, use your blue or black pen to promptly write down any questions that you have about the content of the RFP so these thoughts are not lost. Ensure to write the page number of the content to which your question

relates. Leave four to five lines of space between each question. Number your questions (e.g., Q1, Q2, Q3, etc.) place that corresponding mark in the margin of the RFP beside the content that you have a question about. Bookmark the page.

QUESTIONS FOR RFP #

1. Page #, [write question]

2. Page #, [write question]

3. Page #, [write question]

As you proceed through the remaining steps, if any further questions arise continue to mark your working copy and include them on your questions sheet using the same method.

Step 2: Locate the section in the RFP that says mandatory requirements or similar wording and place a bookmark on the edge of the page beside this section to assist you in locating it within Step 3.

Step 3: Using three different colours of highlighters, ***slowly read through the entire RFP again*** looking for:

- a) **The Client's name, RFP Title and RFP# (from the RFP cover page) and each critical date (from within the RFP).** Look for critical dates such as deadline to submit questions and deadline to submit proposals. Use one highlighter colour for these items only. *(These items are highlighted in pink in Appendix 1)*
- b) **Instructional language (must, shall, will, have to, failure to, etc.) that reflects the mandatory nature of the associated requirement. Remember, mandatory requirements are inserted throughout the RFP not just under the section that says mandatory requirements or similar wording.** As you find a requirement use the second colour highlighter and highlight the entire sentence(s) that details the requirement. *(This section is highlighted in yellow in Appendix 1)*

- c) **Any recommendations to proponents contained in the RFP.** Use the third coloured highlighter to highlight each recommendation. Some RFPs do not have any. (*This section is highlighted in green in Appendix 1*)

Use resources available to help you with your review. For example, if you have an electronic version of the RFP, in addition to a physical review, use your computer to search for key words in the document (e.g., must, shall, will, have to, failure to, deadline, date, require, specifications, etc.). Being mindful of any confidentiality requirements, where permitted have another person read through a copy of the RFP repeating steps a) through c) as a double check to ensure that a mandatory requirement, critical deadline, or recommendation has not been overlooked. Compare their findings with your working copy. If another person is not available or engaging another person would contravene any confidentiality requirements, it is good practice to double and even triple check your review later with fresh eyes given the consequence of overlooking a mandatory requirement.

- Step 4: From the information highlighted in your working copy complete the first three sections of the MRCC in Appendix 1 (i.e., pink, yellow and green sections) drawing information directly from the highlighted text from the RFP. Copy the exact wording of the requirements from the RFP into your checklist.
- Step 5: Review your list of questions about the RFP. Check each one to see if the answer to the question was addressed elsewhere in the RFP. If so, using your red pen write the answer directly below the question. If you have any unanswered questions remaining on your list include them in a formal letter to the client requesting clarification be provided. ***Always ensure to submit any questions to the client before the deadline for questions and only submit them in the manner and to the individual instructed within the RFP.*** Complete the Questions section on your MRCC. Staple a copy of your questions and question submission letter to your MRCC. When questions are submitted to the client by any proponent before the deadline for questions, the Buyer may provide a list of questions with responses to all proponents. If you receive a list of questions and responses update your MRCC with all questions and answers.
- Step 6: Make a backup copy of your MRCC and attachments in case the original is misplaced. Place this backup copy in a location you will remember. As you are developing your proposal, keep the checklist attached to the front page and update it (and the backup copy) as each requirement is addressed. Make sure to incorporate the responses to your question into your proposal as appropriate.

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- Always ensure your proposal is signed before submitting it
- Adhere to all mandatory requirements
- When falling short on mandatory requirements partner with a more experienced and resourced individual or business and submit a joint proposal
- Ensure your compliance with all governing laws and be prepared to provide evidence of compliance with mandatory requirements set out in RFP when asked
- Keep contingency planning current and ensure it includes planning for meeting contractual delivery and completion dates
- Instructive terms such as *must, shall, will, have to, failure to* are used when identifying mandatory requirements
- Follow through on client recommendations
- Consistently use a MRCC when developing proposals
- **Always promptly update** your MRCC as more information is received and activities are completed

PART II – PROPOSAL WRITING

Requests for proposals come in all sizes and layouts. We do not recommend using proposals that are recycled (existing) or canned (boilerplate/templates). Writing your proposal takes time however you will have more control over the tone and content which should be customized to effectively respond to the RFP. Evaluators tend to perceive more favourably proponents who make their evaluation work easier by submitting clear, concise and well organization proposals where information is easily found. Ideally, your proposal should be written in a manner that reflects the RFP in organization of section headings and content. As more and more companies move to electronic proposal submissions, the RFP templates will be dictated by the Buyers.

The sample proposal outline below is provided to illustrate 19 potential sections that can make up the body of a proposal. Proposals should only include sections that are relevant to the situation. This sample outline is a general reference for understanding what information could be included in a proposal and how to arrange sections, particularly when writing unsolicited proposals.

Sample Proposal Outline


1. Cover Page
2. Submission Signatory Page

3. Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Statements
4. Table of Contents
5. Executive Summary
6. Mandatory Requirements
7. Introduction
8. Key personnel
9. Present State
10. Goals and Objectives
11. Approach and Scope of Work
12. Methods
13. Schedule
14. Budget/Price
15. Quality Assurance
16. Supplementary Documentation / Information
17. Company Contact Person and Contact Information
18. Appendices
19. Back Page

1. Cover Page

At minimum a cover page should contain the following information:

- Your business name & logo
- Title
- Client's name
- Subtitle – Project/RFP Name
- Solicitation/RFP number
- Date

	Business Name
Response to Request for Proposal	
Name of Client	
Name of Project/RFP	
RFP/Solicitation #	
Date	

For an unsolicited proposal you can use the title Proposal, name your project for the subtitle and leave out the RFP/Solicitation number. Need help designing your cover page? Search the internet for examples of proposal cover pages to draw ideas for designing your own cover page or research free downloadable cover page templates for one that meets your needs.

2. Submission Signatory Page

As mentioned earlier, *a proposal is not an offer if it is not signed*. It is very upsetting for proponents who receive returned proposals that have been disqualified because of missing signatures. When organizing proposals some proponents place the signatory page after the offer details and just prior to the appendices. However, particularly for solicited proposals we recommend it be placed at the front of your proposal right after the cover page. A signatory form is often provided in the RFP and may look similar to the one located in Appendix 2.

For an unsolicited proposal there will not be a formal submission signatory page. However, you should include a statement that indicates something to the effect of “This offer is valid for a period of [enter #] days”. Often the time period is 90 days but you choose how long you wish to be committed to providing products or services at the price quoted. The statement should be dated and signed by an authorized signing officer of your company.

3. Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Statements

A RFP usually requires the proponent to make specific statements concerning conflict of interest and disclosure of information. These statements may be included within the Proponent Covenant of the RFP submittal form or they may be located elsewhere in the RFP. Examples of these statements are located in Appendix 3.

These statements are typically not included in an unsolicited RFP.

4. Table of Contents

The table of contents (TOC) should refer the reader to the sections and subsections of your proposal. Including a table of contents not only helps to organize your proposal, it also illustrates organizational abilities and provides a professional appearance to your document. Moreover, it facilitates an accurate evaluation of your proposal because it helps evaluators to locate information. When a proposal does not include a TOC it can be difficult for evaluators to find information, particularly if the proposal is large. Information that cannot be located is not evaluated resulting in loss of evaluation points. Evaluators often do not have the time or the desire to repeatedly go over each RFP so do your best to help them locate information by using clear headings and a TOC.

If your proposal has less than five pages you can consider omitting the TOC. Make sure to use headings in your document that clearly represent the type of information located within the section.

If you use Microsoft Word, did you know that it has a built-in table of contents feature? If not, research the Word help function or internet to quickly learn how to use this feature as it can save you time when preparing your proposal. When using Word do not forget to specifically update your TOC regularly because the table does not automatically update as you make changes in your document. The example TOC in Appendix 4 was prepared with Microsoft Word built-in table of contents function.

Regardless of whether you use a built-in or manually prepared TOC, just before submitting your proposal always double-check to make sure all your headings are included in the TOC and the location page number for each heading is correct.

5. Executive Summary

There are differing opinions concerning the purpose of the executive summary and when to prepare it. Some professionals believe the executive summary should provide a brief summary of the major points in the proposal whereas other professionals believe that its purpose is a marketing tool to sell your solution to the client's problem. Some professionals believe that the executive summary should be written last as doing so permits ideas to form and be worked out before writing the summary. Whereas other professionals believe in writing the executive summary first and using it as a guide for developing the proposal and then tweaking the summary as the proposal is written. These opinions can be very confusing for people who are just learning to write proposals. The reality is there is no one size fits all answer to each of those questions.

The attention that is placed on hitting major points in the RFP or selling the solution depends upon who the client is and their approach to business. For example, even though a lot of work goes into preparing a proposal, the reality in the private sector is some (not all) clients may only read the executive summary and then go straight to the pricing/budget page. Therefore, the importance of the executive summary becomes much more critical and needs to be done **really, really** well for clients in the private sector. Clients in the non-profit sector tend to read beyond the executive summary, particularly if they receive government funding for the products or services they are seeking. For the government sector, before a solution is even considered, they need to ensure compliance with mandatory requirements. We suggest that rather than engaging in a long, drawn out contemplation of what the purpose of the executive in a proposal should be, that you consider what would the purpose of the executive summary be *for your Client?*

We believe executive summaries should hit on major and beneficial points in the proposal and be written in an engaging and influential way. You want to peak the curiosity of the reader to want to read the proposal to learn more about the solution you are offering and how it and your company best meets the client's needs. The executive summary is not the place to go into details about your company and how terrific it is, the focus should be on the client.

With respect to the question when to write the executive summary, before or after the proposal is written, this truly depends upon the preference of the writer in consideration of their personal thought and writing processes. Unless you are seasoned in writing proposals we recommend that you (and your team) develop an outline of what you want to address in your proposal and use it to guide development of your proposal. Save the writing of the executive summary for last drawing key information from your proposal but writing in an engaging and influential manner which should be, as much as possible, the writing tone of the proposal as a whole. Technical information can be dry but much of the proposal can be written in an engaging manner.

Again, reflecting back on the discussion about approach, how you write your proposal including your executive summary will influence evaluator perception of your offer. Put yourself in the client's shoes and ask yourself, if I was the client what would I want to see in the executive summary and how would I want it presented to me? Clients want to know you understand who they are and what their business is, what their needs are, what solution you bring and how it fulfills their needs, and why they should choose you over competitors whose solution may equally meet their need. Use persuasive language and make specific points from your proposal and focus on the benefits to your client.

When writing your executive summary try to keep it within one page or within two pages if your proposal is large in size. Organizations like to hear and see their names in writing so do not hesitate to state the client's name two or three times within a one-page executive summary. Stating their name illustrates that your focus is on them. Always use plain language because you cannot assume that every person evaluating the proposal is familiar with industry jargon, has experience within your area of expertise, or that the language the proposal is written is the evaluator's first language. A panel of evaluators can be made up of people with different areas of expertise (e.g., finance, human resources, IT, operations, management, specialists, etc.). Besides, technical language can be quite dry so unless it is essential to be in the executive summary (e.g., RFP is for a technical solution) leave it within the contents of proposal where you have more space to explain what it means and have room to place it within an engaging and influential context. The executive summary should illuminate the benefits of your solution not the details of it, keep the details to the body of the proposal. Always proofread for typos ***including numeric errors*** and, have another person double check it for spelling and grammar when possible.

6. Mandatory Requirements

We are heavily emphasizing mandatory requirements as a highly critical area and to be accurate and transparent in your writing. As previously mentioned there are two general types of mandatory requirements, administrative and RFP specific and they may be located throughout the RFP document. Having already finished the tedious work of developing your MRCC you will now appreciate the benefit of its use. With the MRCC list in hand you should be able to complete this section within a reasonable time. As you draw each mandatory requirement from the list into your proposal and write your response make sure to update your MRCC at the same time.

For beginners the best way to be accurate and transparent is to use the exact wording of the requirement from the RFP which you were previously instructed to enter into your MRCC. The simplest method for responding to mandatory requirements is to, copy and paste the exact wording from your MRCC listing them separately. Your response to each of the mandatory requirements should be provided directly below the requirement.

Example

1. **Disclosure of Information.** The proponent must agree that any information provided in this proposal, even if it is identified as being supplied in confidence, may be disclosed where required by law or by order of a court or tribunal. The proponent must consent to the disclosure, on a confidential basis, of this proposal by the Client to the advisers retained by the Client to advise or assist with the RFP process, including with respect to the evaluation this proposal.

Proponent's response: The proponent agrees to these terms for Disclosure of Information.

2. [Enter next requirement]

Proponent's response:

You may find some of the RFP specific requirements may also need to be incorporated into other sections in your proposal (e.g., specific technology). Include them in the mandatory requirements section and within the response state “The proponent agrees to this requirement. Details of (identify what it is) are located on page #, Section # of this proposal.” *Ensure references to page and section remain correct as the proposal is written, amended and edited.*

This section is not included in an unsolicited RFP.

7. Introduction

In this section you will introduce your company and partnering companies if you are submitting a joint proposal. You will provide brief information about your company (e.g., name, years in business, areas of service, types of clients you serve, possibly a statement concerning the value that you bring to your community with your business and any voluntary work the business performs). Make accurate flattering statements (e.g., concerning your share of the market, annual gross sales, etc.) and be truthful about what sets you above your competitors. Be sure to sell your brand (speak to any visions, mission, organization principles and values that you share with the client – you should know these from your research of their website), speak to your company's accomplishments (if you are a new owner of an existing business, these accomplishments includes successes that occurred before you became owner as you are speaking to successes of the company), mention projects of similar nature, size, budget or clients, etc. and the successful outcomes experienced for those clients. If you have successfully done business with the client in the past it is okay to briefly mention the project and successful outcome. If you are aware of a characteristic you possess (e.g., Indigenous, woman or minority owned business, local business, etc.) for which the client has a policy that encourages business with particular groups, let the client know in your proposal.

A helpful way to prepare to write this section is to consider how you would pitch your company if you were given two minutes of the client's time? What is the key information you want the client to know? Next consider your information from the client's perspective. Have you included more or less information than the client would want to know? Do not make this section too long as you may lose the client's attention. Stick to relevant information about your company that you would want to know from a supplier if you were the client. Be sure to write in a positive, influential tone and use active descriptive words that will excite the client to want to work with you over other competitors.

8. Key Personnel

In this section you will provide a brief professional biography for each key personnel involved in carrying out the scope of work in the RFP. For example, identify the name, title, areas of speciality, years of experience, and the role of each of the key personnel. Identify any special qualifications/certifications or specialized experience of personnel who are performing key functions, how this will benefit the client, as well as a brief overview of their role in the project. For example, if one of the people mentioned will be the client's main contact, state who it is, their role, and the benefits of having an assigned contact.

Ensure the curriculum vitae (CV, résumé) for each person included in this section of the proposal is placed in an appendix to the proposal. Identify within this section that the curricula vitae for all key personnel is located in Appendix (#).

9. Present State

In this section you will draw upon information in the RFP and your research to reflect your understanding of the client, the client's business, its present situation including the challenges / opportunities that it is currently facing which contribute to the client's needs (i.e., the reason for the RFP). Maintaining a focus on the client, use this section wisely in a way that illustrates you have a really good understanding of the client's needs. If the client believes you appreciate its needs, it will see the benefits of working with you over others who do not have the same level of understanding. Some professionals say to mimic exactly what the client has written about its needs in the RFP however we believe doing so only reflects an individual's ability to copy text.

We suggest that you copy needs statements the client has made in the RFP into your proposal, however that you promptly follow each up with your interpretation of these statements. Interpretations should be presented *in your own words*. If you can demonstrate your understanding of the problem/opportunity from different perspectives, (e.g., company, customers, community, etc.), do so if it is relevant and will help set you apart from competitors. However, before going down this path make sure that any assumptions you are making are supported by direct observations, experience or evidence. You do not want to make wrong assumptions that leave the client thinking that you don't understand them or their needs.

Unless the challenge/opportunity facing the client is complex, this section will only be one to three paragraphs.

10. Goals and Objectives

People sometimes incorrectly interchange the terms goals and objectives. They are different. Goals should reflect the desired outcomes that you expect through fulfilling the contracted work. The goals should directly speak to the needs of the client. The objectives reflect how you will achieve the goal. Objectives should be SMART (specific, measureable, achievable, relevant, and time oriented). The objectives provide the measurable criteria for both you and the client to evaluate your deliverables. For example, in the case of a fictional contract for winter maintenance of sidewalks a goal and objectives may be:

Example:

Goal 1: Sidewalks are free of snow and ice.

Objective 1: Snow is removed from assigned sidewalks when snow accumulation exceeds 3 centimetres (cm)

Objective 2: Assigned sidewalks are sanded with client approved ice melting sand compound within 15 minutes of snow being removed

Objective 3: At no time will snow be permitted to accumulate above 12 cm on assigned sidewalks

Objective 4: Snow removal and sanding cycles will continue to be performed on assigned sidewalks until snow accumulation is below 3 cm

Take care not to go overboard with too many goals and objectives as this could administratively overburden both you and the client. Remember you need to measure what you say you will and be prepared to provide evidence of this monitoring upon client inspection or when responding to complaints. Goals and objectives should reflect the key deliverables of your proposal. They should be directly tied to the needs of the client and serve as criteria for evaluating the work performed under the contract. They do not need to address every detail of the work as these are spoken to in the Methods section.

11. Approach and Scope

In this section you will provide a high level outline of your approach for fulfilling requirements and the scope of the work.

Example:

Frosty's Snow Removal employs technology and human resources for monitoring weather conditions as well as snow and ice accumulation on a 24 hour / 7 days per week basis during the months of October through May. Standard procedures exist for readying and dispatching staff within 15 minutes of notification of snow or ice reaching the client's mandatory requirement for deployment. Only ice melting sanding compounds required by the client are used.

12. Methods

In this section you will provide detail of how the scope of work from the RFP will be carried out. Specifications related to mandatory requirements (e.g., equipment, materials, etc.) should be included.

Example:

Frosty's monitors weather conditions 24 hour/7 days per week between October 1 and May 31. Owners of 24-hour convenience stores located in various areas of town (see Appendix #) are contracted to inform Frosty's dispatch officer of snow and ice accumulation.

When accumulation has reached the mandatory requirement, 3 cm snow accumulation threshold or when ice is building, work crews are dispatched and onsite within 15 minutes of deployment. Work crews keep the dispatch officer informed of conditions as they work through snow/de-icing cycles. Crews are advised to stand down when accumulation is below 3 cm and all assigned sidewalks are de-iced. Staff safety is of utmost importance. Each staff is provided personal protection equipment (insulated clothing, head cover, gloves, work boots, hearing and vision protection), a 10 minute break every hour to rest and hydrate as well as two 20 minute meal breaks during an 8 hour shift.

The dispatch officer uses a Communication Deck Model 1234 for receiving and dispatching calls and crews use mobile devices connected to this deck. Emergency backup equipment includes a 1234CB Radio Deck with hand held radio transmitters. Fifty snow removal workers are equipped with commercial grade 32" blade self-propelling snow blowers that can shoot snow to a height of 8 feet and distance of 25 feet. Thirty workers are equipped with industrial grade spreaders used to spread the mandatory products Ice Away and Ice-B-Gone graded safe for animals and the environment.

If you have more than one option that meets the client's specifications to present for the client's consideration, set each out separately as Option 1 and Option 2. When having more than one option, ensure that your budget/price section (discussed in Section 14) provides separate budget/pricing for each option. We do not recommend you fill your proposal with numerous options as evaluators may perceive you do not understand the client's needs, that you are not confident in the options being proposed, and/or are transferring focus from client needs to your need to make a sale. Select one or two options that fulfill the mandatory requirements and best meet the client's need.

If you would like to propose a solution that doesn't follow mandatory specifications because you believe it will better meet the client's needs, label it (e.g., 'Option 3 – Enhanced Solution) and place it **after** the option(s) that meet the client's mandatory specifications. If the Enhanced Solution is longer than one page, place it into a separate appendix. Label the heading of the appendix (e.g., Enhanced Solution) and include an engaging statement at the end of the section that informs the client of this solution and where to locate it.

Example:

Frosty's believes it truly understands how important public and animal safety is to the [Client's name]. Appendix # - Enhanced Solution uses highly rated technology involving automated spreading that releases a significantly superior ice removal compound immediately after snow removal. This enhanced solution will:

- eliminate risk of snow accumulation between snow removal and sanding
- reduce risk of slip and falls as the rapid acting and long lasting ice removal compound leaves no slippery residue
- reduce the frequency of snow removal / de-icing cycles (weather dependent)

Particularly exciting is the superior ice removal compound consists of all natural elements rated 100% safe to humans, animals, and plants which means no unsafe runoff of toxins into public water systems.

13. Schedule

Information related to time scheduling, including identifying major milestones in a project, or production and delivery times, etc. should be included in this section. Make certain your proposed schedule is achievable. Using a Gantt chart can be an effective and professional way to present a lot of information within a schedule. The example schedule in Appendix 5 is formatted as a Gantt chart and was created using Microsoft Excel.

Schedules do not have to be presented in charts. If the project is not complex, key tasks, milestones, etc. can be listed.

Example:

- Payment for hardware and deposit on installation services is due by May 16, 2019
- Computer Hardware will be delivered on-site during the week May 18 – May 22, 2019

- Installation of hardware will be made during the weeks of May 25 – Jun 6, 2019
- Payment of final invoice is due July 7, 2019

What is important is that the client understands when key components of the solution will be delivered. Additionally clients will want to be aware of:

- your proposed dates for starting and ending the project
- any activities that require their participation and your proposed dates for those activities (e.g., meeting dates, etc.)
- any activities that will require the client to arrange on-site access for your staff (e.g., on-site location and dates)
- key milestones in the project (e.g., completion of phases or stages) and the dates they will be achieved
- any other tasks or activities that are critical to achieving project objectives together with corresponding start and completion dates where applicable and/or frequency of delivery of those key undertakings
- key events (e.g., kickoff event, key communications or advertisements, etc.) and the proposed dates for the key events
- any critical payment dates for work to continue

When specific dates are unknown, it is appropriate to identify dates within the schedule in terms of the week they are expected to occur in the project relative to the project start date (e.g., week [1, 2, 3, etc.] or the week of [month, day, year] as shown in the preceding example).

Schedules should be located in the body of your proposal, not in an appendix.

14. Budget/Price

In this section you should identify the budget/pricing for the solution(s) you are committing to provide under contract.

If you are proposing more than one option for the client's consideration and each option has a different budget/price, then ensure that each option is accurately cross-referenced to the labels you gave them earlier in your proposal (e.g., Option 1, 2 or 3; see Section 12 Methods) and provide separate budgets/prices for each.

Itemized amounts should not include applicable taxes as these may change during the course of the contract and you do not want to be responsible for covering an increase the client should be paying for. To address payment for taxes, ensure to include a statement that indicates that ***the amounts provided do not include applicable taxes which will be an additional charge.***

15. Quality Assurance

This is a section that proponents sometimes include in their proposals to provide the client with assurance of quality in the solutions they offer.

Do you have a quality control program (i.e., a set of processes) that you use to monitor the quality of your products, services and/or delivery? If so, use this section to provide a brief statement about your program. If your process includes the assignment of a specific contact for the client to call in the event of quality concerns mention this as well as it demonstrates efficiency and direct customer service. If you do not have a quality control program, consider developing one soon. Managing a contract includes evaluating the quality of everything that you supply to the client including your methods of delivery. Keeping on top of quality and client satisfaction is essential in building/maintaining a good reputation, developing good business relationships and customer loyalty, increasing recommendations by clients, and enhancing the long-term success of your business.

16. Supplementary Documentation/Information

This section is not always needed in a proposal. Create this section in your proposal if you need to provide supplementary documentation or information that has been requested in the RFP and has not already been addressed elsewhere (e.g., mandatory requirements, methods, etc.).

Ensure the information or documentation you are including in this section is not an item more appropriate to another section (e.g., mandatory requirements, methods, etc.). If you have additional information that you would like to provide to the client about your services include a statement here with reference to the appendix where you will locate the information. An example of supplementary documentation could be product warranty information.

This section may be as simple as listing the supplementary documentation and identifying the corresponding appendix number where you have located each document.

17. Company Contact Person and Contact Information

In this section identification of the person who the Buyer should contact with respect to your proposal, the person's title, and contact information.

Example:

The proponent's contact for this proposal is:

John Smith, Supervisor
123 Main Street
Anywhere, ON P7J 1D0

Telephone: (807) 123-4567, Ext. 89
Mobile: (807) 987-6543
Toll Free: 1-800-765-3421
Email: jsmith@proponent.ca

18. Appendices

Remember, you want your proposal to look attractive, be easy to read and understand, and be engaging while being informative. Your proposal is promoting your company and the solutions being offered to the client. Use consistent formatting for headings for each appendix as has been done with the appendices for this booklet.

Do not place full or large documents, CVs, or highly technical drawings, forms or spreadsheets directly into the body of your proposal. Doing so crowds the proposal, tires the eyes, and makes the proposal difficult and unpleasant to read. These types of documents should be located in the appendices. Each document should be a separate appendix with its own heading (e.g., Appendix 6 – Technical Drawings). An exception to this rule is that CVs of key personnel can be grouped together under one appendix heading.

Within the relevant section of the body of your proposal speak to the document and include the appendix number that has been assigned to it. For example, within the methods section a statement advising where to locate the technical drawing for a piece of equipment could be ***“The technical drawing for this equipment is provided in Appendix #”***.

Before submitting your proposal double check to ensure:

- each appendix # and corresponding name is accurately reflected in the appendix heading

- the appendix number is correctly cross-referenced to the document within the body of the proposal
- the table of contents correctly displays the appendix #, heading title, page #, and formatting. If not, update the table and recheck for errors, including formatting errors

19. Back Page

A professional proposal always has a back page which serves to nicely finish the proposal and protect the contents inside. The back page should be blank on both sides and ideally be a heavier weight of paper than the pages within the document.

When finishing your proposal, we recommend that you do not use document or paper clips to bind your proposal as they tend to slip off as pages are being flipped through or if the document is accidentally dropped. Also avoid using staples if possible. It is preferable proposal are finished with coiled bindings which are not very expensive and give proposals a finished professional appearance.

Hopefully by now you are starting to feel more confident about what is contained in a proposal and how to write it. Next we'll finish off Part II with more general writing and proposal writing tips.

Proposal Writing Don'ts & Dos

Over the years we have observed a general decline in business writing ability that can negatively impact evaluator perception of the abilities of a proponent, particularly if one of the deliverables of the RFP includes preparing a report. In addition to the proposal development tips provided in Part I and throughout Part II of this booklet, the following tips are provided to help you avoid some of the common mistakes we see in business proposals. This list includes some tips that we have already covered, they are repeated as a reminder because of the frequency we see them in proposals.

DON'T:

1. Make your proposals too long (100+ pages) or too short (1 page).

The length of your proposal should coincide with the complexity of the scope of work in the RFP. There are specific reasons for each question presented in a RFP and proposals should address all the information required by the client. Proposals also need to convincingly demonstrate why your

company and its solutions best fit the client's needs. Providing too much information about your company that is not relevant to the requirements of the RFP not only unnecessarily lengthens your proposal and takes longer to write, it also transfers the focus of the proposal from the client's needs to your need to market your company. A proposal should not be viewed as a long marketing brochure of all your products and talents. It is more productive to view the proposal as document that presents a *specific* solution to the client's *specific* needs in an enticing and influencing way. A transfer of focus happens when the tone and content of the proposal is perceived to weigh more heavily on your company versus on the client. Remember, clients are paying customers and the focus of your writing should be on their needs while the benefits of the business relationship should be mutual.

2. Use recycled packages

There is a high risk of typos and not addressing mandatory requirements or sufficiently addressing the client's needs when proponents reuse previously written proposals by changing a few words. For example, we have received proposals where another company is identified as the client. We also recommend caution when using 'canned' packages and 'canned' responses which refers to prewritten proposal templates and content. While some of the content relating to your company may be 'canned', it doesn't have to read like it is. The use of recycled and canned packages is noticeable to evaluators. Similar to a singer writing a song for an important someone, you are writing a proposal for an important client. The proposal should be written specifically for them, about them, and the solution being offered should address their requirements in the way they need. The melody of the words you choose, whether upbeat (engaging) or monotone (purely factual), will impact how influential your proposal is to the client.

3. Submit handwritten proposals

Simply put, handwriting can be difficult to read and submitting handwritten proposals is not professional.

4. Submit unorganized proposals

Evaluators need to be able to find information in order to evaluate your proposal and will quickly become frustrated if your proposal is not organized. Evaluators will not spend extra time searching through your proposal for information and will only award points based on what they initially see. Realistically, proponents who submit unorganized proposals should not expect to be awarded high points or contracts.

5. Assume evaluators know

Even if you already have a relationship with the client, do not assume that the evaluators know about your company. Even if an evaluator is familiar with your company they cannot award you points based on that knowledge. Ethical evaluators award points based only on information contained in the proposals. If an unsuccessful proponent challenges the award of a contract, there may be review of the evaluations performed. Therefore, you should always prepare your proposals as though the client does not know you.

6. Overly reiterate content

We have observed time after time where proponents have copied and pasted the same content into several sections of their proposals. Doing so does not add value to the proposal. Minimize reiterations and when doing so, change up the language to present the same message in another engaging way.

7. Make promises you can't keep

Making promises that you cannot keep is a sure fire way to destroy trust and business relationships and risk a lawsuit. Moreover, you may be prevented from bidding on future contracts.

8. Submit unsigned proposals

Yes, it has made this list as well because of the severe consequences and the frequency that it happens. An unsigned proposal is not a bona fide offer and contracts cannot be awarded where an offer has not been made.

9. Submit proposals late

Consider the date and time deadline for submission of proposals as being written in stone. Adhering to the deadline protects the integrity of the RFP process and proponents should respect the client's procurement process. Remember the client may have regulatory requirements that it must comply with and proposals are usually time stamped when received. Don't expect your proposal to be accepted even if you are within one minute late in delivering it. Acceptance of any proposals erroneously accepted after the submission deadline could be subject challenge.

Now let's move onto things that you should do when writing proposals some of which you have already read about but they are worth repeating.

Do:

1. Write with clarity

Be transparent in your meanings by writing with precise and simple language.

2. Organize your proposal

Make information easy to locate by using a table of contents, descriptive section headings, and dividers to separate sections.

3. Align flow of content

Consider proposals to be a story about parties coming together to solve a problem or engage in an opportunity that results in a mutually beneficial outcome. Align the flow of your story with the outline of your proposal. The content should be written so there is an easy transition from one section to the next until the full story unfolds.

4. Strive for professional presentation

Proposals should look professional which means paying attention to details such as formatting, the use of colour, images, graphics, tables, data, printing and finishing (e.g., the paper you use and how the proposal is bound). If there is little white space showing on a page good chance that it is over crowded with large images or using too narrow margins. We recommend all margins be kept at a normal setting (e.g., 2.54 cm).

5. Highlight your accomplishments

Clients want to know you can fulfill the scope of work in the RFP. When introducing your company be sure to write about your capabilities, capacity, experience, and highlight your accomplishments.

6. Cross-link to Relevant Information

If permitted in the RFP, provide address links to relevant web content and/or promotional videos if available.

7. Include references and testimonials

Clients want to know that you can perform the scope of work in the RFP and that you will fulfill the commitments you make in your proposal. A good way of assuring clients is by including references and testimonials of current and past clients in your proposal. Mention them in the introduction section with a reference to the appendix number where the letters and testimonials are located.

8. List project staff

When applicable list all staff working on the project and provide their contact information.

9. Include staff credentials

Be sure to include the educational and professional credentials of key staff involved in the project when writing about them in the key personnel section of your proposal. Ensure to include copies of their professional CVs as an appendix to the proposal.

10. Consider joint partnership submissions

Consider partnering with other individuals and companies who have the qualifications and resources to increase the likelihood of success through submission of a joint proposal. Partnering with experienced individuals and companies in a joint proposal is a good way to address shortfalls in ability to meet mandatory requirements.

11. Include value-added / innovation

When possible, include value-add or innovated components to your solution. For example, if the RFP is for the provision of software a value-added or innovative component could be offering free training on-site at the client's premises, on-line lunch and learn training sessions, extended warranty, etc.

12. Access professional services when needed

A variety of help exists to develop or review your proposal. If you are considering hiring professionals for assistance, we recommend that you ensure they are qualified and capable of meeting your needs. As well, there are organizations that exist to support entrepreneurs such as the GEDC who have knowledgeable staff to assist you.

General writing tips

1. Always keep the reader in mind
2. Use a business writing style:
 - a. Formal document
 - b. Professional tone (formal if client unknown, friendly formal if existing relationship)
 - c. Avoid use of complex, technical language
 - d. Use proper grammar
 - e. Avoid long sentence
 - f. Use a positive, active writing voice and keep voice consistent throughout the proposal
 - g. Write from the voice of your company, not as an individual
 - h. Be careful to maintain consistency in use of word tense – present tense is preferred
 - i. Avoid use of jargon
 - j. Do not use abbreviated terms unless they have been formally introduced. Specifically for the first use state both the term and abbreviation, e.g., mandatory requirements compliance checklist (MRCC). Thereafter it is okay just to use the abbreviation except when the term is used to start a sentence write out the term in full. If the article ‘The’ is used to start the sentence then the abbreviation can be used, e.g., The MRCC...
3. Plan the content of your proposal before you start writing it – develop an outline and follow it
4. Write the executive summary last – after the content of your proposal is finalized
5. Include a table of contents if your document is more than five pages
6. Use headings that accurately reflect the content under them
7. Content should be precise and concise – transparent, on topic and easy to understand
8. Content should logically flow and the document should be appealing
9. Consider using lists, tables, diagrams, graphics, etc. to illustrate key information. Do not crowd or take up all the white space on the page
10. Supplementary documents should be placed in appendices
11. Be consistent in formatting and use of font styles
12. Writer should review for spelling, grammar, numeric and other content error – document should be error free when it is submitted
13. Ensure document is reviewed internally by others for content errors and that all requirements have been met.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do you know when it is the right time to engage Buyers and when it is too late?

While it is generally recognized that the sooner you engage Buyers the better, it is not unusual for some companies to arrive late on the scene. Ideally you will start to develop a relationship with Buyers before they issue any procurement documents. However, this is not always possible and in some cases suppliers may not have sufficiently developed their capabilities and capacity before contracts were awarded. The good news is that supply and demand is constantly changing. There may be opportunity to fill gaps in needed products or services and/or start developing business relationships in anticipation of future opportunities as the client company moves through stages within its project life cycle (in the case of mines through the mine's life cycle). The needs of companies evolve as they engage in new opportunities so from this perspective, it is never too late to start building business relationships with Buyers of companies. Just ensure to do your research to ensure the potential client is a viable strategic fit for your business.

What happens if there is an error or insufficient information in the procurement document?

Sometimes oversights occur in procurement documents that are identified after posting by the Buyer. If an error is discovered in the procurement document the Buyer will issue an addendum to the procurement document. If a Proponent notices a potential error or has questions concerning the procurement document that requires clarification they should inform the Buyer through submission of questions. Where questions requiring clarification are received from Proponents within the question submission deadline, the Buyer may issue a document that identifies all questions received and the respective responses.

Is it a good idea to identify oneself as a minority in the proposal?

Proposals should be written from the voice of the company not the individual. Nevertheless, if your company is owned or operated by a minority group, or largely employs people from a minority group, do consider identifying this unique aspect in your proposal. Particularly do so if the potential client has made policy or public statements concerning providing business to or supporting this minority group. Part of telling the story within your proposal is illustrating how your company fits and aligns with the potential client's needs. Help potential clients discover that your company can also help them to meet their corporate social responsibility and/or social procurement objectives.

Is there a different proposal template for different industries or sectors?

The proposal outline provided in this booklet is generic and flexible in that you would only include the sections that are applicable to your particular situation. Ideally you will structure your proposal in the manner stated in the RFP or structure it in a similar manner as the RFP using the same relevant headings from the RFP. There are elements (sections) of a proposal that transcend all industries and there are elements that will be different. This is why it is important not to use canned proposals or responses as there is no one size fits all proposal template. Proposals should always be customized to the client's needs. That being said, there may be information from the description of your company, its key personnel and their CV's that may be applicable across different proposals. However, we strongly recommend that you do not copy and paste but rather tweak these to ensure that they are up-to-date and where applicable directly align to the present client's needs.

Should CVs always be included in proposals?

A procurement document will typically state the information required. In the case of provision of services it is normal for potential clients to want Proponents to provide the CVs of key personnel involved in the project. If the procurement document asks for CVs then they should be provided and are generally placed in an appendix. The CVs provide Buyers and evaluation teams with information that relays the capabilities of the key personnel to do perform the work that is being requested. For example, if the scope of work is to build a bridge, the Buyer will want to know that the project team includes qualified engineers and contractors and their specific experience.

How do I know if I've missed something in my proposal?

It is up to proponents to carefully read the procurement document and address all the requirements and information requested. We recommend that you use checklists such as the mandatory requirements checklist tool we provided in this booklet. In order to maintain the integrity of their procurement process, the company and Buyers cannot assist you in this regard as it exposes them to legal risks.

Can I amend my submitted proposal?

Unless otherwise stated, you should be permitted to amend your proposal prior to the submission deadline. Amendments cannot be made after the deadline.

Is there a need for local small businesses to have a website?

Whether or not a business has a website needs to be a strategic marketing decision as would the level of content that goes into the website, and whether or not it is a static site or requires constant updates. Websites can be useful tools for branding (building the image) of your company in how you want to be perceived by your customers. Buyers will search the internet on prospective suppliers. With the tools available today, businesses can develop and maintain basic websites at moderate cost. When proceeding with a website we do not recommend that you use free websites that inject advertising onto your website as you will not have any control over the types of advertisements and they may send the wrong message about your company.

CONCLUSION

This instructional booklet provides a good overview of effective proposal writing. Part I provided valuable and insightful information for understanding the procurement process from multiple perspectives. Moving beyond a single transaction to goal setting that incorporates mutually beneficial relationships supports long-term business success. We heavily emphasized the benefits of engaging in research in preparing to take a focused approach on your customer's needs, demonstrate alignment between your companies, and for illustrating how you will meet their needs and why you are the best proponent for the contract.

We also strongly emphasized the importance of properly addressing all mandatory requirements and provided you with a useful tool that can help you identify and analyze the customer's needs (look for the underlying needs), plan your proposal and ensure that your proposals are never disqualified for noncompliance. Additionally, how gaps in meeting mandatory requirements can be overcome through creation of strategic partnerships. In essence Part I illustrates the procurement document (RFP) as a critical source of information in many different ways including the importance of paying attention to the evaluation criteria when planning for achieving your highest potential allocation of points. For situations where no solicitation for proposals exists, this booklet also provided information for preparing and submitting unsolicited proposals. Part II took you step by step through each section of a proposal and provided a wealth of tips and techniques for writing and finishing a professional proposal in a way that will be appreciated by those who evaluate it.

Remember there is no perfect proposal and there are resources available to assist you. Between this instructional booklet and your research, you will be on solid footing and hopefully feeling much more confident in your ability to write effective proposals. Be assured that with the wealth of information, new tools in your tool belt, and the effort that you are willing to invest, you are ready for the challenge. Best of luck!

PART III – SUPPLEMENTARY: DOING BUSINESS WITH MINING

INTRODUCTION

This supplementary information will be of interest to entrepreneurs interested in doing business with mining companies.

DEFINITIONS

Capital:	money or assets available for investment, development, or creation and production goods and/or services to generate income. Goods generally having a purchase cost of \$10,000 or greater
Commodity:	raw materials extracted from the earth or primary agricultural products (e.g., gold, silver, gas, oil, wheat, sugar, etc.)
Commodity market:	a place where traders buy and sell bulk commodities
Lead time:	the time between initiation and completion of a process, (e.g., the time between order and delivery of a product or service)
Outsourcing:	contracting out a service required by that organization. These are usually non-core services (e.g., camp operations)
Pre-Qualification:	the preliminary stage in a bidding process where it is determined if a proponent has the required capacity or capability to complete the scope of work
Spend:	purchase of goods and services
Throughput:	the productivity of a machine, procedure, process or system relative to a measurable unit (e.g., tons produced per hour)

MINING

Having a sound understanding of the business, culture, technologies and knowledge of mining will help your company be successful.

In general, the business of mining is to find, extract, process and refine a mineral, ore resource, precious metal or gem at an overall lower cost than the current trading (selling) price. The price spread is the profit or loss incurred by the mine. Fluctuation in commodity prices makes the mining sector susceptible to cycles of boom or bust. Mines which are part of larger international corporations may decrease production levels and even temporarily suspend production to artificially reduce market availability for the purpose of stabilizing or increasing prices. These supply control strategies directly affect suppliers doing business with a particular mine site.

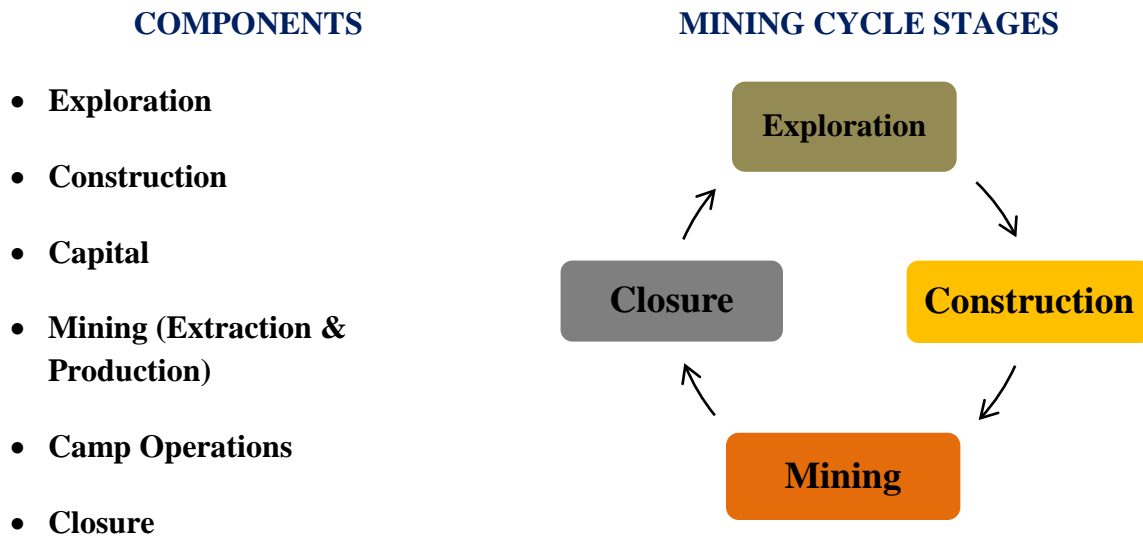
The culture of mining begins with understanding there is a beginning and end to a mine. Mineral deposits (reserves) may range from small to large and be of low to high quality. The culture of a mine is often affected by the length of its life-cycle and geography. The culture of remote, live-in mines is influenced by wages, accommodations, meals and shift rotation schedules. The workforce at remote locations is often transient. Remote mines provide full service on-site camp operations. Mines located near communities draw their workforce from the region. These mines often have lower staff turnover, are inclusive of regional business and become part of the community.

Technology is driving major change in all aspects of mining. Global positioning system, cloud technologies, computer integrated robotics, remote operated and autonomous vehicles, and predictive analytics are only a few of the major advancements underway in mining. Change due to advancement in technology is fast and ongoing. Successful suppliers must remain current in their knowledge, sale, and support of best-in-class solutions.

Mining produces products that are controlled by world commodity pricing. In times of rising commodity price, a mine may focus on increasing capacity and throughput rates. The cost to process each ton may become less important. In times of falling prices, processing costs become very important. Understanding the cyclic nature of mining and the effects of changing commodity prices enables a successful supplier modify sales and marketing strategies to align with the mine and Buyer's current priorities.

Stages of Mining

Mining is a generally used term for describing the extraction and the processing of ores, minerals, precious stones, etc. As a business, mining can be broken down into several main components or stages:



Understanding the components and timing of the mining cycle will assist your company in identifying which stage(s) best align with your business offerings and when, where, and how to begin marketing and sales strategies specific to mining.

Exploration

Exploration is the earliest stage and is essentially the search for and finding of promising ore and mineral deposits. Generally, a promising mineral zone is identified and a drilling project budget is established. Sections of overburden (unproductive upper ground material) are removed followed by lower surface sampling and/or deep drilling. Exploration programs often occur during winter months as it is less expensive to move equipment over ice roads and drill within frozen lakes and swamps. An exploration project continues until the project budget is spent or test results reveal poor ore quality and the drilling program stops. Major supplies procured during the exploration phase include camp supplies, equipment, repairs, fuel and transportation. Exploration companies are generally small and transient.

Construction

After sufficient quantity and quality of reserves have been proven, a mine plan is developed and suitable funding is secured. Mine construction then begins. Depending on size and location of the mine, construction can take two to five years before production activities begin. During construction, large amounts of money are spent, fast! The procurement process is generally centralized and administrated through the mine's lead engineering firm. Engineering firms and their project Buyers are located far from the mine site, usually in a major city. Frequently a small

business office may be located on site or in a nearby community. These local satellite business offices often coordinate deliveries and administer smaller or emergency purchases. It is often a complex and time consuming process for regional suppliers to learn who, how and the best ways to connect with the mine's engineering procurement team. Travel may be required to meet and establish a relationship with project Buyers.

The project engineering firm may issue various Expressions of Interest, Pre-Qualifications, or Requests for Proposal within the region of a new mine. The purpose of this invitational process is to seek an understanding of regional suppliers, diversity, capability and capacity. Responding to these invitations represent major opportunities for suppliers to promote their companies, learn who is leading the procurement activities, and start building business relationships. Another and equally significant opportunity for selling products and services is learning who is awarded major construction contracts. General contractors and their major subcontractors will also procure large volumes of goods and services to building the mine and buildings. These contractors often utilize regional suppliers to meet their needs for goods and services. During the construction stage, major volumes of different supplies are used. These include all forms of construction supplies, fuel, transportation, temporary camp facilities, equipment and much, much more. During the construction stage price is reasonably important, however quality and delivery lead time which aligns with the construction schedule are also major decision criteria.

Capital

A mine undertakes major capital investment at the beginning of a mine to purchase the necessary equipment to extract, crush, and process ore. During the life-cycle of a mine ongoing capital spend is required for replacing end-of-life equipment and managing changes in extraction and production. Examples include equipment to strip overburden, drill rigs (exploration and operations), all forms of mobile fleet (above and underground), processing and production equipment, etc. While capital purchases are usually made through large international suppliers, local opportunity exists in maintaining, servicing and repairing equipment. Examples include supplying tire management program, steam cleaning, lubrication management, glass maintenance, filters, belts, hoses, seating, etc. Original equipment manufacturer (OEM) parts must be purchased and supplied during warranty periods. However, after warranty expiration, non-OEM parts may be used, opening up opportunity for after-market parts to be considered.

Mining (Extraction and Production)

Once construction is complete and the mine is operational, mining essentially becomes a production line of extracting, crushing and processing. Normally, this production line operates 24 hours per day, seven days per week (24/7) during the life of the mine. Mine management is focused on maximizing people, controlling throughput rates and managing cost per unit of

production. The cost of running a mine is very high and any form of production delay or stoppage becomes a major and expensive issue. Successful suppliers need to be capable and responsive to deliver and meet the high expectations of 24/7 mine operations.

The life of an operating mine can last decades, creating great opportunity for regional suppliers. Explosives, reagents, grinding media, fuel, filtration media, drill bits, conveyor belting, piping, staff workwear, personal protective equipment and tools are only a few examples of supplies required. Large, regular and stable spend occurs within the extraction and production process. This stage of mining represents a major opportunity for regional suppliers selling and developing partnerships with mines. Again, suppliers must be aware of world commodity prices and how changing prices may result in changes in mining operations, Buyer needs and their decision-making criteria.

Camp Operations

Remote accessed mines must transport the necessary labour into the mine. This requires mines to construct camp operations to house and feed its labour force. Camps often accommodate 300 – 600 employees and contractors on-site for extended periods of time. Mines that operate live-in camp operations require all forms of goods and services to feed, house, and entertain workers within clean, safe and comfortable environments (e.g., food, furniture, linens, cleaning services, laundry services, etc.). Often camp operations are contracted out. Opportunity exists for regional suppliers to operate camps or sell goods and services to the general contractor operating a camp.

Closure

At some point an ore or mineral body will be exhausted or no longer cost effective to extract and process, essentially reaching its end of mine life. This stage requires site de-construction, salvage, environmental cleanup, and extensive site restoration. These work activities are generally contracted out. Much opportunity exists for regional suppliers to sell goods or services to general or major subcontractors performing closure activities.

PROCUREMENT

In all stages of mining, the procurement of goods, services and equipment can be large and happen very quickly. Conversely, when the commodity price has fallen below production costs, spend can be severely curtailed and cost reduction is critical. For example, high gold prices excite exploration companies who quickly launch new or expanded drilling projects. Conversely, drilling projects can be reduced or cancelled when prices fall. The criteria used for making purchasing decisions changes when major shifts occur in commodity price. That is, in times of rising commodity prices, the cost of an item may become less important than other criteria such as

speed of delivery or quality. In times of declining commodity prices, the cost of items becomes increasingly more important.

Mines or exploration camps can be stand-alone entities or part of a large corporation. Single mines control all aspects of purchasing decisions, while corporations often centralize major procurement purchasing through corporate contracts. Large corporate contracts can be worth tens of millions of dollars and require successful suppliers to have international distribution capability. Corporate contracts often remove the ability of regional suppliers to bid on goods or services specified in those contract (e.g., tires, fuel, personal protection equipment, etc.).

Procurement & Exploration

Procurement decisions at the exploration stage tend to be centralized for major contract decisions. These decisions are usually made by senior managers of junior exploration or mining companies located in major cities (e.g., Vancouver and Toronto). However, authority for making purchases for operational needs is often delegated to the project geologist or camp manager located at the exploration site. Operational needs include all supplies and services required to conduct exploration and drilling activities, often in very remote locations. Goods and services needed at exploration camps are excellent selling opportunities for regional suppliers (e.g., fuel, lubricants, food, accommodations, drill rod / bits, core storage containers and racks, lumber, sea containers, fencing, vehicle rentals, equipment repairs, welding, work wear clothing and much, much more. It is important for regional suppliers to know when exploration companies are setting up drill programs in their region. Exploration companies seek reliable suppliers who understand their unique business needs and who *“do what they say they will do!”*

Procurement & Construction

Procurement opportunity mainly resides with a few contractors. Suppliers should learn who these key contractors are and how they procure:

- Lead Mine Engineering Firm
- Major General Contractor(s)
- Major Subcontractors

Procurement staff of these firms will generally work off site, often at their company’s main or regional offices. Procurement staff will occasionally travel to the mine site opening opportunity to meet regional suppliers.

Procurement & Mining (Extraction and Production)

Mines may make commitments to communities through policy statements. Often a mine issues a Procurement Policy or similar statement. A Procurement Policy may address supporting environmental and sustainable criteria when making purchasing decisions. Policies may also speak to supporting regional businesses or building and supporting Indigenous partnerships. While policy statements say meaningful words, it is important for communities and suppliers to hold mines accountable for what they say and provide evidence of their actions.

Major mining corporations will have some degree of centralized procurement. These centralized procurement operations are usually located in company headquarters, and may even be located in different countries. Centralized procurement that is far removed from the mine site makes it challenging for regional suppliers to know their process and build meaningful relationships. However, mines may have an on-site procurement function that supports immediate operational and maintenance needs. Onsite procurement staff is important for regional suppliers to get to know and build relationships.

Mines will seek suppliers who demonstrate they know mining, possess capability and have capacity to meet their demanding needs. Regional suppliers may be weak in knowledge and capacity however opportunity exists for regional suppliers to establish partnerships with larger national firms. These partnerships enable local presence through the use of smaller local suppliers that are reinforced by larger firms with demonstrated capacity. Partnerships provide excellent opportunity for regional suppliers to gain new business with mines.

Major segments of mining are often outsourced to enable the focus of key mine staff on extraction and production. Outsourced contracts may include:

- Camp operations including: kitchen, accommodations, housekeeping
- Tire management (tires, repairs and cost management reporting)
- Explosives (fabrications and placement)
- Contracted labour services
- Some maintenance activities
- IT services

A more recent development is the outsourcing of procurement services. For example, a northern Ontario mine has outsourced its procurement services to a contractor in India. Location, time difference and lack of ability to build relationships are becoming a challenge for regional suppliers.

Procurement & Camp Operations

Most mines enter into contracts to outsource camp operations. Partnerships are often developed with regional Indigenous communities to run camps. Large quantities of food, refreshments, housecleaning and bedding supplies are just a few of the goods required to run a camp. Regional suppliers should learn which companies have contracts to run camps and their procurement practices. They should also get to know and develop relationships with the companies' key procurement staff.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

Which components of mining are the easiest and hardest for suppliers to access for selling their goods and services?

Once the challenge of identifying who is leading the procurement and determining how to engage Buyers is addressed, the two components of mining which are relatively easy to access are exploration and camp operations. The most difficult component for suppliers to access is the capital program which involves large budgets with big ticket priced items.

CONCLUSION

While mining is complex, fast paced and constantly changing, it can provide incredible opportunities to suppliers who take the time to know the business, establish relationships, seek to solve problems and have sufficient capability and capacity to meet mining needs.

The range and ongoing change of procurement decision criteria throughout the mining cycle makes it important for a supplier to continually monitor changing market conditions and modify sales strategies. This process can be onerous, however there are important resources available to assist you to learn about mining and connect with mines including:

- Ministry of Northern Development and Mines
- Greenstone Municipal Economic Development (GMED)
- Community Futures Development Corporation (GEDC)
- Chambers of Commerce
- Professional Associations
- Internet web searches

PART IV – SUPPLEMENTARY: DOING BUSINESS WITH GOVERNMENT

INTRODUCTION

This supplementary information will be of interest to entrepreneurs interested in doing business with governments and the Ontario broader public sector.

DEFINITIONS

Broader Public Sector	organizations that are funded by but are not a part of the Ontario government
Municipal Government	a term used to describe organized local and regional governments which in Ontario include towns, townships, villages, cities, and municipalities
Standing Offer (SO)	a non-binding arrangement with potential suppliers of specified goods or services. It is an offer from a supplier to a government entity that permitting recurring purchase of goods and/or services, or a combination thereof at pre-arranged prices under set terms and conditions on an as needed basis
Vendor of Record (VOR)	a procurement arrangement typically established through an RFP, authorizing one or more qualified suppliers to provide goods/services to one or more ministries for a defined period on terms and conditions, including pricing, as set out in the VOR agreement

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

According to the Government of Canada approximately \$22 billion is spent annually purchasing goods and services for federal departments and agencies such as:

- Treasury Board Secretariat
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Canadian Heritage, Department of
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Finance, Department of

- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Global Affairs Canada
- Health Canada
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
- Infrastructure Canada
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
- Justice, Department of
- National Defence, Department of
- National Revenue
- Natural Resources Canada
- Public Services and Procurement Canada
- Transport Canada
- Veterans Affairs Canada

Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) procures goods and services on behalf of these departments at the best value for Canadians. Procurement activities are carried out in compliance with statutes and regulations, agreement, policies, directives, and guidelines.

Procurement Processes

Under \$25,000

Purchase requirements valued below \$25,000 are deemed to be low dollar value. For each requirement contracting officers will determine which procurement method will be used to obtain best value. They may contact suppliers directly to obtain quotations and select a supplier from the submitted quotations or, they may use other competitive or non-competitive procurement methods to identify and select a supplier.

Over \$25,000

An open public tendering process is used for purchases with a total value of \$25,000 or more. These larger procurements can be publically accessed through a Government of Canada website at <https://buyandsell.gc.ca/>. We recommend you review this site as it provides extensive information related to:

- New and active procurements (goods, services & construction)
- Awarded contracts
- And much more

Standing Offers

These arrangements outline the terms and conditions that will apply to future goods and/or service requirements ordered on an as and when needed basis. It is important to understand being awarded a SO does not mean a commitment to buy exist. A SO is simply an arrangement that various federal agencies may use to expedite the procurement process.

Helpful Webinars

The federal government provides helpful webinars for suppliers. These seminars assist new businesses to learn how to sell to the federal government. Important topics include:

- Doing business with the Government of Canada
- Locating opportunities on Buyandsell.gc.ca
- Bidding on opportunities

Information on webinars can be accessed at <https://buyandsell.gc.ca/event-calendar>

Selling Opportunity

Many smaller and remote communities do not have federal offices in their regions or access to federal government procurement staff. However, this should not prevent businesses from seeking opportunities to sell their goods and services. The federal government has an internet based central procurement portal that enables suppliers throughout Canada to view opportunities and submit offers. Suppliers from smaller and remote communities may offer specialized or unique goods and services which provide benefits that outweigh potential difficulties and additional cost due to distance. We strongly encourage suppliers to view federal government on-going bid opportunities at <https://buyandsell.gc.ca/>

Additional helpful information & links:

- How to do business with Federal Government:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/business/doing-business.html>
- List of current bid opportunities:
<https://buyandsell.gc.ca/procurement-data/tenders>
- Listing of historical procurement awards:
https://buyandsell.gc.ca/procurement-data/search/site?f%5B0%5D=sm_facet_procurement_data%3Adata_data_ch

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT (ONTARIO)

According to the Ontario government, it spends approximately \$29 billion annually on a diverse range of goods and services. Major ministries include:

- Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
- Attorney General
- Children, Community and Social Services
- Colleges and Universities
- Education
- Energy, Northern Development and Mines
- Environment, Conservation and Parks
- Finance
- Francophone Affairs
- Government and Consumer Services
- Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries
- Indigenous Affairs
- Infrastructure
- Labour, Training and Skills Development
- Long-Term Care
- Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Natural Resources and Forestry
- Seniors and Accessibility
- Solicitor General
- Transportation
- Treasury Board Secretariat

Procurement Processes

Under \$25,000 Goods

For goods valued under \$25,000, within their procurement process provincial ministries may invite suppliers to compete by submitting quotes.

Over \$25,000 Goods

An open public tendering process is administered for purchase requirements with a total value of \$25,000 or more. Procurement opportunities may be accessed online through a service provider

to the Province of Ontario. Once logged in the website provides extensive information including current bid opportunities and past awards.

As of the date of completion of this booklet, registration with the Ontario Tenders Portal is free to receive email alerts that provide opportunities related to your business. This portal may be accessed at <https://ontariotenders.app.jaggaer.com/esop/nac-host/public/web/login.html>.

Under \$100,000 Services and Construction

For services or construction with a total value under \$100,000 written requirements will be prepared and a minimum of three qualified suppliers may be invited to submit written proposals.

Over \$100,000 Services and Construction

An open public tendering process is administered for services or construction purchase requirements greater than \$100,000. Procurements opportunities may be accessed online at <https://ontariotenders.app.jaggaer.com/esop/nac-host/public/web/login.html>.

Standing Offers & Vendor of Record

Standing Offers (SO's) and Vendor of Record (VOR) are arrangements often used. These agreements outline the terms and conditions that will apply to future requirements to be purchased on an as and when required basis. It is important to understand being awarded a SO or VOR does not mean there is a commitment to buy; these are types of arrangements that various provincial agencies may use to expedite the procurement process. Agreements can be viewed at <https://www.doingbusiness.mgs.gov.on.ca/mbs/psb/psb.nsf/vorsearch?openform>

Selling Opportunity

Many smaller and more remote communities across Ontario do not have provincial ministries or department offices represented within their regions, nor do they have direct access to provincial procurement staff. This should not deter businesses from seeking opportunity to sell their goods or services to the Province. A web based central procurement portal enables suppliers to view bid opportunities and submit offers. This procurement portal service is offered free however bidders must first register in the system. Suppliers from smaller and remote communities may offer specialized or unique goods and services which provide benefits that outweigh potential difficulties and additional cost due to distance. Suppliers are strongly encouraged to view tender opportunities at Ontario's Tender Portal <https://ontariotenders.app.jaggaer.com/esop/nac-host/public/web/login.html>. Additionally, suppliers are encouraged to view selling opportunities in all provinces pursuant to the Canadian Fair Trade Agreement (CFTA). The CFTA is an

intergovernmental trade agreement designed to reduce and eliminate, to the extent possible, barriers to the free movement of persons, goods, services, and investments within Canada. The purpose of CFTA is to establish an open, efficient, and stable domestic market.

Important Notice (Ontario):

In 2019 the Ontario government announced it was transitioning to a more modern, efficient and transparent approach for procuring goods and services. The purpose of this approach is to eliminate redundancies and deliver simpler, faster, and better services towards a goal of achieving the best value for every public dollar spent. The Ontario government intends to centralize procurement across the Ontario Public Service and the broader public sector. By leveraging buying power and streamlining processes, procurement will become more efficient and reduce costs. A single streamline approach will make it easier for companies of all sizes to work with government. Changes to Ontario procurement processes will be implemented throughout 2020. We recommend that you keep yourself familiar with interim measures and new information via <https://www.doingbusiness.mgs.gov.on.ca/mbs/psb/psb.nsf/English/SCC-IM-FAQS-EN>

Additional helpful information & links:

- **Doing Business with the Government of Ontario**
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/doing-business-government-ontario>
- **Information for Vendors**
<https://www.doingbusiness.mgs.gov.on.ca/mbs/psb/psb.nsf/English/forvendors>
- **Ontario 2020 Supply Chain Vision**
[https://www.doingbusiness.mgs.gov.on.ca/mbs/psb/psb.nsf/0/865379ec6338e8fb8525806f005aadf3/\\$FILE/MGCS-Vision-2020-EN.pdf](https://www.doingbusiness.mgs.gov.on.ca/mbs/psb/psb.nsf/0/865379ec6338e8fb8525806f005aadf3/$FILE/MGCS-Vision-2020-EN.pdf)

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Municipal government may include single or consolidated local areas. In Ontario there are 444 municipal governments ranging in size from villages to regions. Demand for goods, services and construction are linked to the services provided within each local area. The goods, services, and construction required to provide citizens with water, protective services, roads, recreation, administration and many other services are extensive.

Procurement practices within municipalities are governed by:

- Municipal Act, 2001
- Broader Public Sector Accountability Act
- Canadian Free Trade Agreement
- North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) and other international trade agreements
- Current case law

Procurement Processes

Under \$100,000

For goods, services and construction requirements with an estimated value under \$100,000 a minimum of three (3) written quotations are obtained. This is the maximum threshold before open public tendering must occur. However, a municipality may choose to administer a competitive bidding process such as a Request for Proposal for requirements under \$100,000. Within their respective Procurement By-Laws each municipal government establishes its procurement thresholds. Many Ontario municipalities have set thresholds lower than \$100,000. Bidders should familiarize themselves with bidding thresholds for each municipal government they wish to do business with.

Over \$100,000

For goods, services or construction greater than \$100,000 an open public tendering process is administered. These larger procurements are accessible via publically accessible procurement portals.

Use of Procurement Portals

Municipal governments in Ontario must publically advertise large value procurements through a procurement portal. Unfortunately as procurement amongst municipalities is not centralized, there are several procurement portals that municipalities may use. Suppliers should make themselves familiar with the procurement portal utilized by the municipal government in their area and by others they wish to do business with. Most portals charge a fee to bidders to access procurement documents. Usually fees are applied for each single download or an annual unlimited subscription rate may be offered. Suppliers should make themselves familiar with the various portals and fees.

Portals include but are not limited to:

- MERX
- Bids and Tenders
- Biddingo
- Bonfire
- BestBidz

Use of Group Purchasing Contracts

In addition to tendering for their own goods, services and consulting needs, municipalities have the option to participate in many larger purchasing awards. These larger contracts may have been awarded by Federal, Provincial or group purchasing organizations (GPO's).

Examples of GPO's include but are not limited to:

- Health Pro
- Ontario Education Collaborative Marketplace (OECM)
- Local Authority Services (LAS)
- St. Joseph Care Group, Group Purchasing Organization (SJCG – GPO)
- Northern Supply Chain (NSC)
- Lakehead Purchasing Consortium (LPC)

Selling Opportunity

Municipal governments are ideal for small to medium sized businesses to sell to. Procurement decisions are usually made by municipal staff located within the area, enabling buyer – seller relationships to be established. Most often procurement operations are centralized within cities. In smaller and rural communities, procurement decisions are often decentralized to managers and supervisors overseeing a department. Sellers should make themselves familiar with the procurement processes of the municipal government in their area as well as others they wish to do business with.

Many municipal governments have websites that provide links to selling processes aligned with their needs. For example,

Municipality of Greenstone <http://www.greenstone.ca/content/bid-opportunities-rfq-tenders-rfp>

City of Thunder Bay <https://www.thunderbay.ca/en/business/tenders-and-proposals.aspx>

City of Toronto <https://www.toronto.ca/business-economy/doing-business-with-the-city/>

BROADER PUBLIC SECTOR (Ontario)

The term broader public sector (BPS) is used to describe a range of publically funded agencies. Agencies include but are not limited to:

- School boards
- Hospitals
- Colleges
- Universities
- Health units
- Libraries
- Children's Aid Society

The BPS organizations are substantially provincially funded but often receive supplemental funds from other sources. As public entities the BPS is required to comply with public procurement obligations. The Province of Ontario released the Broader Procurement Sector Procurement Directive that outlines twenty-five (25) mandatory directives the BPS must follow. Highlights include:

- **7.2.3 Mandatory Requirement #3: Competitive Procurement Thresholds**

Organizations must conduct an open competitive procurement process where the estimated value of procurement of goods or services is \$100,000 or more.

- **7.2.6 Mandatory Requirement #6: Posting Competitive Procurement Documents**

Calls for open competitive procurements must be made through an electronic tendering system that is readily accessible by all Canadian suppliers.

- **7.2.10 Mandatory Requirement #10: Evaluation Process Disclosure**

Competitive procurement documents must fully disclose the evaluation methodology and process to be used in assessing submissions, including the method of resolving tie score.

- **7.2.20 Mandatory Requirement #20: Supplier Debriefing**

For procurements valued at \$100,000 or more, Organizations must inform all unsuccessful suppliers about their entitlement to a debriefing.

The full BPS Procurement Directive can be viewed at:

[https://www.doingbusiness.mgs.gov.on.ca/mbs/psb/psb.nsf/Attachments/001-BPS_Procurement_Directive/\\$FILE/BPS_Procurement_Directive.pdf](https://www.doingbusiness.mgs.gov.on.ca/mbs/psb/psb.nsf/Attachments/001-BPS_Procurement_Directive/$FILE/BPS_Procurement_Directive.pdf)

Important Notice (Ontario):

In 2019 the Ontario government announced it was transitioning to a more modern, efficient and transparent approach for procuring goods and services. The purpose of this approach is to eliminate redundancies and deliver simpler, faster, better services towards a goal of achieving the best value for every public dollar spent. The Ontario government intends to centralize procurement across the broader public sector. By leveraging buying power and streamlining processes, procurement will become more efficient and reduce costs. A single streamline approach will make it easier for companies of all sizes to work with the government and BPS. Changes to Ontario procurement processes will be implemented throughout 2020. We recommend that you keep yourself familiar with interim measures and new information via <https://www.doingbusiness.mgs.gov.on.ca/mbs/psb/psb.nsf/English/SCC-IM-FAQS-EN>

Selling Opportunity

Similar to municipalities, BPS entities are ideal for small to medium sized businesses to sell to. Goods and services purchased by a PBS entity are often more narrow or specialized in their needs. Procurement decisions are usually made by staff within the organization enabling buyer – seller relationships to be established. More centralized procurement may occur in larger BPS entities (e.g., healthcare and education) while procurement decisions within smaller organizations are often delegated to managers or supervisors overseeing a department. Sellers should make themselves familiar with the procurement processes of BPS entities within their region and any others they wish to do business with.

Use of Group Purchasing Contracts

As BPS organizations are government funded entities they also have access to the same group purchasing contracts noted under municipalities. These larger group contracts are often used for commodity standard items such as paper, custodial cleaning supplies, classroom furniture, office supplies, etc.

Additional helpful information & links:

- Doing Business with the Ontario Broader Public Sector: A Guide for Small and Medium Enterprises
[https://www.doingbusiness.mgs.gov.on.ca/mbs/psb/psb.nsf/6cccc3a1c31d117f8525746300707e83/35f4f2271419176185257b2e006e5257/\\$FILE/BPSDoingBusiness-Handbook-eng.html](https://www.doingbusiness.mgs.gov.on.ca/mbs/psb/psb.nsf/6cccc3a1c31d117f8525746300707e83/35f4f2271419176185257b2e006e5257/$FILE/BPSDoingBusiness-Handbook-eng.html)
- Procurement Guideline for Publicly Funded Organizations in Ontario
<https://www.doingbusiness.mgs.gov.on.ca/mbs/psb/psb.nsf/English/bps-procurementguideline>

CONCLUSION

Although selling to government and the broader public sector may initially be viewed as onerous, complex and filled with rules, governments are increasingly improving the information they provide to suppliers to inform and facilitate access to procurement opportunities. Suppliers who take the time to understand government procurement and the technology used to submit bids are often rewarded with increased sales. Regardless of size and location, businesses should consider doing business with government as part of their sales strategy. All forms of government buy a large and diverse portfolio of goods, services and construction and, the use of procurement portals enables suppliers of all sizes and locations opportunity to view and bid on government needs.

This process can be onerous. In addition to the information links provided in this supplementary there are resources available to assist you including:

- Greenstone Municipal Economic Development (GMED)
- Community Futures Development Corporation (GEDC)
- Chambers of Commerce
- Professional Associations
- Professional consultants
- Internet web searches

REFERENCES

Government of Canada. (2020). Buyandsell.gc.ca. Retrieved January 23, 2020 from
<https://buyandsell.gc.ca/>

Government of Ontario. (2020). Supply Chain Ontario. Retrieved January 23, 2020 from
<https://www.doingbusiness.mgs.gov.on.ca/>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Template Mandatory Requirement Compliance Checklist

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

CLIENT : (enter name)		RFP # (enter RFP/Submission #)
RFP Name: (enter title)		
Questions Dead line: (enter day & date)	Submission Deadline: (enter day & date)	

	MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS (enter separate requirement on each line)	Details/Comments (enter details/specific wording for each requirement where applicable)	RFP Page #	Proposal Page #	Verified By (initials)
1	Mandatory Submittal Page				
2	Addenda				
3					
4					

	RECOMMENDATIONS	Decision	RFP Page #	Proposal Page #	Verified By (initials)
1	(copy recommendation statement from RFP here)	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopting <input type="checkbox"/> Rejecting			
2	(copy recommendation statement from RFP here)	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopting <input type="checkbox"/> Rejecting			

QUESTIONS		Date	Verified By
(Enter questions submitted by you and other proponents. If questions are submitted Buyer will release a copy of a list of all questions and responses to all registered proponents). Addenda to the RFP may result from the questions or if the Client has discovered an error or oversight in the original RFP)		(submitted/ received/ amended)	(initials)
1	Question: (Copy question here)		
	Response: (Copy response here)		
	Addressed in proposal: (enter location, e.g., page, paragraph #, etc.)		
2	Question: (Copy question here)		
	Response: (Copy response here)		
	Addressed in proposal: (enter location, e.g., page, paragraph #, etc.)		

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Appendix 2

Example Mandatory Submittal Form

MANDATORY SUBMITTAL FORM	
(This FORM <u>must be</u> completed and returned with the Submitted Proposal)	
Proponent Covenant:	
I/We the undersigned authorized signing officer of the Proponent, hereby declare that no person, firm or corporation other than the one represented by the signature below, has any interest in this proposal.	
I/We further declare that all statements, schedules and other information provided in this submission are true, complete and accurate in all respects to the best knowledge and belief of the Proponent.	
I/We further declare that this submission is made without collusion, connection, knowledge, or comparison of figures or arrangements with any other corporation, firm, or persons making a submission and that it is in all respects fair.	
I/We understand that this may result in the rejection of our submission if this declaration is found to be untrue.	
I/We have received, allowed for and included as a part of our submission all issued Addenda.	
I/We have received _____ (state number) addenda .	
PRINT LEGAL NAME OF FIRM	
MAILING ADDRESS	
CITY	POSTAL CODE
NAME OF CONTACT PERSON (print)	PHONE NUMBER
FAX NUMBER	CELLULAR NUMBER
E-MAIL ADDRESS	
SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL	
PRINT NAME	
DATE	

Appendix 3

Example Conflict of Interest and Information Disclosure Statements

Conflict of Interest

The proponent must declare all potential Conflicts of Interest, as defined in section (##) of the RFP. This includes disclosing the names and all pertinent details of all individuals (employees, advisers, or individuals acting in any other capacity) who (a) participated in the preparation of the proposal; AND (b) were employees of the City within twelve (12) months prior to the Submission Deadline.

- ☐ The proponent hereby declares there was no Conflict of Interest in preparing its proposal and there are no foreseeable conflicts of Interest in performing the contractual obligations contemplated in the RFP.
- ☐ The proponent hereby declares that there is an actual or potential Conflict of Interest relating to the preparation of its proposal, and/or the proponent foresees an actual or potential Conflict of Interest in performing the contractual obligations contemplated in the RFP. The details of the actual or potential Conflict of Interest are as follows:

Disclosure of Information

The proponent hereby agrees that any information provided in this proposal, even if it is identified as being supplied in confidence, may be disclosed where required by law or by order of a court or tribunal. The proponent hereby consents to the disclosure, on a confidential basis, of this proposal by the Client to the advisers retained by the Client to advise or assist with the RFP process, including with respect to the evaluation this proposal.

Appendix 4

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Appendix 5

Example of Procurement Schedule (Gantt Style)

