

WHY YOU SHOULD

BID FOR BUSINESS **UK Government Contracts**

BY ALAN BROWN

Increase Your Revenue
Unlock Opportunities
Secure Your Future



Small & Medium Sized
Enterprises Edition



WELCOME

LET'S GET STARTED!

Hi, I'm Alan Brown, and I'm excited to introduce you to the world of public sector contracts for SMEs. As a small business owner myself, I know first-hand the challenges and complexities of navigating the government and local authority procurement process.

But trust me, it's worth it!

I have been involved in delivering government contracts and mandated programs for many departments including the DWP, NHS, MoJ, DfE and I know that winning your first public sector contract can be a game-changer for your business, opening doors to new opportunities and long-term growth.

BID FOR BUSINESS was created to demystify the process, highlight the possibilities and encourage you to enter into this often-overlooked market and this easy to follow guide is designed to be straightforward and accessible answering essential questions, breaking down the complexities into understandable steps and getting you started. The **BID FOR BUSINESS** framework later in the guide illustrates the essential steps required.

And remember, my team at **BID FOR BUSINESS** and I are always here to support you.

So, let's dive in, first step is the hardest and we are here to take it with you!



A stylized, handwritten signature of the name 'Alan' in white ink.

ALAN BROWN
FOUNDER BID FOR BUSINESS
DIRECTOR
BROWN HAT LIMITED

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WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY



Claire Henderson

TMA Data Systems Ltd.



Working with Alan and the team has been an invaluable experience. For anyone looking to master bid writing and thrive in a complex industry, I can't recommend Alan highly enough.

The expertise and personalized approach offered by Alan and his team are truly unmatched, but what truly sets them apart is their ability to make even the most complicated concepts accessible and understandable.



Dieter Koch

Cirax Compliance Ltd.



Alan's expertise in bid writing is truly remarkable. His deep understanding of the process and his ability to communicate it clearly gave me the confidence to navigate this new challenge successfully. The dedication and enthusiasm Alan brings to his work are unmatched, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to have worked with him.

For anyone looking to master bid writing Alan's insights and guidance will be indispensable. He's a true asset, and I can't recommend him highly enough.

WHAT IS THE MARKET LIKE ?

WHAT EXACTLY IS A SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE OR SME ?

- Micro-enterprises up to 10 employees - turnover up to £1.8m
- Small enterprises up to 50 employees - turnover up to £10.2m
- Medium-sized enterprises up to 250 employees - turnover up to £36m

The UK has

5.7 million

SMEs

Generating a staggering

£ 1.9 trillion

turnover

Employing

16 million

people

HOW MANY SME HAVE ENTERED THE PUBLIC SECTOR ?

- Not as many as you think and nothing like as many as there should be!

CONTRACTS AWARDED TO SMEs in 2021

21%
of all contracts

equivalent to
£38 billion



132k
SMEs



2.32%
OF ALL SMEs

UK GOVERNMENT SME AWARD TARGET for 2023/24

33%
of all contracts

equivalent to
£59 billion

73,000

more SMEs than 2021



Your Government Needs You !

Make no mistake, regardless of the party in power – public sector procurement is not going away as it has proved to be the most effective way to keep a tight control on government spending.

The most important thing to keep in mind is that by recognizing the unique strengths of your business and aligning its capabilities with the needs of the public sector, you can secure these contracts.

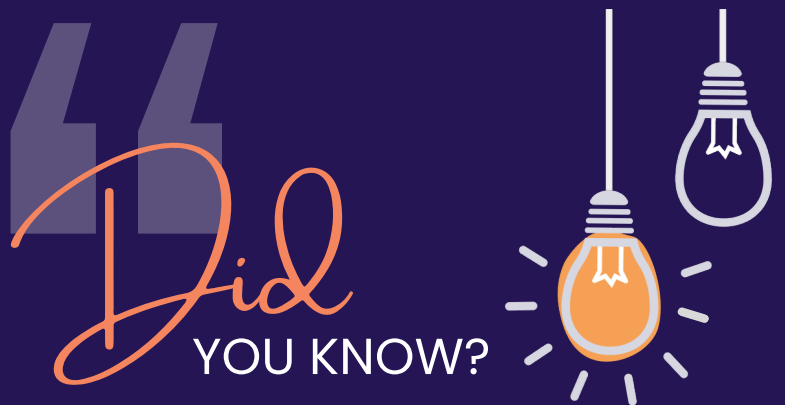
Remember you can always reach out to the team at Brown Hat
b4b@bidforbusiness.net



Many large government contracts are divided into smaller parts, called LOTs, to make them more accessible and manageable for businesses, especially SMEs. This approach offers several advantages for SMEs including increased opportunities and reduced financial risk.



BID FOR BUSINESS



Government contracts are subject to public scrutiny and require a high degree of transparency in terms of pricing, performance, and outcomes. This combined with the Governments commitment to spend with SMEs, ensures that the Government actively demonstrates its dedication to supporting SME growth and encouraging innovation within the public sector.



What kind of customer is the UK GOVERNMENT

The government, both local and national, is quite a unique customer when you compare it to your existing commercial clients.

Sheer scale and variety

One of the first things you'll notice is the massive range and variety of projects they're involved in. They take care of everything from healthcare and education to infrastructure and defence. This means that businesses working with the government can access all sorts of contracts, big and small, simple and complex, covering a wide array of sectors.

Transparency & Accountability

Another thing that makes the government stand out is how transparent and accountable they have to be when it comes to procurement. When you're bidding for a government contract, there are quite a few rules and regulations to follow, ensuring a fair competition and responsible use of taxpayers' money. Not only do government contracts often require extensive reporting, but they also focus on how a task was completed, not just that it was done. Although this might make the bidding process a bit more complicated and time-consuming compared to private sector contracts.

What are the differences from serving your existing commercial customers and the public sector ?

It's also an excellent chance for businesses to show off their dedication to quality, professionalism, and ethical practices, which can really boost their reputation in the market.

Social Value

Lastly, the government's focus on social value and long-term goals is something you don't always see with commercial customers. While most businesses are all about profits and efficiency, public sector organisations have a broader set of objectives, like improving social outcomes, driving economic growth, and protecting the environment. This means that when you work with the government, you get to be part of meaningful projects that can make a real difference in people's lives. Plus, government contracts often encourage collaboration, innovation, and sharing of knowledge, which can help businesses learn and grow while working towards a common purpose. On contracts worth over £123k Social Value makes up at least 10% of the bid decision but can be as much as 30% so it is imperative that you have this as part of your bid.

WHO CAN BID FOR BUSINESS ?

The simple answer is – any business, of any size.

This list is not exhaustive by any means, but it does illustrate the range of opportunities available to SMEs in various industries and sectors.

Construction and infrastructure

Government and local authorities often require construction, renovation, and maintenance services for public buildings, schools, hospitals, roads, bridges, and utilities.

IT and digital services

There is an increasing need for IT and digital solutions such as software development, web design, cybersecurity, data analytics, cloud computing, and digital transformation initiatives.

Professional and consultancy services

Government organizations frequently seek external consultants for expertise in areas like management, financial services, legal advice, human resources, marketing, and strategic planning.

Healthcare and social care

Supply of healthcare-related services, including medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, and specialized care services. Local authorities may also need social care services for elderly and disabled individuals, as well as children and families.

Education and training

SMEs can offer educational and training services, encompassing curriculum development, e-learning solutions, training workshops, and career development programs.

Environmental and sustainability services

Services related to environmental management, waste management, recycling, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainability consultancy are increasingly in demand.

Facilities management & maintenance

Government organizations and local authorities require services like cleaning, landscaping, pest control, security, and catering.

Transport and logistics

Public sector organizations need transport and logistics solutions, including fleet management, courier services, and public transportation.

Research and development

Government-funded research projects provide opportunities for SMEs specializing in R&D across sectors such as life sciences, advanced manufacturing, and clean technology.

Manufacturing and supply chain

SMEs can contribute to the manufacturing and supply of goods and equipment needed by public sector organizations, like office furniture, uniforms, personal protective equipment (PPE), and other specialized products.



How do I get started ?

BID FOR BUSINESS FRAMEWORK



Preparation

Register on procurement portals, establish your unique selling proposition, learn about public sector procurement procedures but most importantly get your business ready to enter this market by building your 'Bid Library'.



Research and Evaluation

Search for opportunities that match your capabilities and goals on procurement portals. Utilize filters and CPV codes for efficient searching. Evaluate those opportunities to ensure you are a good fit.



Bid Creation

Draft a tailored proposal that meets the specific requirements of the contract, highlighting your company's strengths and delivery plan.



Submission and Follow-Up

Submit your bid on time, adhering strictly to submission guidelines. Monitor your bid's status and engage in any required post-submission communication.



Review and Refine

Post-bidding, review your process. Identify what worked and what didn't, seek feedback, and refine your approach for future bids based on this feedback.

Searching for Opportunities

The UK government's Find a Tender Service is your gateway to public sector contract opportunities. Making the best use of this and information it provides is vital as it is the key to unlocking opportunities for your business.

Explore the Find a Tender Service: Head over to the official UK government's platform for public sector contracts, the Find a Tender Service (<https://www.find-tender.service.gov.uk>).

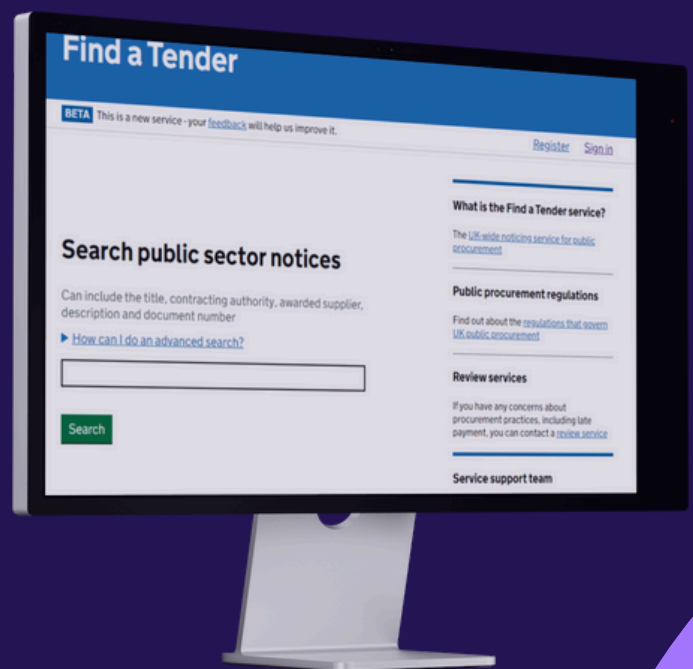
To make full use of the platform, make sure to register. This way, you can save your searches, set up email alerts for new opportunities, and be ready to respond to tenders.

Define Your Search Criteria: Use the search bar and enter keywords that are most relevant to your business. You could enter terms related to the services or products your business offers. Alternatively, you can use Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV) codes. These are standard codes used by the European Union to categorize different types of goods and services. Using these codes can help you find contracts that are directly related to your business offering.

(A useful website to help with CPV (Common Procurement Vocabulary) codes is SIMAP (Information System for European Public Procurement), which provides a comprehensive CPV code directory. The direct link to the English version of the CPV code search function is: Go to <https://simap.ted.europa.eu/cpv> for more information. This tool allows you to search for specific codes or terms to find the relevant CPV code for your industry or service.)

Make Use of Advanced Search: Don't forget the advanced search function. It's a versatile tool that allows you to narrow down your search by location, contract type, sector, and even by specific organisations. With these filters, you can really focus on finding opportunities that fit your business's capabilities and goals.

Sort and Scan Results: Once you've got your search results, you can sort them by different criteria like publication date, deadline, estimated contract value, and more. Regularly reviewing these listings will ensure you stay up-to-date with new postings.



Dive into Contract Details: By clicking on a contract title, you can access more details about it. This includes a description of the contract, the scope of the work, deadlines, the contracting authority, the timeline for the contract, any specific requirements or qualifications needed, and the criteria that will be used to evaluate bids.

Express Interest and Gather Documents: If the contract is appealing to you, the next step is to express your interest. This may require you to register on another tender platform, especially if it's a local authority contract. Once you've registered your interest, you'll get access to the full set of tender documents.

Join Preliminary Calls: Some contracts will offer exploratory or pre-tender calls before the bid submission deadline. These calls are a chance to get more information and clarity about the contract and the bidding process. Participating in these calls can be very beneficial.

Prepare Your Bid: Once you have all the information and documents, you can start preparing your bid. Ensure you respond thoroughly to all the requirements laid out in the tender documents, and present a compelling case for why your business is the best fit for the contract.

Submit Your Bid: When your bid is ready and you've checked it over, submit it via the tender portal before the deadline. Late submissions are usually not accepted, so be sure to give yourself plenty of time.

Wait for Evaluation: After submission, your bid will be evaluated along with others. The contracting authority will usually notify you about the outcome.

Learn and Improve: Whether you win or lose the contract, there's always room for learning and improvement. Ask for feedback from the contracting authority and use it to strengthen your future bids.

IS IT WORTH IT?

There are many benefits but here are are our top five!

1

STABLE INCOME SOURCE

Government and local authority contracts often provide a stable income source for the duration of the contract, reducing the uncertainty that can come with private sector projects.

2

LARGE CONTRACT VALUES

Some government contracts have high contract values, offering the potential for significant revenue and profit for businesses that can secure them.

3

REPUTATION BOOST

Winning a government or local authority contract can enhance a company's reputation, demonstrating that it has met the rigorous standards and requirements necessary to work with public sector organizations.

4

LONG-TERM CONTRACTS

Many government and local authority contracts are long-term agreements, offering businesses the opportunity to develop a lasting relationship with the contracting authority and the potential for future contracts.

5

SOCIAL IMPACT

Working with government and local authorities allows businesses to contribute to public services and make a positive social impact in their community.



To illustrate the benefits of winning your first public sector contract we are going to take the genuine* (but renamed - for the purposes of this guide) business - Brown Hat Landscape Gardening - and in the style of a simple case study, show the **very real benefits** available to all small businesses in the UK.

BROWN HAT LANDSCAPE GARDENING

A real case study showcasing real benefits

AT A GLANCE

CHALLENGES

- Growth
- All year round work
- Irregular cashflow

BENEFITS

- Growth without marketing
- 12 month security
- Dependable cashflow

Financial Stability

The contract provided a steady income, helping to offset seasonal fluctuations and stabilize cash flow.

Growth

The company was able to expand its team to 20 employees, creating new jobs and opportunities for skilled workers in the community.

Enhanced Reputation

Successfully managing the local government grounds enhanced Brown Hat Landscape Gardening's reputation and credibility, leading to an influx of new clients from both the public and private sectors.

THE COMPANY

Brown Hat Landscape Gardening, a family-owned business, was established 10 years ago, providing high-quality landscape gardening services to private clients. Despite their steady growth, they sought to expand their client base and establish a more stable revenue stream.

THE OPPORTUNITY

In August 2022, the local government issued a public tender for a three-year contract to maintain various public grounds, including parks, green spaces, and recreation areas. Brown Hat Landscape Gardening saw this as an excellent opportunity to diversify their portfolio and grow their business.

BEFORE WINNING THE CONTRACT

Before securing the contract, Brown Hat Landscape Gardening had a team of 12 dedicated employees, working primarily on residential and small commercial projects. The company was well-regarded in their community, but they struggled with seasonal fluctuations in demand, which affected their cash flow and limited their growth potential.

THE BIDDING PROCESS

Brown Hat Landscape Gardening invested time and resources into preparing a comprehensive bid, highlighting their commitment to sustainability, use of eco-friendly practices, and track record of delivering exceptional results. They emphasized their ability to enhance the visual appeal of public grounds while meeting the local government's environmental objectives and budget constraints.

WINNING THE CONTRACT

In Jan 2023, Brown Hat Landscape Gardening was awarded the three-year contract for maintaining local government grounds. This achievement was a testament to their hard work, dedication, and focus on delivering top-quality services.

*Confidentiality agreements with all our clients prevent us from naming individual business so for the purposes of this guide this case study was anonymised by changing it to Brown Hat Landscape Gardening

BID FOR BUSINESS

Open your business to a world of genuine opportunities!

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