



Ministry of
JUSTICE

National Offender
Management Service



European Union
European Social Fund
Investing in jobs and skills

Helpful Hints for better bids

March 2012

A few useful tips to consider

All too often we find that bidders are excluded because they make a number of basic errors. This leaflet provides helpful guidance to ensure that your bid reliably reflects what your consortium has to offer.

- Show you understand what they want
 - Read the Specification – don't be afraid to clarify areas of uncertainty
 - Answer the question they asked (not the one you want to answer)
 - Answer the question fully - nothing is too obvious
- Check Spelling and Grammar - get someone else to proof read it
- Don't fall at the first hurdle
 - Stick to the word count
 - If there is a word count, save words by referencing and using cross-referencing occasionally
 - Use plain English and avoid jargon
 - Deadlines matter – respond in time!
- Focus on the big hit requirements
 - Ensure you understand the scoring system - look at any weightings being applied
 - Higher weightings often attract a longer word count
- Be bold; be audacious; demonstrate your worth
 - Explain your approach and why it is a good one
 - Say what you will do and why - demonstrate your understanding of the requirement
 - Explain how you will adapt what you offer to different circumstances
 - Use attachments where allowed

This activity is about consortia building and the support they need

- The value added by the partners in each consortia will be embraced in the evaluation criteria
- The activity will draw upon “Social Clauses” to support a number of NOMS objectives –grants will not be awarded to the “cheapest” proposals as the focus is on quality
- The Authority is aiming to nurture smaller organisations through this activity – make the most of today, ensure you feed in ideas for technical support that you would find most valuable and explore the potential links to the main co-financing programme

The Procurement Process

The procurement process supporting the NOMS CFO Social Enterprise Programme has been designed to give prospective bidders the time they need to form strong consortia and design innovative proposals. NOMS CFO is supporting this process through engaging with the organisations at these launch events and by providing technical support to bidders throughout the procurement process.

We have designed the procurement process so that there is time for organisations to come together through consortia building; new groups of organisations will be able to come together and form a structure which will enhance their competitiveness and sustainability.

NOMS CFO will then undertake to provide more detailed technical support to consortia shortlisted following the evaluation of the initial submissions. This will allow us to work with a significant number of consortia to enable their proposals to be further developed and refined. This will also involve a two-way dialogue to explore the strengths of each proposal. Consortia will then be invited to submit a final proposal for the Authority to consider.

Some key milestones in the procurement process are:

- Competition advert published via Contracts Finder – February
- Deadline for submitting a Expression of Interest – March
- Deadline for submitting the first Request for Proposal (RFP) response – June
- Shortlist of bidders taken forward to second stage announced – July
- Publication of the result of the procurement process – November

Further information will be found via the Contracts Finder website: <http://www.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk/>