



# *Your Guide to doing Business with the Government of Canada*



*A 5-Step approach for small and  
medium enterprises*

Office of Small and Medium Enterprises



Public Works and  
Government Services  
Canada

Travaux publics et  
Services gouvernementaux  
Canada

Canada

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# *Your Guide to doing Business with the Government of Canada*

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# Introduction

If you own or operate a business and are interested in selling your goods or services to the federal government, this guide will help you understand the basics of procurement. The guide explains the steps involved in how to do business with the Government of Canada. It is one of several products and services provided by the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises to businesses wanting to sell to the Government of Canada.

The guide is divided into five steps:

**Step 1:** Understand the Process

**Step 2:** Register Your Business

**Step 3:** Promote Yourself

**Step 4:** Search for Opportunities

**Step 5:** Bid on Opportunities

In addition to the basic information provided in this guide, there are many other resources that may help you with the process. You will find a list of resources and a glossary of key terms at the end of the guide.

## *Seminars*

The Office of Small and Medium Enterprises offers free seminars to explain the federal purchasing process and how to sell goods and services to the Government of Canada.

Seminar Topics Include:

- Overview of the contracting process
- Standing Offers and Supply Arrangements
- Registering in the Supplier Registration

Information System

- Getting a Procurement Business Number
- Registering in Professional Services Online and/or SELECT
- Finding key purchasing contacts at Public Works and Government Services Canada and in other government departments
- Conducting market research through searching previously awarded contracts
- Searching for opportunities on MERX™

## **Other Services of the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises**

The Office of Small and Medium Enterprises is a sector within Public Works and Government Services Canada. The office provides information and advice to small and medium enterprises interested in doing business with the federal government by:

- Providing information, counselling services
- Helping reduce competition barriers and simplifying the government contracting process
- Working closely with the business community to ensure their concerns and views are brought forward and heard

- Finding subcontracting opportunities
- Obtaining security clearances
- Responding to bids

#### Removal of Barriers

The Office of Small and Medium Enterprises and Public Works and Government Services Canada have worked together to remove barriers to competition and make it easier for small and medium enterprises to do business with the federal government. This includes:

- eliminating the fees on MERX™ to access documents on all Federal opportunities
- simplifying the language in bid solicitations and contacts
- educating procurement specialists on small and medium enterprises' concerns and barriers through presentations
- developing guidelines for creating procurement strategies that give the enterprises fair and equal access to federal procurement opportunities

### What is a small and medium enterprise?

There are 2.3 million\* small and medium enterprises in Canada. They are significant contributors to Canada's economic performance.

	Goods	Services
<b>Small Enterprise</b>	< 100 employees	< 50 employees
<b>Medium Enterprise</b>	100-499 employees	50-499 employees

\* Source: Industry Canada Key Small Business Statistics, July 2008

### Seminar Participant Feedback

"The seminar offered me a good overview of the wide variety of opportunities to sell to the federal government. It improved my awareness of the processes and tools for doing business with the government. The presenters were well prepared, organized and engaged well with the audience.

Attending the seminar was worth my while."

### Questions? Concerns?

For more information about the services offered or to discuss barriers you are facing, contact one of the regional offices across Canada, or call the national InfoLine at 1-800-811-1148.

#### Western Region

10025 Jasper Avenue  
 Telus Plaza North, 5th Floor  
 Edmonton, Alberta T5J 1S6  
 osme-bpme-wst@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca  
 Telephone: 780-497-3601

#### Atlantic Region

236 Brownlow Avenue  
 Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B3B 1V5  
 osme-bpme-atl@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca  
 Telephone: 902-426-5677

#### National Capital Region

11 Laurier Street, 0C1-100A  
 Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0S5  
 ncr.osme@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca  
 Toll Free Infoline: 1-800-811-1148

#### Pacific Region

800 Burrard Street, Room 1210  
 Mailing: 800 Burrard Street, Room 641  
 Vancouver, British Columbia V6Z 2V8  
 osme-bpme-pac@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca  
 Telephone: 604-666-8295  
 Toll free: 1-866-602-0403

#### Quebec Region

Southeast Portal, 800 de la Gauchetière Street  
 West, Suite 7300  
 Montreal, Quebec H5A 1L6  
 QueBPME.QueOSME@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca  
 Telephone: 514-496-3525

#### Ontario Region

4900 Yonge Street  
 Toronto, Ontario M2N 6A6  
 ont.osme@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca  
 Telephone: 416-512-5577  
 Toll-free: 1-800-668-5378

The Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Contracts Canada site <http://contractscanada.gc.ca>, provides a single point of contact for small and medium enterprises and up-to-date information on how to navigate the government procurement system and listing of seminars across the country.



## Step 1: Understand the Process

### Did you know?

The federal government is one of the biggest national buyers of goods and services, purchasing over \$20 billion worth each year. In recent years Public Works and Government Services Canada, on behalf of government departments and agencies, contracted for over 5,300 different types of goods and services in all price ranges\*.

It may surprise you to know that, besides goods and services like military vehicles, office supplies and consultant services, the Government of Canada also buys:

Goods	Services
Ice cream	Window washing
Bug spray	Medical
Flowers	Film design
Lumber	Sculpture

\* PWGSC Acquisition Information System Database, July 2008 ( data describe 2005-06 to 2007-08 fiscal years).

### WHO DOES THE BUYING?

Public Works and Government Services Canada is the main purchaser of goods and services (including construction) for the Government of Canada. Public Works and Government Services Canada buys over \$12 billion a year of goods and services on behalf of a large number of federal departments and agencies. Purchasing through Public Works and Government Services Canada means that federal departments and agencies can benefit from the experience of dedicated procurement specialists and the Government can obtain advantages from economies of scale – in short, it allows the Government to achieve better value in the procurement process.

Because Public Works and Government Services Canada is the largest federal purchaser, it is a good idea to become familiar with its purchasing processes. This guide gives you an overview of the

### Did you know?

There is a BIG market for small and medium enterprises!

In recent years, an average of 43% of new contracts awarded by Public Works and Government Services Canada have gone to small and medium enterprises located in Canada.

Source: PWGSC Acquisition Information System (data describe 2005-06 to 2007-08 fiscal years).



process; you can find more information about Public Works and Government Services Canada and its purchasing processes on the website at [www.pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca](http://www.pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca)

#### *Other federal departments and agencies*

Some goods and services must be purchased through Public Works and Government Services Canada, however, individual departments and agencies have the authority to purchase their own goods and services (in most cases, up to \$25,000 worth of goods and, up to \$2,000,000 of services). Most have procurement officers who handle department's/agency's purchasing, and the purchasing processes may vary from those of Public Works and Government Services Canada.

#### *Construction*

Although departments and agencies can buy most of their construction supplies and services directly, Public Works and Government Services Canada also purchases a broad range of these services in support of departments and agencies.

There are different contracting limits for architectural and engineering services, and these, along with information about the delegations for goods, services and construction, can be found in Appendix C (Treasury Board Contracts Directive) of the Contracting Policy. It is available on the Treasury Board Secretariat website at [www.tbs-sct.gc.ca](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca)

## HOW IS PURCHASING DONE?

Every purchase the government makes is subject to Canadian laws and regulations, government

policies and/or Canada's trade obligations.

Purchases must also align with the Government of Canada contracting objectives such as procuring goods and services in a way that enhances access and competition, ensuring best value and treating industry fairly. In keeping with the Government Contracts Regulations, purchasing is done through a competitive procurement process whenever possible;

### Framework for Procurement Activities

Public Works and Government Services Canada supply activities are carried out in respect to four major statutes. The following acts govern the procurement process:

- Financial Administration Act
- Department of Public Works and Government Services Act
- Defence Production Act
- Comprehensive Land Claim Agreements

Other guidelines for procurement include:

- Government Contracts Regulations
- Treasury Board Contracting Policy

non-competitive processes are used on an exceptional basis.

#### *The competitive approach*

The competitive process aims to get the best value for Canadians while enhancing access, competition and fairness. The majority of small and medium enterprise contracts are done competitively, making it the most common approach used by the government.

#### Contracts above \$25,000

Many of the federal government's opportunities over \$25,000 are posted through the Government Electronic Tendering Service hosted on MERX™.

Various procurement mechanisms (such as Professional Services Online and SELECT<sup>1</sup>) allow the government to purchase up to \$76,600 of professional services and real property consulting services and up to \$100,000 for construction services without using MERX™. For more information on these database systems, see Step 2.

## Solicitation Types

**Request for Quotation:** For contracts valued under \$25,000. The bid documents are kept simple and allow contracts to be awarded quickly.

**Invitation to Tender:** For contracts over \$25,000 that are fairly straightforward in nature. In this case, the supplier submitting the lowest tender complying with mandatory requirements is awarded the contract. This is primarily used for construction needs.

**Request for Standing Offer:** Done in an effort to establish offers from potential suppliers for goods or services that are purchased on a regular (as-needed) basis at pre-arranged prices.

**Request for Supply Arrangement:** Done in an effort to create a list of pre-qualified suppliers; however, this arrangement allows for negotiation and/or price competition at the time it is used.

**Request for Proposal:** Most common method - used when the selection cannot be made simply on the basis of the lowest cost. It uses selection criteria that are defined in the bid document and seek proposed solutions to the requirement. Specifications are performance-based and focus on the desired outcome rather than the method of supply or the design.

**Request for Information:** It is not a bidding opportunity but a document requesting information from the supplier community. In this case, industry feedback is sought on a proposed procurement strategy prior to the release of a solicitation document. While not a bid document, it is an important opportunity for you to help shape the resulting requirements and provide your input and advice to the procurement community.

<sup>1</sup> See glossary for terms definitions.

### Contracts below \$25,000

When the value is below this amount, buyers may contact suppliers directly. These contracts are considered by Public Works and Government Services Canada as low dollar value procurement. In this case, buyers will determine the most appropriate procurement strategy for each requirement to obtain best value and ensure the timeliness and cost-effectiveness of each contract. Buyers may use various methods to identify and select a supplier on either a competitive or directed basis.

### Standing Offers

A standing offer creates a list of qualified suppliers from which buyers can easily purchase the goods and services that the government requires. It is an agreement that a good or service will be provided at a certain price, on an as-needed basis, with established terms and conditions and no negotiations.

Suppliers must go through the competitive process to become what is known as a standing offer holder – this means you have been successfully evaluated against the criteria in the Request for Standing Offer solicitation document and issued a standing offer. When more than one successful supplier meets the requirements, suppliers are ranked and/or allocated business volumes according to a predefined system (defined during the competitive process) that is transparent and fair. It is also possible for only a single supplier to qualify for a standing offer and receive all of the associated business.

A standing offer is **not** a contract and there are no obligations for the Government of Canada to purchase. When a need is identified for a good or service for which a standing offer exists, a “call-up” document is sent to a supplier listed on the standing offer. With each “call-up” a separate contract is formed. The “call-up” is an unconditional acceptance by the Government of Canada of your offer to supply the goods or services described in the standing offer. You, as the supplier, and the Government of Canada, as the buyer, are obligated to abide by the terms and conditions in the standing offer.

### *Mandatory Standing Offer*

If a standing offer exists for goods and services that fall into a subcategory of one of the following 10 commodities, buyers **must** purchase from a standing offer holder:

- ground effect vehicles, motor vehicles, trailer and cycles
- telecommunications equipment and accessories
- computer equipment, software, supplies and support equipment
- furniture
- office supplies and equipment
- office machines, text processing and recording equipment
- clothing accessories and insignia
- fuels, lubricants, oils and waxes
- information processing and related telecommunications services

- professional, administrative, and management support services

If a mandatory standing offer exists for your goods or services, you will need to become a standing offer holder in order to get government business. To find out if there is a standing offer and if the standing offer is mandatory, contact the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises. You can also use the Procurement Allocations Directory, accessible from the Contracts Canada web site (<http://contractscanada.gc.ca>) to find the Public Works and Government Services Canada commodity manager responsible for your good or service.

### Supply Arrangements

A supply arrangement is similar to a standing offer in that it creates a list of qualified suppliers for a given good or service. Supply arrangements are non-binding agreements between the Government of Canada and suppliers to provide a range of goods and, more commonly, services on an 'as-required' basis. They include a set of pre-determined terms and conditions that will apply to the resulting contract; however, unlike standing offers, supply arrangements allow for variation, and elements of the resulting contract may be negotiated.

Like standing offers, supply arrangements are not contracts. When a need is identified for a good or service for which a supply arrangement exists, a competition is held amongst the supply arrangement holders. This process is often referred to as a mini Request for Proposal. In

this case, a specific statement of work is sent to suppliers in the pool and a contract will be awarded to the lowest priced responsive or compliant bidder. Note: there may be a system in place to identify which suppliers the Request for Proposal will be sent to – ask the buyer if it is not clear.

A separate contract will result for each of these requests, and it will be formulated within the scope of the supply arrangements.

### *The non-competitive approach*

The non-competitive approach is only used in certain special circumstances:

- There is a pressing emergency, such as a life-threatening situation, or a disaster which endangers the lives of Canadians or may result in loss or damage to government property
- It would not be in the public interest due to the nature of the work (for example, requirements dealing with national security such as some military projects to ensure that future needs of government can be met)



## What's an Advance Contract Award Notice?

When only one supplier is believed to be able to fulfill the requirement, an Advance Contract Award Notice (ACAN) is often published on MERX™ in order to indicate that the Government of Canada intends to award a contract to a pre-identified supplier and give other suppliers the opportunity to submit a statement of capabilities for the requirement. These notices are posted for a minimum of 15 calendar days. During this period, potential suppliers can complete the statement of capabilities explaining how they could fulfill the requirements. If one or more suppliers meet the requirements, the contracting officer will then proceed with the full tendering process.

- Only one supplier is capable of fulfilling the requirement or performing the work, such as when a supplier owns a copyright or a licence
- If the proposed contract does not exceed \$25,000 (or \$100,000 in the case of Architectural and Engineering Services)



## Step 2: Register Your Business



There are three main on-line systems operated by Public Works and Government Services Canada that allow you to register your business so that buyers can find you and invite you to bid on opportunities: the Supplier Registration Information system, Professional Services Online and SELECT (for construction and architectural and engineering services). You must register in the Supplier Registration Information system before registering in Professional Services Online or SELECT.

It is your responsibility to register and to keep your information and the information on your consultants, up-to-date.

### SUPPLIER REGISTRATION INFORMATION SYSTEM

Supplier Registration Information is a system that is accessible to all buyers in the federal government. Registering in this system is mandatory when doing business with Public Works and Government Services Canada and recommended when dealing with other departments.

To register in the Supplier Registration Information system, you must have a Canada Revenue Agency Business Number. If you have a Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Services

Tax number, your Business Number is the first nine digits (e.g.: 123456789RT0001). It is also possible to have a Business Number without having a Goods and Services Tax/ Harmonized Services Tax number. If you do not have a Business Number, contact the Canada Revenue Agency at: 1-800-959-5525 or go to their web site at [www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bn](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bn)

Registration in the Supplier Registration Information system is free and takes about 15 minutes. You can register through Contracts Canada at <http://contractscanada.gc.ca>

### PROFESSIONAL SERVICES ONLINE

Professional Services Online is an electronic procurement tool that assists federal departments in the purchasing of information technology

#### Did you know?

When registering in the Supplier Registration Information system it is important to select the commodities (categories of goods and services) that relate to what you sell, because this is the basis for searches by contracting officers.

You will notice that commodities have **Goods and Services Identification Numbers** associated with them. This is simply a code used by the federal government to identify generic product descriptions for its purchasing activities.

services and general professional services. It is a form of supply arrangement and pre-qualifies you as a provider of these services. Buyers can use Professional Services Online to search for potential suppliers and then run competitions (for requirements under \$76,600<sup>2</sup> including Goods and Services Tax/ Harmonized Services Tax, which are not competed on MERX™) to quickly select a successful supplier.

To come up with the list of potential suppliers, buyers search Professional Services Online based on the skills/requirements in the Statement of Work. They then send the bid solicitation document to at least three of the suppliers who match the skills/requirements and have the lowest per diem rates on the list.

If you use consultants and you receive the bid document, it will indicate which consultant came up in the search. While Professional Services Online qualifies you as a supplier, buyers will still need to evaluate your consultant to ensure his/her skills meet the requirement before issuing a contract. They will do this by reviewing your bid document and the consultant's resume or meeting with him or her.

Professional Services Online covers the following professional services:

**Non-Information Technology Streams** (*there are various categories within each of these*)

- Human Resources Management
- Organizational Management
- Project Management



- Organization and Classification Services
- Change Management/Organizational Development Services

#### Information Technology Related Categories

- Business Transformation Architect
- Call Centre Consultant
- Database Administrator/Analyst
- Enterprise Architect Consultant
- Information Architect
- Internet/Intranet Site Specialist
- Information Technology
- Project Executive
- Information Technology Risk Management Service
- Information Technology Security Consultant
- Information Technology Technical Writer
- Information Technology Tester
- Platform Analyst
- Programmer
- Programmer Analyst
- Project Administrator
- Project Leader
- Project Manager

<sup>2</sup> Threshold based on the North American Free Trade Agreement.

- Quality Assurance Consultant
- Senior Platform Analyst
- Senior Systems Analyst
- Systems Auditor
- Technology Analyst
- Technology Architect
- Technology Operator
- Web Accessibility Services
- Wireless Application Services Consultant

You can register for Professional Services Online at:

[www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/sp-ps/fournisseurs-suppliers/index-eng.html](http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/sp-ps/fournisseurs-suppliers/index-eng.html)

### Did you know?

Registering through Professional Services Online also allows you to better market your services to federal departments as you have been pre-qualified to provide those services. If contracting officers know you are registered with Professional Services Online and you or your consultants match the required skill set, they can select you as one of the potential suppliers to bid on contracts..

### Other methods of supply for professional services

Many professional services that are not found on Professional Services Online, such as audit services, are covered by standing offers or supply arrangements.

For information on temporary help services, cyber protection, task-based informatics professional services, in-service support and technical, engineering and maintenance services, visit: [www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/sp-ps-eng.html](http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/sp-ps-eng.html)

For information on **Translation Services**, contact the Translation Bureau at 819-953-2588 or [ncr.trarepertoire@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca](mailto:ncr.trarepertoire@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca)

For information on **Communications and Printing Services**, access the Public Works and Government Services Canada website at: [www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/communications-eng.html](http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/communications-eng.html)

To find out more about standing offers and supply arrangements for your service, contact the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises National InfoLine at 1-800-811-1148 (press option 1 after the greeting) or [ncr.contractscanada@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca](mailto:ncr.contractscanada@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca)





## SELECT

SELECT is a database of approved suppliers who are qualified to perform specialty construction, or architectural and engineering consulting services. By registering with SELECT, you become eligible to provide these services. Suppliers are invited to bid on opportunities for real property consulting services up to \$76,600<sup>3</sup> and opportunities for construction services up to \$100,000<sup>4</sup> on a rotational basis. If you are interested in these types of opportunities, you must register on SELECT, as they may not be completed on MERX™ unless the opportunity is over the dollar thresholds detailed above.

The frequency of invitations to bid depends on the demand for the work and the number of registered firms qualified to perform the services.

You can register at:

<https://select.pwpsc-tpsgc.gc.ca>

## OTHER REGISTRATION SYSTEMS

In addition to the Public Works and Government Services Canada databases, departments and agencies may use their own lists of suppliers. Contact the Materiel Manager (see the “Checklist for Research” in Step 3) of the department or agency you are interested in to make sure that you are maximizing your opportunities.

### *Industry Canada - Aboriginal Business Directory*

Aboriginal Businesses can register in the Aboriginal Business Directory through the Canadian Company Capabilities database. To be

included in the Aboriginal Business directory, businesses must meet Procurement Strategies for Aboriginal Business eligibility policies.

You can register at: <http://www.ic.gc.ca>

### **Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Businesses**

The Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Businesses is designed to help Aboriginal firms do more contracting with all federal government departments and agencies and assist Aboriginal businesses in gaining access to the overall procurement process. The Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Businesses, while led by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, is a Government of Canada initiative. Visit: [www.ainc-inac.gc.ca](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca) for more details.

<sup>3</sup> Threshold based on the North American Free Trade Agreement and subject to change.

<sup>4</sup> Threshold based on the Agreement on Internal Trade and subject to change.

## Step 3: Promote Yourself



### HOW DO I FIND CUSTOMERS?

Public Works and Government Services Canada should be your first point of contact for information about how the goods you sell are bought. If you are interested in service contracts that are under \$25,000, you will want to contact Public Works and Government Services Canada or agencies that may require your service; you can use the Government Electronic Directory Service to find contacts. If you are interested in service contracts over \$25,000, you will often be dealing with Public Works and Government Services Canada. The Office of Small and Medium Enterprises at Public Works and Government Services Canada can provide you with information about how your goods or services are bought or point you in the right direction.

Contact the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises at 1-800-811-1148 or [ncr.contractscanada@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca](mailto:ncr.contractscanada@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca)

### WHO SHOULD I TALK TO?

- Contact the people in the organizations, directorates and divisions within departments that need your goods and services. This is particularly important for contracts under \$25,000, which are often purchased directly by departments and agencies. Take the time to find out about

their needs and let them know that you have the goods and services they are looking for. If the end user or buyer knows of your business, it is more likely that you will be contacted – even by telephone – to provide a quote for your goods or services.

### Environmentally friendly?

Federal departments and agencies are establishing purchasing practices to make government procurement more environmentally responsible. You should ask end users and buyers what environmental attributes they will be asking for in their upcoming solicitations. You also should research the environmental practices and benchmarks in your industry to ensure that your business remains competitive.

For more information visit the website of the Office of Greening Government Operations at:

**[www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/greening/text/index-e.htm](http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/greening/text/index-e.htm)**



- Most departments will designate one person as a technical authority or coordinator for a particular product or service. Ask for the names of people who have the authority to make purchases. Use the Materiel Managers list to find these contacts.
- In the case of low-dollar value procurement, buyers can use a range of sources (Public Works and Government Services Canada's and/or departmental databases, telephone or trade directories...etc.) to identify and select suppliers. If you are qualified under Professional Services Online or have a standing offer or supply arrangement, you can market this fact.

When you contact buyers, keep some of the following questions in mind:

- What is the government purchasing cycle for your good or service?
- How does the department you are interested in buy your good or service? Do they use Public Works and Government Services Canada or do they purchase on their own?
- What method or tool is used for purchasing your good or service? Is there a standing offer or supply arrangement? Is it mandatory? When will it next be up for competition?
- Does the Public Works and Government Services Canada purchasing group buy on behalf of other departments or agencies? Which ones?

### Did you know?

As the main federal government supplier resource, the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises is a very important point of contact for general procurement questions. The office's National InfoLine (**1-800-811-1148**) is an excellent starting point. Agents are on hand to answer your questions and to direct you to the right area and buyer. The office also has regional offices across Canada that can provide you with information and advice. For information on these contacts, please see the *Still Have Questions?* section of this guide.

The Office of Small and Medium Enterprise's Contracts Canada website (<http://contractscanada.gc.ca>) has a wealth of information on doing business with the federal government. From key contacts, tips for getting security clearances and information on seminars in your area, Contracts Canada is an important resource and great place to begin your research.

## A Checklist for Research

### Previous Award Notices

- Learn more about federal purchasing activity in your industry including contract values and successful bidders
- Find out which departments and agencies are likely to want to buy your goods or services
- View previous awards on:
  - MERX™ ([www.merx.com](http://www.merx.com))
  - Contract History on the Contracts Canada site  
<http://contractscanada.gc.ca>
  - The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat Government-Wide Reporting  
[www.sct-tbs.gc.ca](http://www.sct-tbs.gc.ca)

### Procurement Allocation Directory

- Searchable database of key Public Works and Government Services Canada commodity managers at National Headquarters. They should be able to provide you with information on how your goods and services are purchased (e.g. if there is a standing offer in place)
- Found in the “Contacts” section of Contracts Canada:  
<http://contractscanada.gc.ca>

### Departmental Materiel Managers

- Directory of Materiel Managers who manage purchasing in other departments and agencies
- Organized by region and by department
- Found in the “Contacts” section of Contracts Canada:  
<http://contractscanada.gc.ca>

### The Government Electronic

#### Directory Service

- Internet-based address book of all federal government employees
- Use the Government Electronic Directory Service to search – by department or agency – for key contacts in your area of interest
- You can access it at  
<http://sage-geds.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca>

### Office of Small and Medium Enterprises

- Main federal government supplier resource and an important point of contact for general procurement questions
- Get information about federal government procurement through:

National InfoLine:  
**1-800-811-1148**

E-mail:  
**ncr.contractscanada  
@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca**

Contracts Canada site  
<http://contractscanada.gc.ca>

## Step 4: Search for Opportunities

### WHAT IS THE GOVERNMENT ELECTRONIC TENDERING SERVICE?

The Government Electronic Tendering Service is the Government of Canada's tendering system, which allows suppliers to search for bid opportunities online. This service is currently hosted on MERX™, a third party application owned by Mediagrif Interactive Technologies Inc.

#### Did you know?

While MERX™ is the only site for federal opportunities, **www.marcan.net** will give you links to the websites that other Canadian public sector organizations (provinces, territories and municipalities) are using to publish their opportunities.

Both the private and public sectors use MERX™ to post opportunities. This includes many Canadian provinces as well as over 500 municipal, academic, schools and health organizations.

MERX™ is currently the only online tendering service used by the Government of Canada.

The Government of Canada is a signatory to various trade agreements, and these have an impact on procurement activities. Opportunities above the dollar thresholds in the trade agreements are published on MERX™. The table below details the thresholds in the three leading trade agreements. Please note that they are periodically revised and are subject to change.

Some bidding opportunities, however, are not posted on the Government Electronic Tendering Service. Electronic databases such as Professional Services Online and SELECT can be used by buyers for procurements that fall under these thresholds – the limits for these systems are subject to change based on revisions to the trade agreements.

### WHAT CAN I DO ON MERX™ ?

On MERX™ you can search for and download federal government opportunities for free.

Fees may apply to certain services such as having documents mailed to you.

Agreement	Goods	Services	Construction
North American Free Trade Agreement	\$27,300	\$76,600	\$9,900,000
Agreement on Internal Trade	\$25,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
World Trade Organization – Agreement on Government Procurement	\$221,300	\$221,300	\$8,500,000

On MERX™ you can:

- create a profile for “opportunity matching” based on the types of goods or services that you provide; MERX™ will send you opportunities that match your profile (the first profile is free)
- set your profile to receive e-mail updates on opportunities that you have downloaded
- learn more about purchasing activities in your industry by viewing Former Opportunity and Award Notices. This will show you the kind of opportunities that are available and which departments are purchasing your goods or services, therefore giving you a better idea of whom to contact when promoting yourself
- get possible leads for partnering or subcontracting opportunities by finding out who else is interested in the same opportunities as you
- access procurement-related Government of Canada announcements



### Did you know?

There is no cost to access federal opportunities on MERX™. A small Canadian flag identifies these opportunities.

**If you are only interested in accessing federal opportunities, you can register for MERX™ using your Procurement Business Number instead of a credit card number. You can do this online during the registration process or by calling 1-800-964-MERX (-6379).**

## Step 5: Bid on Opportunities

One of the most common types of solicitation documents is the Request for Proposal. While the following section refers mostly to what you will find in the Request for Proposal, the information also applies to other types of solicitation documents.

The following section includes examples of elements that are frequently found in solicitation documents. These are only samples, and it is important to read each solicitation document carefully as the criteria will differ.

### WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW BEFORE I START?

- If you have questions, follow the process specified in the solicitation document. Generally, you will be asked to submit your questions in writing to the buyer (Contracting Authority/Contracting Officer/Procurement Officer). While you can contact the buyer, **do not contact the end-user or your contacts in the client departments or agencies** regarding the particular solicitation process – this may result in your being disqualified.
- Do not make any assumptions about what is required. If you need clarification or think you have found an error, let the buyer know as soon as possible. The bid must be evaluated against the criteria as they are

### Code of Conduct for Procurement

You should take time to familiarize yourself with the *Code of Conduct for Procurement*. The *Code* provides everyone involved in the procurement process – both public servants and suppliers – with a clear statement of mutual expectations to ensure a common basic understanding among all participants in procurement. Everyone involved in the procurement process is expected to abide by the provisions of this *Code*. You can access it at:

**[www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/cndt-cndct/index-eng.html](http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/cndt-cndct/index-eng.html)**

written so changes cannot be made by the buyer after bid closing.

- The buyer will compile all questions and answers and issue an amendment to the solicitation document (if the opportunity was on MERX™, the amendment will be posted there). This ensures that all suppliers have the same information. Pay attention to the timelines specified in the solicitation document, as questions may need to be received before a certain deadline.

The Office of Small and Medium Enterprises cannot help you prepare your proposal for a specific requirement; however, seminars are offered to assist you in understanding the process. For information on free seminars, visit **<http://contractscanada.gc.ca>**



- If you think that the deadline is unreasonable, call the buyer and see if the closing date can be extended. If you do this right away, it may be possible. However, it is not possible to extend the date within three days of the bid closing as it may be too late to notify bidders who may have already sent in their bids.

### HOW DO I PREPARE A PROPOSAL?

The solicitation document will tell you exactly how to lay out your proposal and how it will be evaluated. Make sure you follow the instructions provided and address each and every point completely. You will usually be asked to provide two envelopes: one containing your technical proposal and the other your price proposal.

- Carefully review and make sure you understand the clauses and conditions as well as the standard instructions. These are normally included in each bid solicitation in full text or incorporated by reference. Refer to the Standard Acquisition Clauses and Conditions manual (<http://sacc.pwgsc.gc.ca/sacc>).
- Before you start writing, figure out which requirements are mandatory - the “must haves”. Mandatory requirements are usually evaluated on a simple pass/fail basis. You have to meet all mandatory requirements for your proposal to be compliant.

- Make sure that you complete all of the certifications requested in the bid document. Examples of certifications that may be required include Education and Experience or the Federal Contractors Program for Employment Equity. Depending on the size of your business you will be required to certify for some federal government contracts, that you have made a formal commitment to implement employment equity.
- Make sure you submit these by the time and date specified in the solicitation (some certifications may be submitted later than the bid closing but be sure to check).
- Ensure that your proposal meets the conditions to bid, such as submitting it on time. This is especially important since only responsive bids will be evaluated regardless of the quality of the document.

#### *Technical Section*

- This is where you usually provide the most detail. It is your chance to show the evaluation team that you understand the requirements. Use your own words to describe what and how you would do the work if you were awarded the contract.
- Start with a short introduction that includes an evaluation of the current situation and the need for the project, the objectives of the proposed work, the reasons for carrying it out as proposed and the benefits that will be derived.
- Describe and substantiate the work plan, methodology and techniques that you are proposing. Discuss feasibility and the degree



of success expected, identify any problems anticipated, and provide contingency plans in the event that problems arise.

- Identify specific tasks and deliverables and the schedule for completion or delivery. Provide information about how many people you will assign to the various tasks, their levels (explained by title, not salary) and how many hours or days they will be assigned. Do not include any pricing information in this section. (Note: this may or may not be a requirement of every solicitation).
- Ensure you respond to all requirements so that your proposal clearly details how it meets each and every criterion.
- If you would like to propose an alternative solution, you should respond to the specific request made in the solicitation document first. Do not offer it as a substitute for what is being requested or your proposal might be deemed non-compliant. If you still would like to offer an alternative solution, submit it as a separate bid along with your main bid.

#### *Management Section*

- Introduce your team and demonstrate how they meet the required qualifications. Include any corroborating information required, such as resumes.
- If you will be subcontracting part of the work, the same information should be provided for each subcontractor.
- Do not assume the buyer knows your organization and skills because you have dealt with them before. Each proposal is evaluated solely on its content and members

## Security Clearance

A security clearance is necessary when your personnel, under contract, will require access to Classified/Protected information or sensitive Government of Canada work sites. If this is the case, the buyer or project manager may, through their directorate/department's security office (as required), complete a request for registration that will propose a security clearance for your business and your personnel. The bid document will specify what level of security clearance your business will need. Obtaining a security clearance can be a lengthy process, therefore, if a contract you are interested in bidding on requires a security clearance and you do not have one, speak to the buyer as soon as possible to get the process started.

For more information on security clearances, visit the Industrial Security Program website (<http://iss-ssi.pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca>). You can also contact the call centre at **1-866-368-4646** or **ncr.ciisd@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca**

of the evaluation team are prohibited from using prior knowledge to award points or pass mandatory criteria.

#### *Financial Section*

- Provide a detailed breakdown of the quoted price in terms of its cost elements.
- The solicitation document will tell you what cost items will be considered in the financial evaluation. No other costs will be considered.

### HOW WILL MY PROPOSAL BE EVALUATED?

Proposals are normally evaluated on relevant technical merit and overall best value, in accordance with the selection method specified in the solicitation document.

To ensure fairness, financial information is not sent to the evaluation team.

The evaluation team must evaluate the technical proposal in accordance with evaluation criteria outlined in the solicitation document. Three methods of evaluation may be used:

- evaluation on the basis of mandatory minimum requirements only
- evaluation on the basis of a point rating system only
- evaluation using a combination of mandatory minimum requirements and point rating

In the point-rating system, point-rated criteria are used to determine the relative technical merit of each proposal. Evaluation teams use point-rated

criteria to evaluate the factors over and above the mandatory requirements of the solicitation.

The minimum points that **must** be achieved and the maximum points that **can** be achieved for each criterion are identified in the solicitation document. If you have questions about how the points are being allocated, be sure to ask the Contracting Authority within the time period allowed for questions.

### HOW WILL THE WINNING PROPOSAL BE SELECTED?

#### *Selection on the basis of the lowest price*

- Only those proposals that meet the mandatory criteria are deemed to be valid (i.e., qualify for further consideration).
- Within this category of valid proposals, price is the determining factor in selection.
- The difference between the successful and unsuccessful bidder could be as little as 5 cents, which is why you should be as competitive as possible in your pricing.

#### *Selection on the basis of best overall value*

- The requirements usually include mandatory and point-rated criteria.
- A point rating scale is developed and selection is often based on the bidder offering the lowest compliant cost-per-point proposal. This is determined by dividing the bid price by the total points achieved in the technical evaluation of the bidder's proposal.
- Other methods, besides cost-per-point, may also be used to determine best overall value.

The method being used will be set out in the solicitation document.

*Selection on the basis of the highest technical proposal within a stipulated budget*

- This method is used when seeking the best possible technical solution within a stipulated budget.
- A supplier is invited to propose a solution to a problem or a method of achieving an objective.

## HOW CAN I FOLLOW UP?

### *Debriefings*

Once you have been notified of the bid evaluation results or that a contract has been awarded, you should request a debriefing from the Contracting Authority. In accordance with Treasury Board Contracting Policy and the various trade agreements, every supplier has access to a debriefing from the federal government following the award of a contract resulting from a competitive process. This includes the issuing of supply arrangements and standing offers.

Debriefings can help you understand the decision-making criteria used in the evaluation process - essentially how and why the contract award decision was made. They can also help you see where your strengths and weaknesses were; this is important to keep in mind when preparing your next bid.

A supplier debriefing can vary depending on the nature of the process as well as the number of

bidders involved. Debriefings can be done in person, over the telephone or in writing.

Before your debriefing, you should review the contents of your bid and prepare questions to ensure you get the most out of your debriefing. When preparing these questions, please keep in mind that the government can only discuss the contents of the requester's bid and cannot discuss the contents of other bids.

### *Complaints*

You should request a debriefing as soon as possible after the award of a contract. If you have concerns about the process or results, there is a specific time limit within which you may file a complaint with the Office of the Procurement Ombudsman or the Canadian International Trade Tribunal. Which avenue of recourse you choose will depend on the size of the contract in question.

Complaints concerning federal government procurement covered by the trade agreements may be directed to the Canadian International Trade Tribunal. For more information, visit [www.citt.gc.ca](http://www.citt.gc.ca). Concerns about contracts not covered by the trade agreements may be addressed to the Office of the Procurement Ombudsman.

## The Office of the Procurement Ombudsman

The Office of the Procurement Ombudsman provides assistance to Canadian suppliers on procurement issues and reviews their complaints with the aim of solving them quickly and efficiently.

The Office of the Procurement Ombudsman:

- Reviews the procurement practices of departments for acquiring goods and services to assess their fairness, openness and transparency
- Reviews complaints respecting the award of a contract for the acquisition of goods below the value of \$25,000 and services below the value of \$100,000
- Reviews complaints respecting the administration of a contract regardless of the dollar value
- Ensures that an alternative dispute resolution process is provided, if both parties agree to participate

For further information, visit:

**[www.opo-boa.gc.ca](http://www.opo-boa.gc.ca)** or call their toll free number at **1-866-734-5169**



## Best Practices for Bidding: A Checklist

### You **MUST**

- ✓ Read all terms and conditions thoroughly.
- ✓ Meet all mandatory requirements.
- ✓ Respond to all sections, regardless of points value (Note: not all evaluations are point-rated).
- ✓ Provide the number of copies of your proposal as requested in the solicitation document.
- ✓ Make sure that all certifications are included with the bid package if requested.
- ✓ Remember that the buyer, not the end-user or department, is your only point of contact during the bid process.
- ✓ Sign your proposal and make sure to fill in and sign all required elements (e.g. certifications) within your proposal.
- ✓ Follow the instructions completely and submit your proposal on time and to the right place.

Failure to do the above could result in your bid being deemed non-responsive or non-compliant.

### You **SHOULD**

- ✓ Organize your offer so that it is complete, concise and precise.
- ✓ Include the following on the front page of your proposal:
  - The reference number you've assigned to the proposal for legal purposes;
  - Public Works and Government Services Canada or agency's file number and the date of your proposal; and
  - The name, address and phone number of your contact person.
- ✓ Write an executive summary and include a table of contents with page numbers.
- ✓ While responding to all criteria, be aware that some sections may carry more points in points-rated evaluations.
- ✓ Put your logo or business name on every page.
- ✓ Have fresh eyes do a quality review of your document before submitting it.
- ✓ After the contract has been awarded, ask the buyer for a debriefing.

## Still have Questions?

The Office of Small and Medium Enterprises is available to assist you with information about the procurement process. There are six regional offices across the country that offer services to small and medium enterprises interested in doing business with the government:

### Western Region

10025 Jasper Avenue  
 Telus Plaza North, 5th Floor  
 Edmonton, Alberta T5J 1S6  
 osme-bpme-wst@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca  
 Telephone: 780-497-3601

### Atlantic Region

236 Brownlow Avenue  
 Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B3B 1V5  
 osme-bpme-atl@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca  
 Telephone: 902-426-5677

### National Capital Region

11 Laurier Street, 0C1-100A  
 Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0S5  
 ncr.osme@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca  
 Toll Free Infoline: 1-800-811-1148

### Pacific Region

800 Burrard Street, Room 1210  
 Mailing: 800 Burrard Street, Room 641  
 Vancouver, British Columbia V6Z 2V8  
 osme-bpme-pac@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca  
 Telephone: 604-666-8295  
 Toll free: 1-866-602-0403

For contact names and phone numbers, visit the **Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Contracts Canada** website at <http://contractscanada.gc.ca> or call the national InfoLine at 1-800-811-1148

### Quebec Region

Southeast Portal, 800 de la Gauchetière Street  
 West, Suite 7300  
 Montreal, Quebec H5A 1L6  
 QueBPME.QueOSME@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca  
 Telephone: 514-496-3525

### Ontario Region

4900 Yonge Street  
 Toronto, Ontario M2N 6A6  
 ont.osme@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca  
 Telephone: 416-512-5577  
 Toll-free: 1-800-668-5378



## Resources for Businesses

### PROCUREMENT RELATED RESOURCES

#### *Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC)*

- [www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca](http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca)
- Federal government and main buyer for the Government of Canada
- Find information on Public Works and Government Services Canada and federal government purchasing

#### *Office of Small and Medium Enterprises (OSME)*

- [www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/pme-sme/osme-eng.html](http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/pme-sme/osme-eng.html)
- Sector within PWGSC dedicated to assisting small and medium enterprises in federal government procurement
- Find information about the mandate and the structure of its regional office network, as well as links to other useful sites

#### *Contracts Canada Website*

- <http://contractscanada.gc.ca>
- Learn about doing business with the federal government
- Search the *Procurement Allocation Directory* and the *Materiel Managers Directory*
- Register for *Supplier Registration information, Professional Services Online, SELECT systems*
- Search Contract History, a database of contracts awarded by Public Works and Government Services Canada
- Learn more about *OSME* and register for supplier seminars

#### *National InfoLine, Office of Small and Medium Enterprises*

- 1-800-811-1148
- Speak to knowledgeable agents and get answers to your questions
- Get help registering or accessing your Supplier Registration Information account

#### *Government Electronic Tendering System (GETS - MERX™)*

- [www.merx.com](http://www.merx.com)
- Used by the Government of Canada and by other organizations to post bid opportunities
- Search for opportunities for a wide variety of products and services

#### *Industrial Security Sector*

<http://ssi-iss.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca>

- Sector within Public Works and Government Services Canada responsible for security clearances
- Get information about security clearances of personnel and organizations

#### *Code of Conduct for Procurement*

- [www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/cndt-cndct/contexte-context-eng.html](http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/cndt-cndct/contexte-context-eng.html)
- Code of conduct for public servants and suppliers regarding the federal procurement process
- Everyone involved in the procurement process must abide by the *Code* provisions
- Review the *Code* to understand your responsibilities as a supplier doing business with the Government of Canada

### *Government Electronic Directory Services (GEDS)*

- <http://sage-geds.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca>
- Electronic directory providing contact information for most federal public servants across Canada
- Search for key contacts in Public Works and Government Services Canada and agencies with whom you are interested in doing business

### *Office of the Procurement Ombudsman (OPO)*

- <http://opo-boa.gc.ca>
- Independent organization with a government-wide mandate
- Amongst other things, the Office can investigate complaints regarding the award of a contract for goods below the value of \$25,000 and for services below the value of \$100,000 and complaints respecting the administration of a contract regardless of dollar value

### *Canadian International Trade Tribunal (CITT)*

- [www.citt.gc.ca](http://www.citt.gc.ca)
- Investigates supplier complaints concerning federal government procurement covered by the trade agreements

### *Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Businesses*

- [www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ecd/ab/psa/index-eng.asp](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ecd/ab/psa/index-eng.asp)
- Telephone: 1-800-400-7677; [psab-saea@ainc-inac.gc.ca](mailto:psab-saea@ainc-inac.gc.ca)
- Strategy launched by the federal government to increase the number of Aboriginal suppliers bidding for, and winning, federal contracts

- Get information and advice on selling to the government as an Aboriginal business
- Find out about registering as an Aboriginal business

### *Public Works and Government Services Canada Manuals*

#### *Standard Acquisition Clauses and Conditions Manual (SACC)*

- <http://sacc.pwgsc.gc.ca/sacc/index-e.jsp>
- Manual of contracting terms and conditions commonly used in the contracting process by the federal government
- Search for details on the terms and conditions referred to in solicitations and contracting activities

#### *Supply Manual*

- [www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/ga-sm/index-eng.html](http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/ga-sm/index-eng.html)
- Manual used by buyers, containing PWGSC's purchasing procedures based on relevant government laws, regulations and policies
- Familiarize yourself with the procurement process and get information on why and how PWGSC carries out its supply activities from a buyer perspective

### *Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat*

- [www.tbs-sct.gc.ca](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca)
- Federal government department responsible for general management of the government initiatives, issues, and activities that cut across all policy sectors



- Provides advice to Treasury Board on policies, directives, regulations, and program expenditure proposals with respect to the management of the government's resources
- Provides links to Proactive Disclosure of Contracts on various departmental sites
- General Business Resources

## GENERAL BUSINESS RESOURCES

### *Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)*

- [www.cra-arc.gc.ca](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca)
- To obtain a business number (BN) call 1-800-959-5525 or visit their website

### *Canada Business Network (CBN)*

- [www.canadabusiness.ca](http://www.canadabusiness.ca)
- Toll free telephone number: 1-888-576-4444 and TTY: 1-800-457-8466
- Government information service for businesses and entrepreneurs in Canada
- Provides a single point of access for information on federal and provincial/territorial government services and programs for business
- Find links to, and information on, naming and registering your business, financing, importing and exporting, taxes, regulations, licenses and permits, etc.

### *Canadian Company Capabilities (CCC)*

- [www.ic.gc.ca/epic/site/ccc-rec.nsf/en/Home](http://www.ic.gc.ca/epic/site/ccc-rec.nsf/en/Home)
- Industry Canada's searchable database of over 60,000 Canadian businesses
- Searched by over 500,000 domestic and international businesses each month looking for Canadian businesses suppliers with national and international import/export experience
- Register your business for free
- Useful tool for small and medium enterprises searching for business partners

## Glossary

**ACAN:** Advance Contract Award Notice, posted on MERX™ when one only supplier is thought to be able to fulfill a certain requirement. It is posted for a pre-defined period of time to give an opportunity to other suppliers to submit a statement of capabilities explaining how they can do the work being requested.

**AIT:** Agreement on Internal Trade, an agreement between the Federal government, the Provinces and two Territories (Nunavut is not a signatory to the AIT and has observer status) that came into effect in 1995.

**BN:** Business Number, number given by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) in order to uniquely identify each business with which it deals.

**Buyer:** General term referring to federal government employees who conduct purchasing activities. Refers to procurement specialists and contracting authorities, as well as those who are not designated procurement specialists but make purchases (for example, administrative assistants buying office supplies).

**Call-up:** Legally binding document issued at the time when the goods and services are required from a supplier who holds a standing offer.

**CCC:** Canadian Company Capabilities, centrally maintained current searchable database of 60,000 Canadian businesses.

**ISS:** Industrial Security Sector, responsible for administering industrial security (government security clearances) in Canada.

**CITT:** Canadian International Trade Tribunal investigates supplier complaints concerning federal government procurement that is covered by the *North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)*, the *Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT)* and the World Trade Organization (WTO) *Agreement on Government Procurement (AGP)*.

**Commodity:** Any category of goods and services (including construction) that can be bought or sold.

**Compliant:** Proposal that meets all technical evaluation criteria as established in the RFP as mandatory requirements.

**Contracts Canada:** A key component of the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises (OSME) of Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC). Contracts Canada is an information service (website) created to improve supplier and buyer awareness of federal business opportunities and of the Government of Canada procurement system.

**Contracting Authority:** Procurement/contracting specialists charged with buying goods and services for the federal government, they are also referred to as buyers or procurement/contracting officers.

**CPSA:** Cyber Protection Supply Arrangement, a government-wide procurement vehicle for the delivery of various informatics security services required on an “as and when requested” basis.

**GEDS:** Government Electronic Directory Services, a directory of public servants’ names, titles, telephone and facsimile numbers,

departmental names, office locations and position titles within the Government of Canada.

**GETS:** The Government Electronic Tendering Service, an on-line system that advertises government contracting opportunities to potential bidders. The current GETS system is operated through MERX™.

**GSIN:** Goods and Services Identification Number, a code used by the federal government to identify generic product descriptions for its purchasing activities.

**GST:** Goods and Services Tax, a tax that applies at a rate of 5% to the supply of most goods and services in Canada.

**HST:** Harmonized Services Tax, tax applied by Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador that harmonizes their provincial sales tax with the GST to create the harmonized sales tax (HST). The HST applies to the same goods and services as the GST but at a rate of 13%.

**ISS SA:** In-Service Support Supply Arrangement, procurement vehicle for the delivery of various services required on an “as and when requested” basis by Social Development Canada (SDC) and by other PWGSC clients.

**ITT:** Invitation to Tender, for contracts valued over \$25,000 that are fairly straightforward in nature. It is mostly used for construction needs. In an ITT, the supplier submitting the lowest proposal complying with mandatory requirements is awarded the tender.

**LDV:** Low Dollar Value Procurement, applies to requirements below \$25,000. In this case, contracting officers determine the most appropriate procurement strategy and use one of the electronic tools available to them to identify and select a supplier on a competitive or directed basis.

**Materiel Managers:** Procurement/contracting specialists across Canada who are responsible for overseeing purchasing activities within government departments. May also be referred to as buyers or procurement/contracting officers.

**MERX™:** A platform operated by Mediagrif Interactive Technologies Inc under contract to provide the electronic tendering service to the federal government.

**MSO:** Mandatory Standing Offers, requirement for the mandatory use of standing offers on certain goods and services that are purchased frequently.

**NAFTA:** North American Free Trade Agreement, an agreement between Canada, the United States and Mexico that took effect in 1994.

**OPO:** Office of the Procurement Ombudsman, an independent organization with a government-wide mandate. Its overall objective is to ensure the fairness, openness and transparency of government procurement.

**OSME:** Office of Small and Medium Enterprises, supports SMEs by working to reduce barriers and by simplifying requirements for SMEs that want to do business with the Government of Canada.

**PAD:** Procurement Allocation Directory, a list of key purchasing contacts in Public Works and Government Services Canada offices.

**PBN:** Procurement Business Number, obtained by registering through the Supplier Registration Information system (SRI), is created using your Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) Business Number to uniquely identify a branch, division, or office of your company.

**PSAB:** Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Businesses, assists Aboriginal businesses in gaining access to the overall procurement process. Operates under Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

**PSO:** Professional Services Online, an electronic procurement tool that assists federal departments in the procurement (below the NAFTA threshold) of professional services.

**PWGSC:** Public Works and Government Services Canada, a Government of Canada common service provider of procurement services to departments and agencies.

**Responsive:** Proposals that meet all of the conditions to bid established in the RFP (e.g. submitting the bid on time and/or including the requested number of copies).

**Request for Information:** Document requesting information from the supplier community. In this case, industry feedback is sought on a proposed procurement strategy prior to the release of a solicitation document.

**RFP:** Request for Proposal, typically used when the selection of a supplier cannot be made simply on the basis of the lowest cost. RFPs use selection criteria that are performance based and focus on a desired outcome as defined in the solicitation document.

**RFQ:** Request for Quotation, normally for contracts valued under \$25,000. The bid documents are kept simple and allow contracts to be awarded quickly.

**RFSa:** Request for Supply Arrangement, bid solicitation method used to create a list of pre-qualified suppliers as part of a supply arrangement.

**RFSO:** Request for Standing Offer, bid solicitation method used to create a list of pre-qualified suppliers as part of a standing offer.

**SA:** Supply Arrangement, used to meet recurring needs and are put in place with negotiable prices and requirements for a specific period of time from pre-qualified suppliers.

**SACC:** Standard Acquisition Clauses and Conditions, manual intended to provide suppliers and clients of PWGSC with information on terms and conditions commonly used in the contracting process by PWGSC and some other federal government departments. Its contents are referenced in bidding opportunities and contracting activities.

**SELECT:** Database that contains lists of pre-qualified real property firms (such as architects, engineers and construction trade contractors) and

is used by Public Works and Government Services Canada to invite firms to bid on opportunities on a rotation system.

**SME:** Small and Medium Enterprises, defined as enterprises with fewer than 500 employees. However, firms range from one-person consulting shops to larger, publicly traded companies. SMEs are present in almost every industrial sector.

**SO:** Standing offer, used to meet recurring needs and are put in place with pre-determined prices and requirements for a specific period of time with pre-qualified suppliers who have met the technical criteria. They can be in the form of National Master Standing Offers (NMSO), Regional Master Standing Offers (RMSO), National Individual Standing Offers (NISO), Regional Individual Standing Offer (RISO), or Departmental Individual Standing offer (DISO).

**SRI:** Supplier Registration Information, SRI is a database of registered suppliers. May be used to identify potential suppliers for purchases not subject to any of the trade agreements (for which they use MERX™).

**TBIPS:** Task-Based Informatics Professional Services, a method of supply for professional services.

**TBS:** Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat Government, the administrative arm of the Treasury Board, a Cabinet committee of the Queen's Privy Council of Canada.

**TEMS SA:** Technical, Engineering and Maintenance Services Supply Arrangement, a

government-wide procurement vehicle for the delivery of various technical professional services required on an “as and when requested” basis.

**THS:** Temporary Help Services, are services that are provided by the employees of temporary help firms. THS standing offers may be used by clients when a public servant is absent for a period of time or when there is a temporary requirement for additional staff during a workload increase.

**WTO-AGP:** The World Trade Organization Agreement on Government Procurement, an agreement between a number of countries world wide; it is a multilateral agreement which aims to secure greater international competition for government procurement.

