

Mitigating Issues within the Tender Process

May 2023

The Starting Point – Understanding what you want & what you need

What do you have now and how does that compare to what is available on the market (not just in the UK)?

Has anything changed since you last tendered?
E.g. FF numbers, budgets, EN standards, operational processes?

What worked well during your current contract? What do you want to see improved or changed?

Have you completed an up-to-date risk assessment?

Have you gathered feedback from users?

Have you assessed MI reports and other contract data?

What is likely to change during the term of the next contract?

What is the relative importance of each part of the tender?

Preparing for the Tender Process



Industry Engagement

Current lead times & specific challenges

Innovation / new product & service developments

1-2-1s most effective with suppliers, so must be *BEFORE* tendering including sample viewing days



Gathering Information Internally

What date do you need to receive / install the new products?

Feedback on current products – are updates needed / available?

What service levels are required?



Required Outputs

Agree detailed performance specifications for products – updated risk assessments

Confirm service requirements

Establish tender timescales and processes & **PRIORITIES**

Implications of what you're asking for

- Consider how to eliminate inherent bias towards incumbent, for a truly fair process
- Lead times for each stage of the tender process
- What are the criteria for shortlisting suppliers at each stage?
- Samples
 - How many do you need of each item?
 - How will you assess them prior to wearer trial?
- Wearer Trials
 - How many suppliers will be invited?
 - How many wearers & over what time period?
 - How will you assess the outcome?
- Testing & Certification
 - Are any of the items already available on the market & certificated?
 - Do some / all need new testing and certification?
 - New product developments can have test reports but not necessarily certification prior to contract award
- Costs to suppliers - 'fair & reasonable', increased charges from supply chain for sampling
- Final delivery date based on tender process + delivery lead time

Sample Assessment – Product Quality



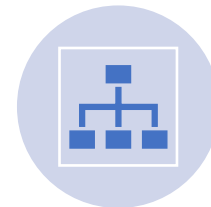
Start with very clear & detailed specification



Reduce the opportunity for challenge



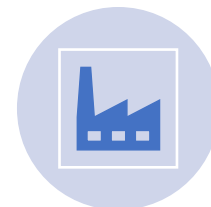
How do you assess product quality?
Qualitative & Quantitative



Who is able to complete the technical assessment within your organisation?



Sealed sample process for on-going assessment



Robust specifications to ensure on-going production continues at same level as tendered

Wearer Trial

- Consistent & Measurable
- Sufficient Time & Resource
- Proportionate & Representative
- Qualitative & Quantitative Assessment Marking Criteria

Qualitative Methods:

- Gathering consistent feedback by having clear criteria
- Comparing the same environment for testing

Quantitative Methods:

- BS 8469 Ergonomic Testing for FF PPE (includes ensembles)
- NATO LEAP Assessments (DSTL)



Assessment Criteria – Price

SPOILER ALERT

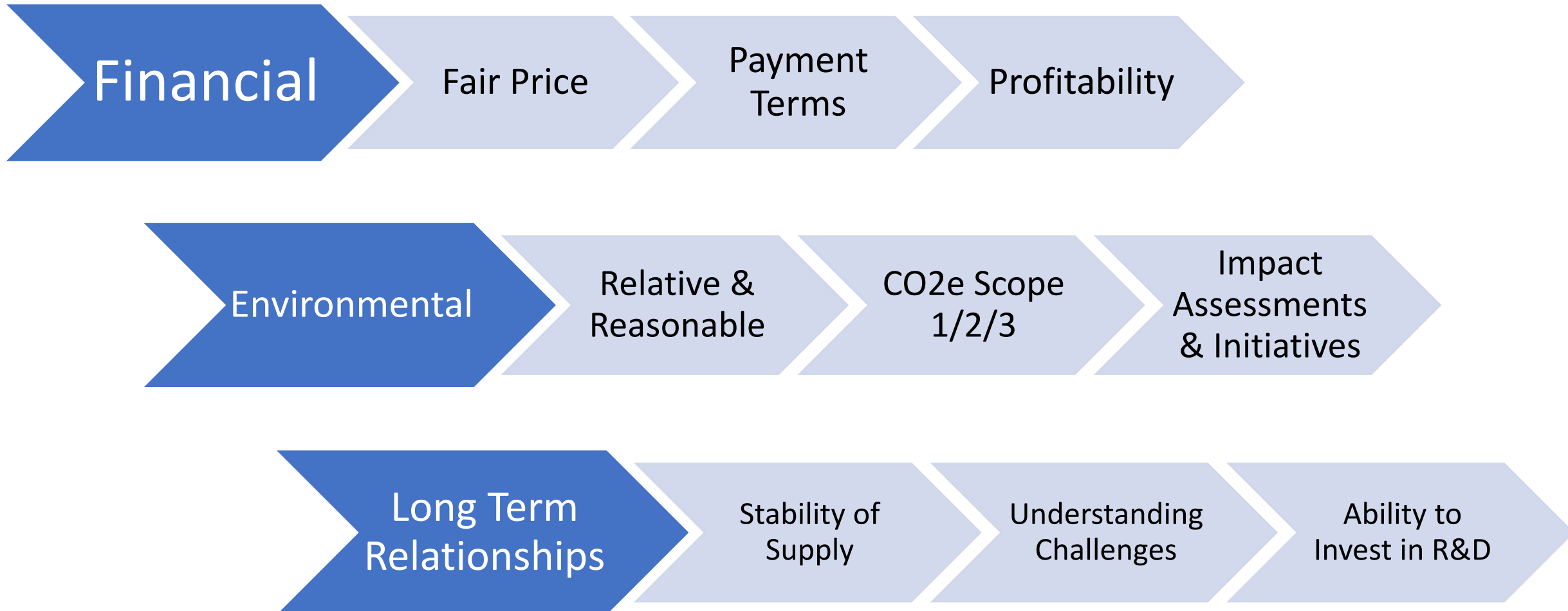
It is highly unlikely that you will

INCREASE QUALITY / PERFORMANCE and REDUCE PRICE

Key Considerations:

- Quality vs Cost
- Lifecycle cost consideration, not just price
- Cost reductions drive quality reduction
- What is ‘best value’ – not the cheapest, right product at affordable price
- Be prepared to spend to save – invest in quality & performance for the longevity (& sustainability)

Assessment Criteria - Sustainability



Assessment Criteria – Modern Slavery & Ethical Trading



Assessment Criteria – Social Value

PPN 06/20 Social Value Guidance

“Social value will be evaluated based on qualitative responses from bidders, and not on volumes” (Gov.uk Social Value Guidance)

- Example: Apprenticeship in local area £25k contract
- Scoring – rate a number of points per activity
- Social Value to be UK wide, not just within the locality of tender

Assessment Criteria - SME Engagement

- How can SMEs practically get involved?
 - Groups of SMEs directly bidding
 - Opportunities to collaborate with larger companies
 - Role of SMEs within the supply chain
- Financial ratios and commercial risks - facilitating or hindering?
- Award criteria to support the inclusion of SMEs

The Future of Tendering

The Buyer's Challenge:

- ✓ Increased Social Value, Added Value & Innovation
- ✓ Increased Garment Quality
- ✓ Increased Sustainability (Product & Service)
- ✓ Reduced Budgets and / or Cost Saving Targets



Buy fewer, higher quality products that last longer



Alternative service models – rentals or laundry services may enable re-purpose, repair & re-use of uniforms



Consider the impact of payment terms, rebates, sponsorship, 'free' delivery & long-term fixed pricing on supply chain



Early engagement with industry prior to the tender process to help set expectations on both sides



Better collaboration & transparency between buyers & suppliers e.g. longer term forecasting

In Summary:

- Understand what you want/need & explain it clearly
- Consider the impact of what you're asking for – is it 'fair & reasonable'
- Don't set suppliers up to fail – challenge them, but consider if any supplier can perform to requirements
- Long term contracts need long term relationships – be prepared to be open, transparent and committed to the successful tenderer