

The European Procurement Forum

Are you interested in doing business with the UN? The European Procurement Forum provides you the perfect guide to get you started!

The European Procurement Forum (EUPF) is a non-profit organization formed by government representatives of member states of the European Union in New York and aims to assist European companies in the UN tendering process. Flanders Investment & Trade has close ties to this organization as Heidi Hoover, the Director of Trade at FIT in the New York office, is also board member of the European Procurement Forum.

The Forum's main activities include advising EU member states in procurement matters, training companies and government representatives by giving handy tools and information to access the procurement market, and organizing an annual seminar to encourage B2B networking and to meet face-to-face with UN officials. This year, their comprehensive seminar will be held in New York between February 29th and March 1st and will include training sessions on the different steps in the procurement process, workshops on specific industries and the possibility to have one-on-one meetings with UN procurement staff of selected UN Organizations like: UNPD, UNOPS, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNRWA, UNIDO, UNGM, OCHA, World Bank, IDB, IMF.

Leading up to this event, a webinar was given on January 7th 2016 by William Tahon, Procurement Manager at the UN Secretariat, who gave a detailed description of the tendering process.

What follows is a short overview of his main points and some handy tips and tricks to get ahead.

The UN Tender Process

The United Nations Procurement Division (UNPD) is the UN institution that is responsible for procurement services to the UN headquarters, peacekeeping missions and other UN institutions. In order to offer goods or services to the UN institutions, a company must follow a standardized tender process.

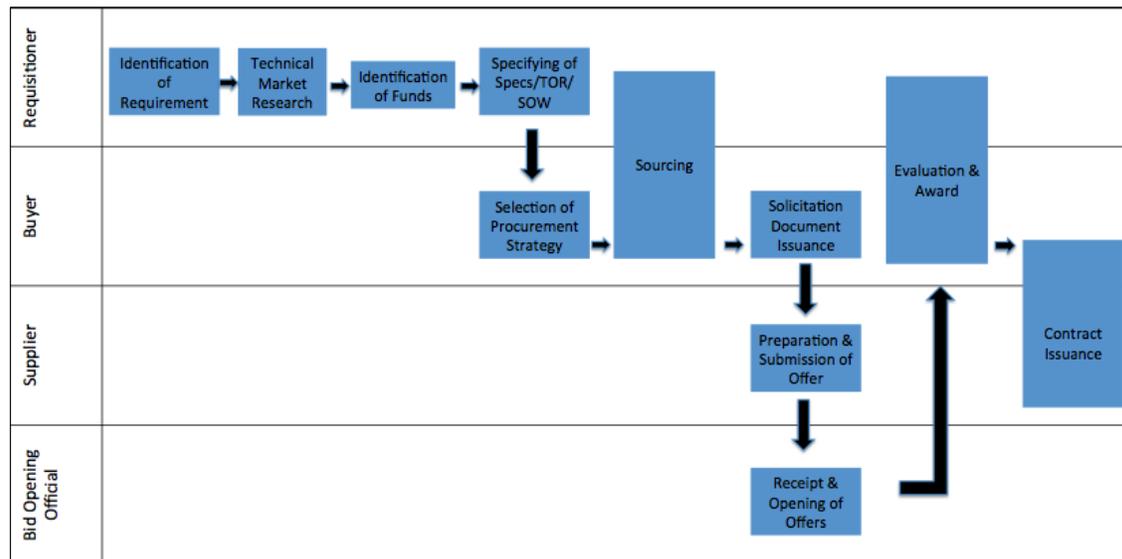
1. Governing policies and procedures

The procurement process applies to all UN institutions and complies with the UN charter. Despite the fact that most agencies try to harmonize their procedures as much as possible, some agencies like the UN Secretariat are subject to more rules and regulations. Specific rules that apply to the UN Secretariat can be found in the *Procurement Manual* which can be freely accessed at: <https://www.un.org/Depts/ptd/about-us/procurement-manual>

The principles that govern the process are the following:

- **Best value for money:** goods and services need to strike the right balance between functionality/efficiency and pricing
- **Fairness, integrity and transparency:** since it's a public tendering process, every business should have a fair chance to compete: all contracts need to be published publicly after the decision
- **Effective international competition:** all businesses should be able to compete, no matter in what part of the world the goods or services are needed
- **Respect of UN regulations**

2. Tender Process



The process consists of different phases with 4 actors who have delineated roles and responsibilities.

First, the *Requisitioner* will signal the need for procurement and will set the technical standards of the needed goods or services.

In a second step, the *Buyer* will develop a strategic source selection plan in coordination with the Requisitioner, which describes critical components of the acquisition process and takes into account technical, but also financial considerations. He will then turn to the market and start sourcing suppliers by looking at similar previous projects within the UN entities, checking the UN Global Marketplace (UNGM) vendor database, inviting businesses that seem interesting according to their own market research and by advertising publicly. Advertisements of the tender solicitations can be found on the UN procurement website, on UNGM (registration needed: <https://www.ungm.org/>), on the Tender Alert Service (paid service) and on the mobile app (free service). Solicitations can have three formats: either they are a request for quotation, an invitation to bid or a request for proposal.

- Tips to increase chances of being identified as a possible supplier:
 - Register at UNGM: research what specific UN entities procure and carefully select the UN entity you want to supply for. Only registered vendors will be able to receive awards.
 - When signing up to UNGM, use your legal name and keep your profile up to date.
 - Consider signing up for the Tender Alert Service which notifies you when there is a procurement opportunity in your area. The nominal fee is \$250/year.

During the third step the *interested suppliers* come into play, as they can respond to the advertised *Request for Expression of Interest (REOI)*. After the submission is evaluated and deemed qualified, a final tender solicitation document will be sent. Registered vendors at UNGM automatically get this document. The solicitation documents include a draft contract and some security instruments like a bid bond or a performance bond to protect against withdrawal of the offer. Next the supplier must return an *Acknowledgement Letter* to indicate continued interest or not. If still interested, the supplier must draft a technical and financial proposal. Once the *Bid Opening Official* announces the public bid opening, companies can submit their proposal.

- Tips for a successful submission:
 - Pay close attention to all mandatory requirements, ask for clarification in case of questions and opt out in case qualifications cannot be met.
 - Submit via proper channel, on time and under the legal name indicated on UNGM.
 - Submit financial and technical proposals separately as they will be assessed by different teams: if not, the proposal will be disqualified.

Finally the submissions will be evaluated by different parameters depending on the format of the solicitation by the *Requisitioner* and the *Buyer*. The *Award* goes to the most successful bidder, who will receive a notification and get the possibility to renegotiate the contract. After signing the contract, the *Award* will be published on UNDP's website. Unsuccessful bidders will be notified and get the chance to request a debrief, if this does not satisfy the unsuccessful bidder, they can start a review procedure and challenge the decision.

For more information, check the following websites:

<http://eupf.org/eu/static/eupf-index.html>

<https://www.un.org/Depts/ptd/>

www.flandersinvestmentandtrade.com

If you have any further questions, contact your country representative at:

<http://eupf.org/eu/contact/contact.form>

Or speak to Heidi Hoover, Director of Trade FIT New York & Board member of EUPF:

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