



Cairngorms
National Park Authority

Ùghdarras Pàirc Nàiseanta a'
Mhonaidh Ruaidh

Procurement Guidance



How to use this document

This document combines detailed and summarised guidance to support colleagues in carrying out procurement in line with Scottish Government and Park Authority requirements.

The [Overview of the procurement process](#) provides a succinct, step-by-step guide with links to more detailed information within the body of the document.

[Key procurement thresholds](#) are part of the Authority's governance, accountability and control processes as stipulated in the [Delegated Levels of Authority \(DLA\) document](#). The table provided sets out the required approach to procurement based on the whole-life cost of the goods / services provided.

Information on the Scottish Government's procurement process, known as the [Procurement Journey](#), is provided for detailed reference. In practice, the more complex, higher risk procurements (Route 2 and Route 3) will be managed directly by the Procurement Officer. Procurements using Route 1, more straightforward, low risk activities, will be closely guided by the Procurement Officer.

Detailed information on the [Route 1](#) procurement journey is provided to support the involvement of operational colleagues in their procurement requirements.

The final section of the document provides an [Aide Memoire](#) for Route 1 delivery.



Overview of the procurement process

1	Follow the guidance for project initiation, and consider how the project will be resourced. For example, <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you have budget?• What are the ongoing budget requirements year on year?• What are the implications for staff resourcing?
2	Estimate the whole-life cost of the goods / services to be procured.
3	Using the procurement thresholds table below, establish how your procurement should be undertaken.
4	If the value your procurement is greater than £9,999 (before VAT) consult the Procurement Officer.
5	For procurements using Route 1 of the Procurement Journey you will be guided by the Procurement Officer through the processes outlined below. More complex procurements (Route 2 and Route 3) will be managed directly by the Procurement Officer.
6	Prepare a brief for your procurement. The Procurement Officer will assist with this, but you will be required to prepare a detailed specification of your requirements.
7	The Procurement Officer will prepare the Invitation to Tender documents.
8	Your Invitation to Tender will be posted on the Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) website by the Procurement Officer.
9	Potential suppliers / contractors may come back, through the PCS website, with queries. The Procurement Officer will ask for your input in answering these queries. All questions, together with the responses you provide, are made public to all potential tenderers.
10	Best practice is for tenders will be received through PCS, but they may also be received by email or through the post.
11	The Procurement Officer will receive all tender responses. When the deadline for tender submission has passed, they will distribute the responses to the designated colleagues responsible for evaluating them.
12	Tenders will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria published in the Invitation to tender documents.



13	Complete a Recommendations Report presenting your findings and proposal for approval to proceed.
14	Award the contract.
15	Store all documentation in the Sharepoint Procurement EDMS.
16	Inform unsuccessful tenderers and provide feedback if this is requested.
17	Carry out and document a ' lessons learned ' review.

Key procurement thresholds

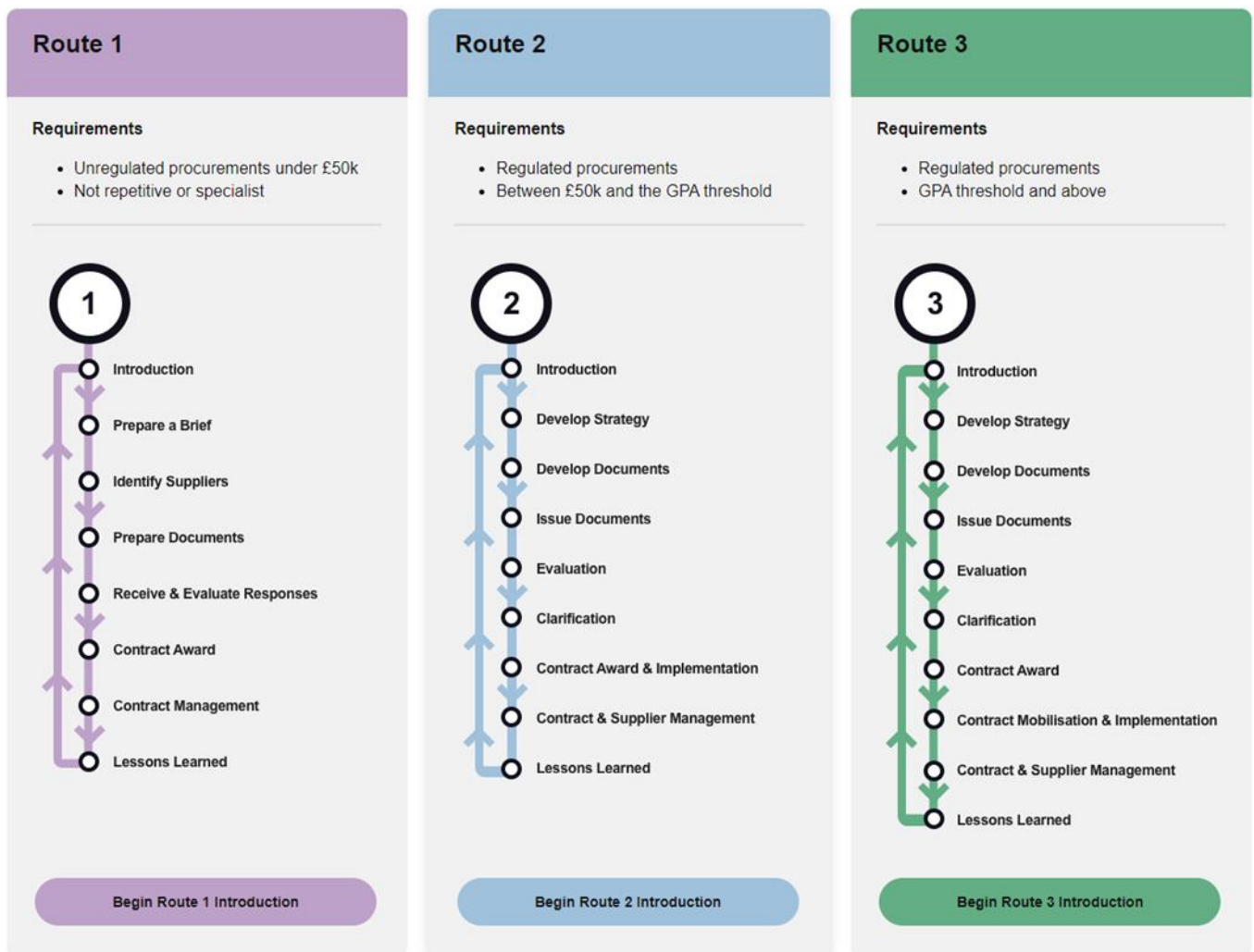
Whole life value of goods/ services (before VAT)	Procurement type	Procurement method
Up to £1,999	Single quote acceptable, but with an expectation that consideration of multiple suppliers is required in order to demonstrate Value for Money.	
Between £2,000 and £9,999	At least three written quotes using a written specification. Evaluation criteria should be applied.	Scottish Government Procurement Journey Route 1 should be followed. The Quick Quote facility on PCS can be used if project teams have a list of known contractors.
Between £10,000 and £24,999	At least 3 tenders using a written specification. Evaluation criteria must be applied and published. Process to be undertaken by Public Contracts Scotland (PCS).	Scottish Government Procurement Journey Route 1 should be followed.
Between £25,000 and £49,999	Open competition using a written specification. Evaluation criteria must be applied and published. Process to be undertaken via Public Contracts Scotland (PCS).	
£50,000 and above	Open competition using a written specification. Evaluation criteria must be applied and published. Process to be undertaken via Public Contracts Scotland (PCS). These are "regulated contracts".	Scottish Government Procurement Journey Route 2 or Route 3 must be followed.



Procurement Journey

The Procurement Journey provides guidance for public sector buyers who procure goods and services. The route maps shown below outline the steps involved in each process. More detailed information can be found at www.procurementjourney.scot.

All procurement activity conducted by the Park Authority is supported by the Procurement Officer who must be consulted on all procurements with a whole life cost of £10,000 (before VAT) or above.



Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) threshold value is subject to annual review.

The guidance below sets out details of the Route 1 process, which is the route most frequently applicable to the Park Authority's procurements. Any procurement identified as falling within the scope of Route 2 or Route 3 must be discussed with the Procurement Officer.



Route 1

Introduction

This Route provides guidance and templates for procurements that are:

- low value (a total estimated value of under £50k **excluding VAT**)
- low risk
- non-repetitive.

Considerations before proceeding

Before you start your Procurement Journey, please consider the following points:

1. Are the good/services you are buying business critical?
2. Is there a significant risk to the Park Authority's reputation or ability to deliver if something went wrong with what you are buying?
3. Is the estimated value of the goods/services that you are buying more than £50,000 (excluding VAT) over the lifetime of the contract? If so, this means that Route 1 cannot be used, as the contract needs to be advertised and formally tendered.

To calculate the estimated value of the contract you should add the spend for the full contract duration, including any contract extensions. For example, a contract of £10,000 per year (excluding VAT) over three years plus a 1 year £10,000 extension (excluding VAT) is a £40,000 contract i.e. $3 \times £10,000 + £10,000$.

Please note, requirements must not be 'split' into contracts of lower value, or contracts reduced in duration, to avoid the need to advertise / conduct a full tender exercise.

Points for consideration

1. Are existing contracts already available that you could use e.g. call off from?
2. Is there a conflict of interest? Do you or someone in the Park Authority stand to benefit from the outcome of the procurement? For example:
 - benefit financially
 - Have friendships with suppliers
 - Previously worked for suppliers
 - If so, should the buyer and/or evaluating team be changed?

If you have answered 'yes' to any of the above questions. please contact the Procurement Officer before proceeding.



Audit Requirements

You should keep your Route 1 procurement documents in the Sharepoint Procurement EDMS, in case of future audit. Please note that purchases of goods and services may routinely be the subject of Freedom of Information (Fol) requests.

Quote Distribution

Your quote should be sent to the suppliers you want to participate in your quote. This can be done using the Quick Quote functionality in Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) or by other means e.g. in writing via email or by post.

PCS is recommended as:

- you can search through a register of suppliers to select those you want to bid
- questions and answers can be provided through this system
- this will provide an audit trail for your quote.

Procurement Documents

Your quote should include all the documents a potential bidder would need, to decide whether to bid or not e.g. your specification, the Park Authority's Terms and Conditions, and all the documentation required to be able to respond to your request for a bid e.g. a pricing spreadsheet that the bidder needs to complete.

If using Quick Quote in PCS for your quote, please note that the following file size restrictions apply for uploading documents:

- 100Mb per document with a maximum of 100Mb for the Buyer
- 10Mb per document with a maximum of 30Mb for the Supplier.

Contract Award

Once you have completed all stages of your procurement you must seek approval on who to award your contract to. This approval process must follow the Park Authority's policy on [Delegated Levels of Authority \(DLA\)](#).

Once approval has been received you should notify the successful and unsuccessful suppliers of the outcome in writing.



Prepare a Brief

A brief is the written document that includes your requirements for your procurement exercise. As a minimum your Brief should include:

1. Key Requirements

- What do you want?
- Detail the timescales
- Technical specifications
- Statement of work
- Budget

2. Outputs

Examples may be:

- Consultancy
- Surveys
- Supply of goods
- Creative work
- Construction works
- Restoration
- Maintenance works

3. How bids will be evaluated

Include your evaluation criteria and weightings. These should be communicated to all potential bidders. Examples of criteria and weightings can be found in the [ITT Brief Template](#) and in documentation from previous procurements.

4. Contract Management

- How you are going to manage the contract when it goes live (does anything need to be added to the brief to reflect this?)
- How will quality or service levels be measured, recorded and maintained?
- What information should the bidder provide?
- Costs: how do you keep them from rising?
- How will issues be rectified?
- Where and how are deliveries made?
- How will processes be improved? Etc.



The ITT Brief [Template](#) provides a template that you can populate to issue to tenderers. It includes guidance on how to do this that can be deleted when the ITT is ready for issue.

To prepare a brief, you should gather information to help you make decisions on what your requirements are. This will include research on:

1. Suppliers

- Do you have a current incumbent supplier?
- What is working in this contract / what is not?
- Are there suppliers available to quote for the work e.g. locally, regionally, nationally?

2. Knowledgeable People/Experts

- Talk to people in the organisation who deal with the current contract – what do they want from a new contract?
- Talk with colleagues who have worked on a similar project.
- Talk with suppliers as part of early market engagement.

3. Market information

- Have there been any changes in the market?
- Are there any new innovations / technology?

Any decisions on what your brief will include should consider the risk and value involved.

Data Protection Regulations (DPR)

You should ensure that all relevant procurement documents make reference to the Data Protection Regulations (DPR) and that specific requirements around information management are set out in the ITT. DPR is particularly relevant to projects where suppliers will be generating data, information or reports on our behalf, rather than contracts for goods. If you are in any doubt, you should speak to the Procurement Officer or Information Manager to help finalise your brief and ensure your ITT, as well as any other documentation that you issue, is DPR compliant. It may be necessary to seek legal advice.



Identify Suppliers

If you have identified that the Park Authority has a new procurement requirement (that cannot be met by reusing or recycling existing goods or services, or by using an existing contract), you should seek quotations from a minimum of three suppliers. These suppliers should have the experience and expertise to meet your requirements.

To receive three quotes back from suppliers, you may wish to approach four or five suppliers in case not all respond.

How to Identify Potential Suppliers

Potential suppliers may be identified by searching the register of suppliers on Public Contracts Scotland (PCS). This website offers a 'Quick Quote' system to seek quotations from suppliers registered on the website. Alternatively potential suppliers may be identified using internet searches or from trade publications.

If you are unable to identify three suppliers to enable use of the Quick Quote facility, you should then opt for an Open Competition approach via PCS.

You should try to not restrict your selection to existing suppliers to the Park Authority but include new suppliers for each procurement exercise. This will:

- facilitate competition
- encourage innovation
- ensure best value in future service delivery
- help suppliers, who have not previously bid for Scottish public sector work, to gain access to opportunities and gain experience working for the Scottish Public Sector.

If only one supplier can undertake the work required, it may be acceptable to seek approval for a Non-Competitive Action (NCA) from senior management. You should then follow the remainder of this process. For commercial reasons, you should not inform the supplier that they are the only supplier involved in the process.

A Non-Competitive Action is **an exceptional procedure** and should:

- be strictly limited to certain situations
- be approved by senior management



- be documented and the documentation retained for audit purposes.

Prepare Documents

To tell potential suppliers what your requirements are, you will need to distribute quotation documents. These quotation documents need to include information that will help suppliers decide whether they wish to bid or not.

Invitation to Tender Documents

Your Invitation to tender documents must, as a minimum, include the following:

1. Brief

The document that includes your requirements for the procurement exercise. The Brief is an example template showing the type of information you can include. It is important to include your evaluation criteria - including weightings - in your Brief.

2. Terms and Conditions (T&C's) of Contract

Please use the available T&C templates. You should ask for approval from the Procurement Officer on what T&C's to use and whether clauses need to be added or removed.

3. Any Other Information

Any information that may affect the supplier's quote should also be included in the ITT document, i.e. cost/commercial tables.

You should ensure that all relevant procurement documents make reference to the Data Protection Regulations (DPR). You should ask for advice from the Information Manager / Procurement Officer to determine how DPR fits with your current quotation requirement and any other documentation used, location maps etc.

How Do I Publish my Invitation to Tender Documents?

You should use the Quick Quote facility (restricted competition where a number of suppliers are to be invited) or "Create Notice" facility (open competition) on the Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) website wherever possible when seeking quotation bids, ensuring you include the above documents. You can also seek quotes in writing or by e-mail (for procurements up to £9,999 before VAT)



Issuing Clarifications or Further Information

Suppliers may ask questions about the published Invitation to tender documents. As a result, you may wish to issue further information or provide further clarification not contained within the original document. In PCS Quick Quote, you can do this via an online bulletin board facility. Alternatively, you can provide clarifications or further information in writing or by e-mail.

If you have issued any clarifications, you should communicate all questions, answers and clarifications in writing to all bidders. This ensures that all bidders are treated fairly and in an open and transparent manner.

Care should be taken to remove all commercially sensitive information in this process e.g. names of potential suppliers, etc.

Invitation to Tender Timescales

The time limit for quotation responses should reflect the complexity of the requirement and be sufficient for the supplier to make a considered response.

You should keep to your original timescales as included in your Brief document. In exceptional circumstances, you may choose to consider extending the deadline for receipt of quotations.

An example may be that you have had to issue a clarification / further information to all suppliers. As a result of this clarification, the suppliers now need more time to work on their quotation document, to be able to respond adequately.

Please remember to communicate any deadline extensions to all potential suppliers. It is advised that you consult with the Procurement Officer for further guidance.

Receive and Evaluate Responses

1. Receipt of Responses

Quotation responses should be received through the Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) Quick Quote system. Quick Quote is a secure way to receive responses and can act as an audit trail if required. This is considered best practice.



Quotation responses may also be received in writing or by email. Remember to check your junk mail folder before and after the quotation deadline in case bids have been filtered by your email system.

2. Opening the Responses

It is anticipated that procurement will be carried out through the PCS portal. If this is not the case, then the Procurement Officer will guide you through the process of opening and formally recording the quotation responses received.

If fewer than three quotation responses are returned, reasons should be sought from the suppliers who did not submit a bid. This feedback should be retained on file and can be used as lessons learned for future quotations.

If only one response is received, please contact the Procurement Officer on how to proceed.

3. Evaluation of Responses

Fair and transparent evaluation of responses is essential to the public sector procurement process. Consequently, the process outlined below **must** be followed in order to avoid any potential for unfairness and subsequent challenge by an unsuccessful supplier.

You **must** use the evaluation process and guidance [template](#) to score the responses. This evaluation will determine which bid best meets your requirements.

Your evaluation **must** score the evaluation criteria you published in the Invitation to tender documents. The finalised evaluation scoring sheet should be forwarded to the Procurement Officer, who will collect all the scoring sheets to calculate the overall scores using the master evaluation sheet provided by the Scottish Government.

If you need to seek clarification on any or all quotation responses, this should be sent in writing to the supplier(s). You should set a specific deadline for supplier(s) to respond with their answer(s) and treat all suppliers on an equal basis.



4. Abnormally Low-Price Response

In many cases, the price alone will not dictate which bidder secures the contract, as the published criteria will also include assessment of 'quality' factors. However, it is important and appropriate to consider carefully whether pricing is abnormally low.

Any quote that shows an abnormally low price may be queried with the supplier to identify the reason(s) for this. If this is due to supplier error, you should consult with the Procurement Officer for further advice on how to proceed.

5. Alternative Terms and Conditions of Contract

If any of the quotation responses are received with alternative Terms and Conditions (T&Cs) of Contract to those you published in your quotation, you must inform the supplier in writing that your original T&Cs of Contract apply.

If the supplier continues to challenge your Terms and Conditions of Contract, you should seek advice from the Procurement Officer.

6. Supplier Interviews and Presentations

In exceptional circumstances, you may consider interviewing / inviting presentations from suppliers in order to assist in the evaluation of quotation responses. However, if you decide to score a supplier presentation as part of the evaluation you should have stated this in the Invitation to tender documents.

For supplier interviews / presentations, you should provide the suppliers with details of the time, place and format of any interview or presentation, ideally as part of the Invitation to tender (ITT).

All suppliers should be treated equally. Suppliers should be provided with an equal opportunity for interview, presentation or site visits unless the initial evaluation undertaken shows that the supplier could not meet the Invitation to tender core requirements.

Records of the interviews / presentations should be kept for audit purposes.



Recommendations Report

Once the evaluation has finished you should complete a recommendations report. This report is used to present your findings and proposal to your manager (in accordance with the policy on Delegated Levels of Authority DLA) for approval to proceed.

The recommendations report should contain as a minimum:

- A summary of the process undertaken
- Ensure any decisions for supplier disqualification are given
- Recommendation of award
- Request for approval

The report should contain reference to the following:

- Summary of the process to date
- Ensure any decisions for supplier disqualification have been fully documented and that the paperwork is available for inspection
- Recommendation of award & request for approval
- Details of any risks still present and mitigation plans
- Sustainability considerations (life-cycle costing, social, economic and environmental)
- Considerations in relation to Community Benefits
- Details on how the tender outcome will meet the requirements identified in the brief

Contract Award

Once the successful supplier has been identified and approval has been received to award the contract, you can notify suppliers of the outcome.

The successful supplier should be notified of the outcome in writing, using the [Contract Award Letter](#). This must be signed by a person with the delegated authority to procure and commit the Park Authority to the contract. The letter may be adapted as required.

At the same time as the above, unsuccessful suppliers should be notified using the [Unsuccessful Tender Letter](#).

A supplier is entitled to ask for the reasons why their quotation was unsuccessful. It is essential that all feedback is documented for audit purposes and based on the objective



criteria used to evaluate the quotation. This is called de-briefing and provides suppliers with positive constructive feedback to help improve their performance in future quotations. It can also provide an opportunity for suppliers to suggest improvements to your procurement processes.

Once these letters have been issued to the successful supplier, the quotation becomes live and can now be referred to as a contract.

Retention of Documentation

All documentation relating to your quotation process must be kept in the Sharepoint Procurement EDMS. This will make sure you have a full audit trail of the quotation activities.

If you are using the Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) Quick Quote facility, a full audit trail will have been automatically maintained by this system. PCS will hold this information for one year. Documentation is deleted from PCS after 12 months. As we are required to keep information for longer than one year, you must save it to Sharepoint before it is removed from PCS.

Any information you keep must be held in line with the current Data Protection Regulation (DPR) requirements. Please discuss this with the Information Manager if you need advice.

Lessons Learned

You should review all activities undertaken for the procurement. This will help you understand which areas performed well and areas for development. The areas identified should be acted upon to make improvements for the future.

All staff and suppliers involved with the bid can be asked for feedback. These people may be in your organisation or external to your organisation e.g. bidders. Feedback can be provided in a number of ways e.g. face to face meetings, online feedback, etc. and given by a variety of roles e.g. bidders, procurement officers, project managers, etc. However, you should ensure that these people understand the process and are trained / experienced in providing this kind of feedback.

Questions which could be asked are:



- what worked well?
- what didn't work well?
- what would you do differently in the future?
- were there any unresolved problems?
- were any innovations, workarounds or solutions used? If so, what improvements resulted?
- do you have ideas for improvements for future procurements?
- what issues occurred which were not anticipated?
- what extra costs occurred?
- were there processes used that could be improved upon?
- were there processes that are not needed?
- can ICT (Information and Communications Technology) systems be used to improve performance?

Changes identified may not be in procurement areas e.g. you may suggest improving communications and / or processes between internal departments.

It must be recognised that any lessons learned data could be subject to a freedom of information request. As a result, any information held should be objective.



Aide Memoire

Route 1 stage	Considerations	Do you have what you need
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reputational risk• Whole life value - up to £50,000 (excluding VAT)• Existing contracts available for call-off• Conflicts of interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budgetary sign off and sponsorship• Individuals with relevant experience to evaluate responses and write the brief• Timescale plan.
Prepare a brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key requirements• Outputs• How bids will be evaluated• Contract management• Data Protection Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authority to procure before continuing
Identify suppliers	<p>Identify potential suppliers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitate competition• Encourage innovation• Ensure bdst value in future service delivery• Help suppliers who have not previously bid for Scottish public sector work <p>Non-Competitive action is exceptional</p>	<p>Please ensure that you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• have received senior management approval• documented all activities related to identifying suppliers for your procurement exercise.



Route 1 stage	Considerations	Do you have what you need
Prepare documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation to tender letter • Brief • Terms and conditions • Anything else that may affect the quote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation criteria and weightings agreed and included in the Brief document, prior to Invitation to tender publication. • Sign off from technical expert and senior management on evaluation criteria and all Invitation to tender documents. • Names and availability of those who will support the answer of supplier's technical or commercial questions • Names and availability of those who will evaluate technical or commercial responses
Receive and evaluate responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCS Quick Quote system • In writing / by email • Opening quotes – governance • Evaluation of responses • Abnormally low-price response • Alternative terms and conditions • Supplier interviews and presentations • Recommendations report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final scores calculated for all bids • Agreement from all evaluators on proposed final scores • Approval received to proceed
Contract award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract award letter • Unsuccessful quotation letter • Retention of documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • issued a formal Award letter • issued unsuccessful letter(s) • remember to raise a requisition and PO



Route 1 stage	Considerations	Do you have what you need
Contract management	<p>Contract management required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mobilisation and implementation• Lifetime of the contract• Exit strategy <p>Responsibilities of contract manager dependent on complexity of contract</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scope of responsibilities are identified• A documented contract management process in in place
Lessons learned	<p>Undertaken throughout the procurement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• After the contract has been awarded• During the lifetime of the contract <p>After the contract has ended</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who should be involved?• How will feedback be obtained?• Has an objective assessment been documented?