

Procurement Glossary

The terms and acronyms that turn up most often in tenders, PQQs, and contract notices, explained in plain English.

PQQ (Pre-Qualification Questionnaire)	An initial screening stage used to check that a business meets the baseline criteria (financial standing, insurance, health and safety, etc.) before being invited to submit a full tender.
ITT (Invitation to Tender)	The formal document set out by a buyer inviting suppliers to submit a priced, detailed proposal for a contract.
SQ (Selection Questionnaire)	The standard public sector questionnaire (replacing many individual PQQs) used to assess a supplier's suitability before tendering.
RFQ (Request for Quotation)	A simpler, usually lower-value procurement route where a buyer asks a small number of suppliers for a price, rather than running a full tender.
RFP (Request for Proposal)	Similar to an ITT; a request for a fuller proposal covering approach, methodology, and price, not just a quote.
Framework Agreement	An agreement with a pool of pre-approved suppliers that a buyer can call off work from over a set period, without running a full tender each time.
Lot	A distinct part of a larger contract or framework, split out (often by geography, service type, or value) so suppliers can bid for the parts relevant to them.
MEAT (Most Economically Advantageous Tender)	The basis on which many public sector contracts are awarded; a combination of price and quality, rather than price alone.
Social Value	The wider social, economic, and environmental benefit a contract delivers beyond its core purpose, such as local employment, apprenticeships, or community initiatives. Increasingly weighted in award criteria.
Award Criteria	The published factors a buyer will use to score and compare bids, and the weighting given to each (for example, 60% quality, 40% price).
Method Statement	A written explanation of how a supplier would carry out the work if awarded the contract; used to assess quality and approach.
Pricing Schedule	The structured format in which a supplier submits their costs, often a set spreadsheet template provided by the buyer.
KPI (Key Performance Indicator)	A measurable target used to track a supplier's performance once a contract is underway.
Contract Notice	The public advertisement of a contract opportunity, typically published on Find a Tender or a similar portal, giving the key details and deadline.
Find a Tender (FTS)	The UK's public procurement portal for above-threshold contract opportunities, which replaced the EU's OJEU system after Brexit.

CPV Code (Common Procurement Vocabulary)	A standard classification code used to describe the type of goods, works, or services being procured, making opportunities easier to search for.
Standstill Period	A mandatory pause (commonly 10 calendar days) between a buyer notifying bidders of an award decision and formally signing the contract, giving unsuccessful bidders a window to challenge the decision.
Abnormally Low Tender	A bid priced so far below the expected cost of delivery that the buyer is required to query it, to check the supplier can actually deliver at that price.
Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS)	An open, ongoing procurement list that new suppliers can join at any time, unlike a framework, which typically only opens periodically.
TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings, Protection of Employment)	Regulations that protect staff employment terms when a contract, and the staff delivering it, transfers from one supplier to another.
Single Tender Action	A direct award of a contract to one supplier without a competitive process, normally only permitted in specific, limited circumstances.
Procurement Act 2023	The legislation reforming UK public procurement rules, replacing the previous regulations and introducing changes such as a single Selection Questionnaire and revised transparency requirements.

Bidding for public sector work for the first time, or want a second pair of eyes on a live tender? The Bid Zone provides hands-on bid management and tender support for sole traders and SMEs. Book a free, no-obligation chat at www.thebidzone.co.uk.