



Buyer and Supplier Activation – Guide

Electronic Government Procurement

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Buyer and Supplier Activation

The Challenge

A successful strategy for electronic government procurement requires that a marketplace be created. The idea of a marketplace differs between countries but for the purposes of this discussion recognises that electronic government procurement requires that government buyers and suppliers (either contracted or uncontracted) come together and interact online, where previously they interacted through diverse means including newspapers, faxes, written correspondence, etc. The shift to the online world may require that many hundreds or even thousands of government buyers and government suppliers, within a brief period of time, change their business methodology to present and seek out opportunities, exchange information, issue purchase orders, transact and publish results and undertake numerous other commercial activities through online information technology.

Many of these buyers and suppliers will have minimal if any familiarity with this technology, many will be apprehensive and some may have never operated a keyboard. Yet, unless significant numbers of them see benefits to themselves in changing to this method of doing business, then there is a risk that the government's investment in electronic government procurement will fail to deliver its promise.

In the transition to e-GP, buyers will need to learn new job skills and undergo some reorientation to procurement as a strategic function. For the transition to e-GP to succeed, procurement staff will need to be supportive of the changes required, understand the impact on suppliers, and adapt to and use the new technologies involved.

Activation of suppliers too is critical to the implementation of e-GP. Small suppliers need to understand the changes involved and what impacts these changes will have on their businesses. They need to realise the benefits from participation and receive support to enter the new e-procurement market. These changes need to take place over a limited time period. If this transition is prolonged then businesses that have invested the time and money to participate will become disillusioned with the slow take-up by buyers. Similarly online buyers can become frustrated with the lack of online suppliers.

There is an important role within government in initiating the technological enablement of the business sector as well as its own managers. This leadership role will be called upon to deliver significant results in a short time frame with relatively modest investment, but unless this is effective then the e-marketplace may be of little value.

➤ *Hurdles*

In shaping the messages about e-GP for implementation requires that the perceptions and reservations of users be fully appreciated. Despite tremendous benefits, the creation of an online marketplace faces serious challenges that have undermined e-GP strategies in developed and developing economies alike. For example:

- Apprehension is often widespread amongst small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and regional economies that perceive new technology as a threat to business. This apprehension is realised if Government buying agencies begin dealing directly with the online catalogues of major corporations thereby locking out small and regional players.
- Regional economies are often dominated by SMEs with widely varying, but generally low awareness, understanding, or skill in relation to new technology.
- A perception by SMEs in particular that the government procurement market is not a viable option for them and that dealing with government requires new approaches and resources that are difficult to maintain.
- Many local economies are geographically remote, often with poor telecommunications infrastructure.
- Government activity, especially procurement, is sometimes subject to intense scrutiny and must be undertaken within a tight policy, accountability and probity framework – a framework that is often poorly understood by private sector service providers.
- Lack of technological literacy and awareness at the political and community levels.
- Well developed technological capabilities by some major suppliers that may be unwilling to change to match the government's e-GP strategy
- Government managers that regard e-GP as a threat to their job security
- A lack of supplier confidence in the integrity, consistency and professionalism by government buyers in managing and applying procurement processes
- Government offices and businesses that have little or no IT equipment or connectivity

There maybe resistance both from government buyers and government suppliers towards this development arising from possible concerns including:

- *Job security*
- *Departmental sovereignty*
- *Business competition*
- *Cost & technological literacy*
- *Transparency*
- *Business security*
- *Business status e.g. tax profile*
- *Connectivity*

- Lack of hardware and software support for small business
- Fears by business of security risks

Addressing these issues is important and cannot be resolved at the technological level alone. A basic element in an e-GP strategy has been to add value both to the marketplace and to community services to provide real incentives for business, the community and government organizations to adopt the new technologies. Complementing these developments has been the need to address the policy and management frameworks, infrastructure as well as some training requirements and a variety of enablement programs.

➤ *Business Risk*

Businesses do not like being the subject of experiments. They prefer to see the new approach offered by e-GP become operational and successful before they invest time and money becoming involved. Most of this investment will be for e-purchasing rather than for e-tendering. However until they do become involved in significant numbers e-GP cannot become successful.

Businesses will have a range of other concerns as well, including that the online environment will de-personalize their customer relationships, that they do not have the skills to acquire and operate technology and that the government might

change direction again or that government technology systems are too technical and expensive to deal with. Businesses themselves risk becoming invisible and losing market share should they not engage with this e-market, but this will not always be obvious to the businesses concerned. A legitimate concern to business will be the lack of a coordinated approach by government. Some businesses will have already experienced the problem of dealing with other businesses online, each of which uses systems incompatible with the others so that each business needs to operate multiple systems. An uncoordinated approach from government with numerous departments developing their own approach would therefore be a matter of concern to business and any communication strategy should address this and allay fears if indeed this mistake has been avoided: A Key Message – one business system can access many government departments.

Benefits of E-Purchasing that can be communicated to business include:

- *Automated order processing*
- *Inexpensive marketing*
- *Low processing costs*
- *Higher processing speeds*
- *Automated payments*
- *Elimination of expensive paper catalogues*
- *Reduced error rates*
- *Market information*
- *Provides wider market access*
- *Payment online*

Many of these benefits will not be available for the smallest businesses that can nevertheless benefit from access and profile in the government market.

It is essential that these concerns of business are carefully addressed and every effort taken to demonstrate to them that this transformation of government procurement is profitable and sustainable. Government buyers are accustomed to regard suppliers as being dependent on government. However for the implementation of e-GP government is very definitely dependent on its suppliers' preparedness to change, without which the government can be saddled with a humiliating failure.

Private Sector Activation

All markets, including those relevant to e-GP, are comprised of a 'buyer' side and a 'seller' side. The participation of the private sector cannot be taken for granted. Experience suggests that the most effective way to promote business activation is through the immediate value proposition. Businesses will be sceptical of investing in a 'good idea' but receptive to a credible business case that offers lower costs or greater tangible opportunity.

An e-GP strategy that attends only to issues within government bureaucracy may find itself with a limited 'sell' side of little value to buyers. It is important that suppliers see the government market as acceptable and performing in a reasonable way for e-procurement to take off. These issues have been identified in the *e-GP Strategic Planning Guide* (mdb-egp.org) and summarised in Attachment 2.

➤ *Communicating the Benefits*

Governments have extensive avenues to communicate the issues and opportunities with the business sector. Most governments already deal with thousands of businesses each year (contracted suppliers) and these form an ideal basis for a communications strategy – these businesses already interact with government to their commercial advantage and will be interested in defending or extending this business. At other levels, governments also frequently liaise with business associations, regional associations and numerous community groups. A business activation strategy will address existing contracted suppliers, non-contracted suppliers and may also work with the service industry that supports business applications.

Also relevant is the structure of the e-GP implementation programme itself where business is initially uncertain about the benefits. This awareness and training program can be delivered through a communication strategy that uses online and offline methods for getting these messages out including regular business briefings, regional visits, newsletters, case studies and advice. The option of a help desk can also be beneficial

In addition to communicating the benefits the communication strategy should provide a simple easy-to-follow guide on how to get involved or how to find additional assistance. Where e-GP is phased in commencing with e-tendering the demands on business processes will be modest and will not need any catalogue development or interactive online presence. The business requirements of e-tendering generally be met by a weekly visit to the e-tendering government site and take place from an internet café if needed.

➤ *Scope*

The scope of possible issues for business e-GP activation varies by industry and region but should be customised according to the implementation schedules for e-GP by government.

The scope of issues covered by supplier activation can include:

- Systems benefits and functionality
 - ✓ Features and business value
 - ✓ The value proposition and better market information
 - ✓ SME and regional benefits
 - such as access
 - ✓ Ease of use
 - ✓ Tracking of bids
 - ✓ Access to procurement policies, data and contract history
- Service industry development
 - ✓ Catalogue development
 - ✓ Business systems integration
 - ✓ Consortium development
- Electronic Trading Associations support for suppliers
- Business selection and policies for inclusion in government supplier lists
- Remote business access and assistance programs
- Whether to apply supplier charging policies
- Supplier to supplier interoperability
- Guidelines for catalogues that are compatible with government system standards

Business people are interested simply in the immediate business proposition of e-GP for them and their customers. They will generally not appreciate a lecture about how this is good for the government.

A business awareness, consultation and orientation programme is vital. A fully integrated e-purchasing strategy is likely to be relatively complex and expensive for business to adopt, whereas e-tendering is easily picked up by business at little or no cost and represents an effective means of activation of the private sector, forming a foundation on which higher value services can be built. Whichever approach is used it should recognise that business people are busy and often not interested in information about how this is good for government but usually want to know in simple terms what's in it for them and what it will cost.

➤ *A Targeted Approach*

Government procurement in most countries is structured very differently between low value, high volume procurement (such as office supplies) and high value, low volume procurement such as major capital works. Governments separate these two broad areas with different management protocols, policies and regulations. Most *transactions* in every jurisdiction are of low value and high volume, including most office supplies for example, although most *expenditure* is involved with high value, low volume exercises. Small transactions (for less than \$US5000) are usually undertaken through a simplified quoting system or even straight off a pre-existing contract. For higher value procurement (typically above \$US25000-100,000) a public bidding or tendering process is usually the standard methodology.

The application of e-GP to each of these types of procurement will be undertaken by very different technology and business systems. More importantly these two types of procurement methodologies will almost certainly relate to two different markets amongst business with, for example, the larger tendering exercises often involving the construction industry which will have relatively little involvement in the low value part of government procurement activities and which will want to hear about particular functional capabilities specific to their business such as the ability to upload and download technical drawings. Similarly the activation of business in the up-take of e-GP will require very different messages for each of these two components. Combining the two into a generic 'master strategy' that seeks to sell all of the benefits of e-GP to business is likely to confuse businesses and compromise relevance and effectiveness.

The business messages need to be well targeted: The benefits of e-tendering differ from those of e-purchasing and often apply to different industries or businesses

Also the benefits to business of e-tendering are very different to those of e-purchasing. Typically the most significant benefits of e-tendering are those of information about business opportunities and some elements of improved access and broader market intelligence, while for e-purchasing the benefits are more related to transactional efficiency and market presence.

Although these messages are different and apply to different market segments it is also advisable to be able to communicate the broader strategy which will be of interest to some businesses such as application service providers that can emerge in response to e-GP to provide a valuable business service role.

➤ *E-Tendering*

The preferred approach for e-tendering is for there to be a single online portal for government departments through which they all advertise their tenders, just as previously they may have all advertised in a newspaper. Businesses will be attracted to the convenience of finding so many opportunities in the one place, all in the same format and with convenient documentation that in all cases should be able to be downloaded. These simple benefits will be greatly welcomed by businesses.

The benefits of e-tendering differ from those of e-purchasing and often apply to different industries or businesses. The business benefits of e-tendering include:

- *Greater access to opportunities*
- *Convenience*
- *Process consistency*
- *Policy transparency – how governments buy goods and services*
- *Document access*
- *Document standardization*
- *Interactive advice*

The benefits need to be explained both for SMEs and for larger enterprises.

Other key messages that will draw the interest of businesses include that e-GP bidding documentation is

A business activation strategy for e-tendering will separately target:

- *SMEs*
- *Large business*
- *Regional business*
- *Business associations*

And in doing so will:

- *Describe the benefits to each*
- *Show how to use the internet and search (e.g. Google) to find the site*
- *Demonstrate how to use the site*
- *Advise what to do if the business has no connectivity*

standardized across government in order that business does not have to undertake an ongoing and expensive learning process agency by agency. Inconsistent documentation creates uncertainty amongst suppliers as to what agencies are actually seeking, and often requires bidders to provide similar information repeatedly but in slightly different formats. One of the most persistent complaints by businesses in many jurisdictions relates to the inconsistent application

of policy and procedures between government agencies or even by different officials within the same agency. This creates confusion, reduces the potential for

business (especially SMEs) to improve its skill base, reduces transparency, undermines confidence, adds to cost and is a cause of why some otherwise competitive SMEs conclude that doing business with government is ‘too hard’.

It is also important to appreciate that the information that an e-tendering site offers SMEs can be more extensive than it appears. For example the e-tendering site will also advertise the results of tendering processes and announce the winners of major construction exercises and while SMEs cannot generally win many of these it nevertheless provides them with information about who they can approach for sub-contracting work.

Small and regional businesses will often be concerned that e-GP will expose them to the full force of international competition. Awareness needs to be raised with these businesses about the way in which government goes about its procurement activities. The government should be able to point to design elements that it has included in its e-GP which are aimed at accommodating the competitiveness and productivity of small and medium sized companies and encourage local firms to participate in national or international markets. E-GP can:

- Progressively reduce the gap in bid preparation expertise between small local and foreign suppliers by standardizing the procurement documentation and providing support functions for preparation and submission of bids.
- Increase the access of small and medium enterprises to public procurement through information on subcontracting opportunities, targeted online research and bidding support, and computer-assisted enforcement of legally-sanctioned preferences. All the major systems reviewed for this report in the EU, the US and Canada have supportive functions for SMEs or disadvantaged groups.
- Facilitate the analysis of public procurement data to detect areas of opportunity for local enterprises.

Business will also appreciate hard evidence of the benefits more than hypothetical modelling and the use of case studies should be exploited wherever possible to get the messages across.

➤ *E-Purchasing*

E-purchasing and e-reverse auctions can be more demanding of businesses than e-tendering. For businesses to participate in e-purchasing it is necessary that they have an online catalogue which is constructed with standards that are compatible with the government procurement systems. The prospect of developing an e-catalogue will be daunting for some businesses and assistance from government

and other service providers will be helpful. Also it will be largely impractical for businesses to gain all the benefits of the e-purchasing system through secondary access such as internet cafés and kiosks. For those businesses that are online assistance or guidance with catalogues should be a central part of the activation strategy, even to the extent of government providing a hosting service in some instances. For maximum benefits e-purchasing will also enable e-transactions with timely payments directly into business bank accounts. This represents a major benefit to business with savings in terms of time and process. These processes require more careful consideration of business induction and orientation. It would be undesirable both for government and for many businesses for e-purchasing to be monopolised by a small number of large corporations with sophisticated online catalogues. This can occur where an e-GP system locks into selected catalogues only – this is acceptable practice in the private sector but not for governments.

➤ *Catalogues*

Where businesses become engaged with e-procurement and develop an online catalogue it is natural that they will want to use their catalogue more broadly than just for government buyers. This means that their catalogues should be built on open standards. But there are other issues that the business activation strategy should provide guidance on. These include who will host the catalogues – will this be the individual business, an ISP or the government? The government may have to provide catalogue support (such as operating as a service provider) to SMEs initially until those SMEs are firmly established in the government procurement market. In the longer term the government may be able to phase itself out of these services.

Service providers are able to provide these options even where a business has no internet presence. Catalogue design features should also allow customised pricing via profiles, preferred customers as well as broad retail. Catalogues should allow easy searching through keywords, part numbers as well as standard classification systems. Tracking of purchase orders and requests for information should be possible while purchasing through credit cards and other arrangements should be supported. By accompanying e-purchasing these common features have the potential to add substantial value to small and medium business capabilities and thereby deliver one of the key benefits of e-GP. Catalogues also need to be low maintenance.

➤ *A Supplier Activation Strategy*

Target groups	Issues	Key messages	Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Existing contractors ➤ Construction industry ➤ Sub-contractors ➤ SMEs ➤ Support businesses ➤ Associations ➤ Regional businesses ➤ Include supplier representatives in the design phase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Business competition ➤ Cost ➤ Technological literacy - skills ➤ Transparency ➤ Business status eg tax ➤ Profile ➤ Connectivity ➤ Site access ➤ Site operation ➤ Bandwidth ➤ Equipment ➤ Contract packaging ➤ Security ➤ Catalogues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Why this is important to you ➤ Value proposition ➤ E-GP is here to stay ➤ Greater access to opportunities ➤ Improved information access ➤ Convenience ➤ Policy transparency ➤ Document access ➤ Document standardization ➤ Interactive advice ➤ Push service ➤ Early warning service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Help desk ➤ Brochures ➤ Online information ➤ Road shows ➤ Workshops & seminars ➤ Interactive demonstrations ➤ Association assistance ➤ Internet cafés ➤ Government office desk service ➤ G2G links ➤ Catalogue hosting ➤ How to get involved ➤ How to access ➤ How to download

Activating Government Buyers

Just as suppliers are motivated by a range of factors influencing their attitude towards e-GP and their readiness to get involved, so it is for government procurement officers. More than one government has spent significant time and money establishing e-GP systems only to find that their procurement officers in

An implementation strategy for the public sector will need to communicate and address issues requiring:

- ***Change management***
- ***Policy advice and guidance***
- ***Technical support***
- ***Training***
- ***Political involvement***
- ***Organizational structure***

A transition period can be planned that will bring this support to individuals and organizations across the public sector.

their departments continue to refer to paper catalogues and use the new technology for the most minimal applications such as transmitting of purchase orders.

Many purchasing officers will have no experience at all with online technology. Some will be receptive to learning

how to adapt while others will fear that this development will threaten their job security and will hope it will go away. Often their first reaction will be that the

The implementation of both e-tendering and e-purchasing will be different strategies addressing different individuals, but in both instances the systems should:

- ***Be capable of customization within limits for each agency***
- ***Include easily accessible help desks for technical and user support***
- ***Offer standard templates to assist online learning for the routine functions such as tender advertising, purchase orders, etc.***
- ***Include advice on the relationship between the program and government policy***
- ***Include training modules that encourage users to explore the functionality of the systems and seek explanations***

Online training can be very effective but may be insufficient on its own and should be accompanied by formal workshops, etc conducted such that even junior staff can attend.

systems are very nice but do not match the way in which they go about these activities in their particular organizations (the 'We are different' syndrome). Successful activation of purchasing departments of larger organizations must accommodate this attitude rather than ignore it and therefore will start with the design of the systems themselves – it is important to allow some customization of

the user interface for each department in recognition of the particular working styles, specializations and authorizations of individual departments. Departments will also want to badge their own internal online pages and perhaps reformat forms and reports. This customization is vital for acceptance and must be undertaken while at the same time preserving the coherence of the system across government so that buyers are not confronted by different systems for different departments and whole-of-government analyses can easily be undertaken. Consultation and training are essential but often there is a lack of coverage of training even where it is undertaken. For example often many individuals and professionals such as teachers have authorization to undertake minor purchasing but training sometimes overlooks these and focuses only on the procurement staff. It is a good idea to target and recruit champions for the program from strategic locations around the public sector.

One of the more difficult challenges for activation is to win the support of departmental managers and executives who will prefer to develop their own systems and will resist a whole-of-government coordinate approach. However a department by department approach will discourage business take-up and will be self-defeating.

Just as for supplier activation the implementation of e-GP in the public sector requires a communications and change-management strategy. And just as for business activation, this strategy will be very different between e-tendering and e-purchasing and will address different individuals. For e-tendering the change strategy will need to work with senior management and professional procurement officers and even with the legal advice that each department relies on during the course of procurement. For e-purchasing implementation the strategy will also need to communicate with significant numbers of much more junior staff as well as staff for whom procurement is not their primary responsibility, such as teachers, nurses, office administrators, etc.

➤ *Training*

Training requirements for buyers exist at two levels. The first is procurement career development for those who will manage e-GP. If procurement is to be managed as a strategic issue then the fact that procurement staff are often a population that has received little training needs to be addressed.

The second training requirement is to address the needs of staff who will be involved in the day to day operation of the e-procurement process. A summary of some of the training agenda is outlined in Attachment 2.

➤ *Developing a Buyer Activation Strategy*

Target groups	Issues	Key messages	Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Procurement professionals ➤ Small-value buyers ➤ Finance officers ➤ Regional development agencies ➤ Industry development agencies ➤ Professional associations ➤ Include buyers / users in the design phase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Job security ➤ Discretion ➤ Technological literacy ➤ Transparency ➤ Connectivity ➤ Centralization ➤ Site operation ➤ Bandwidth ➤ Preferred suppliers ➤ Contract packaging ➤ Security ➤ Catalogues ➤ Procurement Policy ➤ Business model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Professional opportunity ➤ Convenience ➤ Policy transparency ➤ Document standardization ➤ Discretion and control ➤ Agency customization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Help desk ➤ Brochures ➤ Online information ➤ Interactive demonstrations ➤ Templates ➤ Workshops & seminars

Infrastructure and Web Services

Infrastructure and connectivity problems may often be readily addressed through a variety of low cost options such as:

- *Accelerator technologies*
- *Access points*
- *Internet cafés*
- *Internet kiosks*
- *New service businesses*

The potential of online technologies arises from the twin attributes of interoperability which is determined by standards, and connectivity which is a function of infrastructure and web service availability. For developing countries and remote communities connectivity and related variables of bandwidth and reliability can be the principal hurdle to e-GP.

In many cases a basic part of government and business activation will need to confront connectivity or lack of, including poor internet connectivity of government and businesses as well as poor infrastructure. In regions operating with narrow bandwidth, low cost solutions can include the use of emerging accelerator technologies. The reticence of many businesses to invest in software and hardware should be recognized and accommodated with solutions provided possibly through public access to basic facilities in government offices and the adequacy of internet cafés for many purposes. Many small businesses will also find it uneconomic or impractical to interact online, but will be prepared to associate with a service provider that will scan for opportunities and pass on the information on a customized basis for a minor fee. Businesses can also benefit from an email subscriber service that alerts them to tender or bid opportunities relevant to their individual businesses. There may also be a role for the government activation strategy to facilitate the establishment of these secondary businesses. In some countries (e.g. India, Sri Lanka) there are already e-Government initiatives to provide many government services online to regional communities. Government procurement services may be able to ride on these initiatives.

In some countries internet access may be expensive due to lack of competition or effective ISPs, etc. These broader issues are common to any e-government program and should be addressed at that level.

In the pursuit of equal access, there are numerous ways to redress inequalities in access to telecommunications and Internet facilities through common access points at government purchasing agencies and through inter-agency electronic government procurement centres that combine access to Internet, training of staff in e-procurement, and technical assistance on specific transactions. E-GP promotes equal access (or preferred access) for qualified bidders as it establishes and enforces rigorous policy compliance of processes by:

- Reducing cost and procedural disadvantages for bidders outside the capital cities, by enabling them with electronic access facilities neutral to geography and time-zones.

- Systematically enforcing access, payment, and participation rules that create a level playing field verifiable through detailed transaction and activity logs.
- Promoting widely available technology and easily acquired skills and providing mechanisms (such as training, remote technical support, and acceptance of paper bids) that effectively eliminate technology or skill-base discrimination.

A government strategy for e-GP can address many of these issues at various levels some of which may require co-ordination rather than additional resources including:

- Kiosk services, retail connectivity (eg internet cafés)
- Business access to online services in government offices and schools, especially in rural areas.
- Service industry development
 - √ Catalogue development
 - √ Business systems integration
 - √ Electronic Trading Associations
- ISP peering facilitation
- Hardware interoperability (between internet, fax, post, etc)
- Bandwidth design & compression
- Wireless

Included here are elements that would, in developed countries, be regarded as strictly private sector responsibilities such as electronic trading associations (ETAs) and peering. However for developing countries these are frequently at such a level that some government facilitation can be desirable.

Attachment 1: Improving Market Acceptance and Performance

E-GP take-up can also benefit if accompanied by a range of other reforms. Attracting a wider range of suppliers to the government procurement market is an important success factor in strategic procurement planning. This is well demonstrated, for example, in the approaches used by central procurement authorities in the UK¹ and the European Union². In summary some of the strategies used to achieve wider supplier involvement are outlined below.

To improve supplier acceptance of the market the following strategies could be applied:

- Develop a government buying strategy that includes:
 - √ a forecast of total government procurement requirements and delivery timings for the next 12 months
 - √ an analysis of the procurement demands that will be put on suppliers and how the government will attempt to match this with industry capacity
 - √ an analysis of potential bottlenecks and other problems in supply

This will allow suppliers to plan how they may prepare for the market requirements and give some predictability of potential sales.

- Provide incentives in evaluation criteria for prime contractors to source goods and services from local contractors.
- Provide information on the prime contractors to government so smaller suppliers can contact them if they wish.
- Encourage the government to demonstrate their e-procurement processes and systems to local suppliers. Provide machines that incorporate live demonstrations of procurement processes.
- Ensure that the costs and time required for suppliers to interact with government buyers is minimised by removal of charges and fees, reduction in red tape, and the improved clarity of information and documentation given to suppliers. This will reduce the perceived (and real) view that suppliers may have on the complexity of dealing with government.
- Provide targeted, comprehensive information and contacts on “How to supply to the Government”.

The second key issue is to improve suppliers’ often poor view of the performance of government procurement. This will involve addressing issues such as:

¹ See www.ogc.uk

² See www.simap.eu.int

- Improving the quality and clarity of bidding documents.
- Engaging in early discussions with suppliers on future procurement requirements. This allows small suppliers in particular more time to plan and perhaps form alliances with other suppliers.
- Ensuring that procurement managers and staff are well trained so suppliers have confidence in their abilities and the processes are consistent from one agency to another.

Providing and making public a buyer “Code of Practice” that covers issues such as the fairness, transparency, consistency, efficiency, effectiveness and professionalism that suppliers should expect from government procurement managers and staff.

Attachment 2: Training Content

The required buyer training in relation to activation will need to be developed or acquired. It will generally focus on understanding, interacting with, managing, and maintaining the system, as well as how suppliers will interact with it.

Training programs should include issues such as:

- the procurement policy and objectives to be achieved
- system functionality
- system administration
- performance of buyer functions
- performance of supplier functions
- changes to the procurement process involved
- understanding the workflow of the procurement process involved
- support functions for the system (e.g. hosting, support libraries, help desks)
- supplier issues and training
- monitoring system performance
- data collection and reporting
- handling complaints
- impact on current jobs and roles, and the emergence of new skill requirements
- training for the new skill requirements
- change management strategies to be applied
- service level agreements between the buyer agency and other parties.