Bid/no-bid worksheet for government tenders

By AJ Awan, Flowtivity | Updated 28 October 2026 | Version 1.0

For Australian small businesses and bid teams reviewing a government opportunity. Use this sheet to decide whether to invest in a response, seek clarification or stop. Keep the current tender documents and addenda beside it.

How to use it in 15 minutes

1. Minutes 1-3: record the opportunity and check the hard gates against the current pack.

2. Minutes 4-8: score the six checks and write the evidence or gap for each.

3. Minutes 9-12: test delivery capacity, price and response effort with the owners.

4. Minutes 13-15: record Bid, No bid or Hold and assign actions. Complex or unclear opportunities need a fuller review before a decision.

This is an internal planning aid. It does not guarantee eligibility, compliance, an acceptable contract or a successful bid. The buyer's current documents, conditions and instructions take priority.

1. Record the opportunity

Read the source pack, not just a summary. Record the time zone exactly as published and convert it for your team. Check new addenda again before committing and before submission.

Business, reviewer and review date

Buyer, tender title and reference

Official notice URL and document/addenda versions checked

Closing date, time, named time zone and submission method

Question deadline, approved contact channel and any mandatory briefing

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Scope, location, delivery dates and contract term

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2. Clear the hard gates first

Mark each gate Pass, Fail or Unknown and write the document/page reference. Fail means No bid if the issue cannot be resolved within the tender rules and required time. Unknown means Hold while the owner checks it. A high score below cannot override a failed gate.

Gate	What must be checked	Result and source reference
Participation and authority	Can we meet every mandatory participation, licence, insurance, security and scheme condition at the stage the pack requires? Are we authorised to respond?	_____
Truthful evidence	Can we substantiate every required credential and material claim, without inventing experience or certificates?	_____
Submission feasibility	Can the team meet required briefings, questions, formats, signatures, attachments and lodgement deadline?	_____
Lawful, safe delivery	Can we deliver the scope lawfully and safely? Is any conflict, prohibited arrangement or essential contract issue unresolved?	_____

Unknown or failed gate, owner, action and deadline

3. Score commercial fit using evidence

For each row use 0 = not demonstrated or serious gap, 1 = partly demonstrated with a specific action, 2 = demonstrated with a source and owner. Use whole numbers only. If a gap concerns a mandatory condition, also update the hard gates.

Check	Questions to answer	Score 0-2 and evidence/action
Fit	Is the work in our target scope, geography and customer market? Is there a clear reason we are a suitable supplier?	_____
Capability	Can named staff and confirmed partners deliver the required work and technical requirements?	_____
Evidence	Do we have relevant, current examples and approved referees that address the stated evaluation criteria?	_____
Capacity	Are delivery people, equipment and bid-review time available alongside current commitments?	_____
Risk	Have we reviewed contract, insurance, security, payment and subcontractor risks and agreed workable controls?	_____
Price	Can we price the complete scope, meet our commercial minimums and explain value without relying on unconfirmed assumptions?	_____

Total: Fit ___ + Capability ___ + Evidence ___ + Capacity ___ + Risk ___ + Price ___ = ___ / 12

Suggested internal guide, not a government scoring method: 10-12 means consider Bid if every hard gate passes; 7-9 means Hold and clarify the gaps; 0-6 means normally No bid. Any score of 0 needs resolution before Bid. Adapt the thresholds to your business and record why. These scores are neither a win probability nor an assessment of compliance.

4. Check capacity, price and response effort

Use a consistent basis for all price estimates, such as Australian dollars excluding GST. Include the costs of meeting the actual contract, not only the obvious job costs. Treat unknown scope or unconfirmed subcontractor availability as an action, not a favourable assumption.

Commercial check	Record
Delivery capacity	People/equipment required: ___; already committed: ___; available capacity and confirmation: ___
Bid effort	Estimated response hours and cost: ___; maximum approved bid budget: ___
Cost estimate	Labour ___ + materials ___ + subcontractors ___ + travel ___ + allocated overheads ___ + contingency ___ = total estimated cost ___
Proposed price	Price ___; currency/GST basis ___; validity and key assumptions ___
Commercial headroom	Proposed price ___ minus total estimated cost ___ = ___; finance-approved minimum and cash-flow check ___
Contract risk	Payment timing, liability, insurance, delivery obligations and required specialist review: ___

Commercial headroom is a planning estimate, not a profit guarantee. Have the authorised commercial reviewer confirm scope, cost basis, margin requirements, cash flow and contract terms.

5. Assign the evidence and next actions

[ ] Use only approved, current company evidence. Ask referees before naming them.

[ ] Ask tender questions through the nominated channel before its deadline. Keep questions factual and follow confidentiality instructions.

[ ] If using AI, use only a tool approved for the material. A person checks every extracted requirement, factual claim, price and attachment against the source.

Requirement or gap	Source / evidence location	Owner	Due and reviewer
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

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6. Where a person must decide

An authorised bid lead makes the final investment decision. The delivery owner confirms capacity, the commercial reviewer approves price and contract risk, and the submission owner checks the final pack. No worksheet or AI system submits or signs on their behalf.

Decision: Bid / No bid / Hold for clarification

Reason, gate status and score used

Conditions to resolve before starting or continuing; owner and due date

Bid lead, delivery owner and commercial reviewer approval names/date

Response budget, evidence owner and final reviewer

Internal review deadline and submission owner

Recheck trigger: new addendum, changed scope, price, capacity or contract term

If No bid: reason to retain and whether a brief decline or future follow-up is appropriate

Illustrative worked example, not a live tender

A fictional Brisbane maintenance business reviews a routine facilities-maintenance tender. It confirms every mandatory condition can be met at the required stage and records Pass on all four gates.

Its scores are Fit 2, Capability 2, Evidence 1, Capacity 1, Risk 2 and Price 2. The total is 2 + 2 + 1 + 1 + 2 + 2 = 10 out of 12. That suggests considering Bid, but the evidence and capacity actions still need owners.

The delivery manager confirms the roster and a subcontractor in writing. The bid lead obtains permission from a relevant referee. A fictional price of $50,000 less total estimated costs of $42,000 leaves $8,000 of estimated headroom, all excluding GST. Finance checks the cost assumptions, margin requirement and payment timing rather than treating the difference as assured profit.

Decision: Bid after those two actions are verified, within the approved response budget. The lead records the reason, names the final reviewer and schedules an addenda check. If the roster cannot be confirmed, the lead changes the decision to Hold or No bid despite the score.

Where a person must decide

- An authorised bid lead makes the final investment decision.

- The delivery owner confirms people and equipment. The commercial reviewer approves price, cash flow and contract risk.

- The submission owner checks the current pack, required evidence and signatures before lodgement. A worksheet or AI system does not approve or sign the response.

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Sources and further guidance

AusTender: official Australian Government opportunities

Use the original notice and current request pack. Department of Finance guidance below confirms AusTender as the usual open-tender lodgement channel.

Department of Finance: Responding to an Approach to Market

Guidance on requirements, evidence, questions, pricing and response preparation. Each opportunity has its own instructions.

Business Queensland: Planning a tender response

Guidance on examining the request and planning the people and work involved.

buy NSW: Opportunities Hub supplier help

Guidance on finding, preparing and submitting responses, including checking amendments and reviewing completeness.

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Want help putting this in place?

Use the worksheet independently. If you want help organising tender notices, evidence and review ownership, book a free 1-hour consult with AJ. Use public or fictional material in the discussion.

Book a free consultation