

Selling to Power and Water

Power and Water Corporation's
Procurement Framework

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Introduction

Power and Water generates, transmits and distributes electricity, supplies water and wastewater treatment services across the Northern Territory (NT) for the benefit of residents, including remote and isolated Aboriginal communities and outstations.

To deliver these essential services so they meet Territorians' expectations and statutory requirements, we need a significant network of well-maintained assets.

Each of those assets requires a *procurement* activity of some sort.

Power and Water is one of the largest buyers of goods and services in the Northern Territory and our procurement activity is a significant contributor to the Territory economy.

This guideline is for all suppliers that are providing or are interested in providing goods, works and services to Power and Water.

It will help you understand how we buy goods, works and services and what you need to do to become a supplier or win more work.

Overview of the guideline

This guideline covers:

- a profile of the types of goods, works and services Power and Water procures
- the principles that help us in our procurement decisions
- the rules and processes we follow to buy goods, works and services
- where to look for opportunities to supply to Power and Water
- tips on preparing and submitting a tender
- some terms, acronyms or jargon you may encounter during the procurement process.

The procurement outlook

Power and Water is committed to supporting local business, particularly small and medium-sized businesses.

One way we do this is by publishing an annual 'Procurement Outlook' on our website each year that lists the contract opportunities expected over the next 12-36 months.

This advance notice, which includes larger infrastructure and capital expenditure projects, helps suppliers plan and prepare for the projects they may submit a bid for. The Outlook can be downloaded from the website and sorted by category, location and the likely date the opportunity will be released.

What does 'procurement' mean?

The term 'procurement' is used throughout this guideline.

Put simply, it means to 'buy' goods, works and services, but it covers much more than just the simple task of buying something.

Procurement covers every step in the purchasing process:

- *developing a business case for the activity*
- *going to market, then assessing and selecting a supplier*
- *the supplier delivering the goods or service*
- *measuring the supplier's performance and giving them feedback (contract management)*

The procurement cycle

Whenever Power and Water buys something - from a hammer to a power plant - we follow an established Procurement Cycle.

Understanding this cycle will help you better prepare your response documentation and increase the likelihood of a successful outcome. The Procurement Cycle is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: The procurement cycle

As a supplier, you will generally first become aware of an opportunity at step 5 of the Procurement Cycle, which is when it is advertised. By that time, we have already done a good deal of planning work - building a business case, developing a scope of works and analysing the supply market.

However the work does not end when the contract is awarded at step 6 or managing the works at step 7. Power and Water invests a lot of effort and focus on step 8 because it is only by reviewing the project and giving suppliers constructive feedback that an environment of continuous improvement is created. In the long term, that benefits both suppliers and Power and Water.

The key procurement principles

Building business capability

Capable, cost-competitive and innovative suppliers are critical to Power and Water's success.

Only a diverse and active supply chain can ensure we deliver on our responsibility to provide energy, potable (drinking) water and

Power and Water's set of 'key procurement principles' guide all procurement activity.

These six principles are applied to every single purchase, regardless of value or complexity:

- best value for Territory
- ethical and fair treatment
- probity, accountability and transparency
- sustainable and skilled industry partners
- environmental protection
- promotion of Power and Water's objectives

sewerage services to all communities in the Northern Territory.

Opening doors for business and building competition delivers better value for money for taxpayers and the Northern Territory Government.

By demanding the highest quality in our goods, works and services and capital expenditure projects, Power and Water helps stimulate the Territory economy and prepare local business for growth and expansion into new markets

Best value for Territory

Best value for Territory is a broad concept that is made up of considerations like 'quality', 'fitness for purpose' and 'cost-effectiveness'. It represents the optimum combination of quality, quantity, risk (as it relates to environment and sustainability, health and safety and other measures), timeliness, responsiveness, availability and cost and is determined on a whole-of-contract or 'whole-of-asset-life' basis.

Local content is a component of best value for Territory as local businesses can usually respond more quickly and decisively to requirements like whole-of-life maintenance, spare parts and ongoing services such as ICT, labour hire and training.

Achieving best value for Territory in a tender or quote process requires:

- **Open competition:** no unnecessary barriers to potential suppliers participating because best value for Territory is best achieved if there's competition between a number of potential suppliers.
- **An informed purchaser:** Power and Water staff have accurate information about the supplier market and are open to different products or service models that meet our needs.
- **Fair and objective tender and evaluation processes:** Power and Water's tender process and assessment of responses is based on fair and objective criteria, which recognises enhancement of industry and business capability in the Northern Territory.

Best value for Territory means achieving the best return for Power and Water and the Northern Territory, recognising that this may not necessarily be at the lowest price.

**'Best value for Territory' underpins all procurement activity at Power and Water.
Procurement that delivers this ensures optimal use of Power and Water's resources and helps keep costs and utility pricing as low as possible.**

Ethical and fair treatment

Treating all suppliers fairly and ethically means working with them in an open, honest and impartial way and respecting their rights as well as their obligations. Our procurement practitioners ensure this principle is upheld in purchasing activities by:

- conducting an open and competitive tendering process where appropriate
- giving businesses equal opportunity to supply Power and Water
- streamlining documents and making tender requests user-friendly
- making the assessment criteria and methodology clear and easy to understand
- giving consistent feedback to suppliers on decisions and performance
- assessing tender submissions and making decisions quickly
- maintaining a timely and effective complaints and review process
- regularly communicating with all suppliers.

Probity, accountability and transparency

Probity, accountability and transparency as a key procurement principle means ensuring the integrity of the procurement process and integrity in the actions of our staff. All procurement activity should be undertaken in a manner that ensures:

- clearly established roles and responsibilities
- transparency of decisions made
- adherence to the Code of Conduct
- identification and management of perceived, actual or potential conflicts of interest
- confidentiality of all commercial information
- Power and Water staff are accountable for their actions.

Sustainable and skilled industry partners

The objectives of having sustainable and skilled industry partners include:

- development of existing and new businesses capable of supporting a multi-utilities provider across the Northern Territory
- using Power and Water's procurement activities as a driver for an improved business environment and increased competition in the Northern Territory
- raising the skill level, capability and capacity of industry and business to deliver the complex utilities supplies and services to meet Power and Water's evolving needs
- increased opportunities for business on the basis of best value for Territory
- promotion of industry and business awareness of its rights and obligations under Power and Water's Procurement Framework

Assisting local business

Many Territory businesses are small and medium enterprises and often find it challenging to bid for Power and Water projects.

This is particularly so for larger works, where economy-of-scale, previous experience and risk management are critical requirements.

To remedy this and support small and medium businesses, we publish an annual 'Procurement Outlook', which gives suppliers notice about upcoming opportunities in the next 36 months.

The outlook gives local businesses extra time to partner with larger businesses and develop the systems and skills they need to meet the work requirements.

Other measures we have in place to help local businesses win work include:

- structuring contracts appropriately
- feedback to businesses that do not win work to improve the quality of future submissions
- regular contract performance feedback.

- delivering projects at least cost to ensure enduring solutions that will benefit Power and Water's consumers.

Sustainable and skilled industry partners means that Power and Water's procurement processes:

- result in procurement activities which do not disadvantage local business
- recognise and take account of measures taken to deliver least cost and sustainable solutions to ensure efficient Power and Water products and services for the Northern Territory community
- are effective in encouraging development of the right skill sets available to Power and Water
- provide competitive businesses with full, fair and reasonable opportunity to participate in the growth of the Northern Territory.

Environmental protection

Environmental protection supports Power and Water's objective of adopting best practices to promote and protect the environment and minimise environmental harm. Environmental protection means that Power and Water's procurement policies and processes will be implemented so as to minimise the risk of:

- breaching laws in force in the Northern Territory that are designed to protect the environment
- non-compliance with complementary policies, programs and strategies
- adverse impacts on the environment and wildlife arising directly or indirectly from the procurement of supplies by Power and Water
- endangering the public
- causing unnecessary waste, including but not limited to over-packaging or because of an unduly short useful life of supplies
- using materials derived from threatened species or from threatened environments.

Power and Water's procurement policies and processes will be implemented to:

- maximise resource recovery by considering products with high reused, recycled or renewable content and products with high reusability and recyclability
- foster the development and production of products and processes of low environmental impact
- provide leadership and incentive to business, industry and the community by promoting the use of environmentally sensitive supplies where it is technically possible and represents best value.

Promotion of Power and Water's objectives

Whenever we procure something, Power and Water's ultimate goal is to fulfil our vision, goals and corporate objectives. The first five key procurement principles also contribute to this, however this last principle includes concepts such as:

- Maintain the highest image and reputation of Power and Water by following the key procurement principles in accordance with the Procurement Sourcing Rules. The Procurement Sourcing Rules are based around the four procurement principles and are the rules that govern our decision-making. The Procurement Sourcing Rules are available from our website.
- Ensure procurement activity delivers electricity, water and sewerage services to the Northern Territory safely, reliably and efficiently and in doing so:
 - operate at least as efficiently as any comparable business
 - maximise the sustainable return to the people of the Northern Territory on their investment in Power and Water.

The ultimate object of procurement is to add value to Power and Water in fulfilling its corporate objectives and maximise the return to the Northern Territory people on their investment.

Understanding the process

Approaching the market

Power and Water may approach the market to undertake analysis or research and issue a 'request for information' to help establish the number of suppliers and the range of goods, works and services available.

As a supplier, this is an opportunity for you to showcase your range and quality of goods, works and services.

When we're ready to purchase from that market, we can use one of two approaches to potential suppliers:

- a simple one-stage process for low-value, low-risk procurements
- a two-stage process for higher-value, higher-risk procurements that may also be complex or unique.

These options are shown in Table 1.

The approach	Used for
ONE-STAGE PROCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • issue a Request for Quotation (RFQ) • issue a Request for Tender (RFT)
TWO-STAGE PROCESS	<p>Stage one: Open invitation to participate and respond. It can be asking interested suppliers to register their interest in the opportunity or asking them to meet initial qualification conditions in an Expressions of Interest (EOI), or Supplier list.</p> <p>Stage two: We assess all responses then invite only shortlisted suppliers to submit full tenders or proposals.</p>

Table1: Approaching the market

The competitive approach

An open and competitive process is Power and Water's preferred approach when buying goods, works and services.

Table 2 shows the steps in a competitive approach and how these are applied for a procurement activity.

The approach	Generally used for	Method
OPEN Invitation for all interested suppliers to tender.	Higher-value, higher-risk, more complex goods, works and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFT • RFP

The approach	Generally used for	Method
MULTI-STAGE Open invitation for all interested suppliers to respond. We assess and ask shortlisted suppliers to submit tenders.	Highly complex requirements which cannot be adequately defined and/or the number and quality of potential supplies is unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EOI • closed request to shortlisted suppliers for RFP or RFT

Table 2: the competitive approach

The limited approach

A competitive approach is not always the most appropriate procurement process for all types of goods, works and services. The Procurement Sourcing Rules specify where and when a limited approach to market can be used.

Table 3 illustrates the limited approach and where it is most often used.

The approach	Generally used for	Method
BUY DIRECT FROM ANY SUITABLE SUPPLIER Power and Water must demonstrate value for Territory.	Very low-value, low-risk, low-complexity goods. Not usually used for services. Emergencies, such as cyclone or where exemptions apply (sole supplier, continuation of previous contract, public interest)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one-off purchase order • credit card
CLOSED Invitation to a number of suitable suppliers to tender.	Limited market, may be low value, low-risk, low-complexity goods, works and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFQ • RFT • RFP
DIRECT NEGOTIATION The reason not to use competitive approach is justified.	Procurements where there are special circumstances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate/contract with individual supplier
BUY DIRECT FROM POOL OF SUPPLIERS VIA PANEL/PERIOD CONTRACTS OR SUPPLIER LISTS A group of eligible suppliers is established and terms and conditions agreed.	Low-risk goods and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • schedule of rates orders • RFQ

Table 3: the limited approach

Planning a response

Our procurement process - the 'Procurement Cycle' introduced earlier at [Figure 1](#) - stays the same, regardless of the person or business unit doing the buying.

The scale of the process and the approach used will vary depending on the scope, value and complexity of the procurement, but the roles of Power and Water and the supplier essentially remain the same throughout.

The left-hand column in Table 4 summarises Power and Water’s activities at each stage of the Procurement Cycle (see [Figure 1](#)). On the right is some information for you as a supplier to assist you plan your response.

Activity	Tips for suppliers
<p>STEPS 1–3: INITIATE PROJECT, IDENTIFY NEEDS ANALYSE THE MARKET, AND SPECIFY REQUIREMENTS</p> <p>We define our desired outcome and specifications, identify risks, develop a business case, conduct research on the market and draw up our Procurement Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this planning stage, suppliers are sometimes approached informally during research into things like the size and maturity of the market or the availability of the goods and services we are thinking of buying. No formal response is needed from you at this stage.
<p>STEP 4: PLAN APPROACH TO MARKET AND EVALUATION</p> <p>We look at which process we will use to approach and find our supplier. This usually involves an open approach to the market, however sometimes it includes a limited approach, particularly for low-value goods.</p>	<p>To have the best chance of becoming a supplier, you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register your business with ICNNT at www.icn.org.au • apply for any industry accreditation (CAL) that is relevant to your goods, works and services at www.accreditation.com.au • register with NT Government’s ‘Quotations and Tenders Online’ portal at www.nt.gov.au/tenders.
<p>STEP 5: APPROACHING THE MARKET</p> <p>We then formally approach the market using the process we decided was most appropriate in the previous step.</p> <p>The general principle is that all suppliers have an equal opportunity to supply Power and Water.</p> <p>The tender period will remain open long enough to allow suppliers to respond.</p> <p>We will advise of any changes to the tender documents through an addendum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All public approaches to the market are advertised on ‘Quotations and Tenders Online’ • be sure to familiarise yourself with any mandatory requirements including minimum content and formatting • you may be offered the opportunity to attend a briefing session or a site inspection.

Activity	Tips for suppliers
<p>STEP 6: SELECTING SUPPLIER</p> <p>After the tender closing date, we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • check admissibility requirements • assess all submissions according to the steps and the assessment criteria defined in the tender request documents • may seek to negotiate with suppliers on terms and conditions before awarding the contract. We may also seek to negotiate on other issues including price, timing, quality and specifications. • select and notify the preferred supplier or suppliers • notify the unsuccessful applicants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submissions must meet all requirements outlined in the request documentation • submissions must be received on time and in the format and manner requested - if not, it may not be considered • submissions are assessed against the information provided by you in your response • submissions are treated in confidence • if you are unsuccessful, you can request a debriefing to help in preparing future submissions. This is in the interest of both you as a supplier and Power and Water • if you have a concern or wish to make a complaint about the process or the outcome of the tender, it is best to first raise it with Power and Water.
<p>STEP 7: MANAGING THE CONTRACT AND SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIPS</p> <p>We will assign a contract manager to monitor performance and ensure best value for Territory is achieved. The contract manager will also give regular feedback.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating with your contract manager will help build a productive relationship and reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings • we encourage you to raise any issues as they emerge • good contract performance, on-time delivery and meeting all milestones will provide best value for Territory for Power and Water and an enviable reputation for you.
<p>STEP 8: REVIEW</p> <p>Periodically we will review the performance of suppliers and provide a 'KPI and Supplier Performance Scorecard' that assesses performance. You are given the opportunity to respond and also provide feedback to help us improve our procurement practices or behaviours. Upon finalisation of some contracts, we will review overall supplier performance and complete a contract performance report to be used to assess suppliers past performance to assist in future tender assessment activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement can only be made by open, frank and honest feedback and appraisal, this is a two way street • the 'KPI and Supplier Performance Scorecard' provides a single percentage score out of 100 and although it is largely subjective it is a useful record and should be used as a benchmark for future improvement. • The contract performance report requires the two parties to include commentary on the operation and performance of the contract over its life

Table 1: Procurement activity at each stage of the Procurement Cycle and tips for planning a response

Where to start

Building rapport and reputation

With a significant number of contracts issued each year, there is every opportunity for you to find a buyer for your goods, works or services in Power and Water.

Focusing on the opportunities that are most relevant to your offering and most closely match your own business profile is likely to be a far more successful strategy that will also help you establish rapport and an enduring relationship with Power and Water.

Build a reputation for having a keen customer focus and delivering high-quality, competitive goods and services and you will be more likely to win repeat business.

Playing by the rules

Suppliers often find that working with Power and Water means being under the spotlight more than usual.

When you think about it, this is understandable given:

- the essential role power, water and sewerage services play in our lives
- the fact that these services are not free and we all look more closely at the things we buy than we do at those that come for free
- the strong commitment to safety and the environment that comes with provision of power, water and sewerage services.

The extra scrutiny also means that probity, transparency and accountability, one of our key procurement principles, are just as essential as the services we provide.

These rules also mean that Power and Water staff are not allowed to accept gifts or offers of hospitality that could be interpreted as inducements or favours that need to be returned at a later date.

It is therefore important that businesses play by the rules and do not place our staff in an embarrassing or difficult position by offering gifts or hospitality, no matter how courteous and polite the intention may be.

How to win the job

All requests for tender contain detailed descriptions of the goods or services we need. These descriptions are usually referred to as the 'Scope of Works'.

The request for tender will also outline the assessment criteria that each submission will be evaluated against. Understanding the 'Scope of Works' and how it relates to the assessment criteria is often the guide to putting your best foot forward.

Hunting for opportunities

All Power and Water open tender opportunities are posted on the NT Government's 'Quotations and Tenders Online' portal at www.nt.gov.au/tenders

You can also subscribe to the portal to have relevant opportunities emailed to you.

Increase your chances of success by registering with the Industry Capability Network Northern Territory (ICNNT) and applying for Contractor Accreditation Limited (CAL). Many large projects require CAL.

Another tool is our Procurement Outlook, a regularly updated document on the website that lists upcoming work opportunities in the next 36 months.

Terms and conditions

It is important that suppliers do not assume what the terms and conditions of the tender and contract are. Power and Water may choose to use its standard suite, however these may be augmented or replaced by special or alternate terms and conditions and forms of contract and it is important that all suppliers familiarise themselves with these.

You will need to ensure that you understand all the terms and conditions of the specific tender before submitting a response. If you are unsure about the proposed contract presented to you, contact Power and Water for clarification or arrange for a review by your legal representative

Assessment criteria

It is crucial that suppliers fully understand the assessment criteria because all the questions in the response schedules that come with the tender relate directly to one or more of those criteria.

The criteria will be weighted, that is, given a value depending on their relative importance. Those criteria with the highest weighting have the greatest influence on the final outcome. Therefore, when you are responding to questions in the response schedules, give a more detailed and considered response to the questions that directly relate to the assessment criteria with the highest weightings.

Table 5 shows some typical tender assessment criteria and their respective weightings. In this example, it would make more sense to provide a greater level of detail on questions directly related to the criteria with the highest weightings, 'local content' and 'price', because these are both weighted at 30 percent.

'Price' includes the purchase price, but it may also include other cost measures like extended warranty or service, lifecycle costs, parts and maintenance and labour or management requirements. These additional cost measures may be the key to differentiating one business's offering from another's

Criterion	Weighting
Local Content	30%
Capacity (to deliver on time)	10%
Health and Safety	20%
Past performance (and reference checks)	10%
Price	30%
Total	100%

Table 2: Example of assessment criteria and their weightings

While the assessment criteria will usually always include price - and price is important - the 'best value for Territory' key procurement principle we use to assess all purchases includes other measures such as local content, quality, risks, performance and the total cost of ownership of the good or service being procured.

Writing your response

The response schedules will require you to provide answers to questions under each of the assessment criteria. The assessment criteria are broad in nature and it is important to think about what each means in framing your answers.

Table 6 lists examples of assessment criteria used in a tender process and the descriptors that each criterion may cover. In framing your responses to questions for each of the relevant assessment criteria, you should endeavour to address as many of the relevant focus areas in the table as possible.

Assessment criteria	Focus areas
Price	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Price is competitive • Whole of life or whole of asset cost is provided and transparent
Local content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Up-skilling (including apprenticeships, formal and informal training) – Local industry participation (as contractors and/or part of the supply chain) – Local industry development initiatives – Indigenous development initiatives (not included if Indigenous Participation is weighted as a separate criteria) • Regional development initiatives
Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission has technical merit • Compliance with technical specifications • Conformance with performance criteria • Compliance with specified tolerances and finishes • Cooperation with all matters relating to the contract • Promptly informing of anything that is likely to adversely affect the timing, cost or quality of works • Commitment to a cooperative non-adversarial approach through open communication • Evidence of a cooperative culture
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with the quality management system standard and or quality management plan • Results of quality audits • Number of repetitions of the same non-conformance • Quality management system in place • Adequacy of number of personnel proposed • Management of personnel • Payment to subcontractors
Past performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of providing competitively priced quality work • No history of remedial work being required • Has invested in developing positive and productive relationships with Power and Water personnel • Compliance with contractual and legal obligations for suppliers • Payment to all subcontractors in accordance with legislation and contract conditions • Number and value of claims approved for extension of time • Number and value of variation orders approved

Assessment criteria	Focus areas
On-time delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to achieve milestones and timely allocation of resources • Managing delays • Managing industrial relations • Ability to plan, record and administer the contract • Timeliness on acting on requests for information such as drawings, reports and other documentation • Timeliness of submission of claims for payment including the completeness of supporting evidence
Health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with WHS requirements and any WHS project and safety management plans • Compliance with safety issues specifically identified in the contract or submission • Compliance with safe work method statements • WHS risk identification and management • Evidence of safety culture
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with environmental management and reporting requirements set out in the contract or tender documentation • Evidence of an environment aware culture • Compliance and demonstrated understanding of EIS and EMP • No record of previous breaches of environmental legislation
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides new and creative solutions • Offers alternative options that provide cost savings and other high quality outcomes • Undertakes research and analysis as a value-add to the project • Provides more options in their submission that promise cost savings and or better quality outcomes
Indigenous participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of a policy for Indigenous participation • Compliance with the specified requirements for apprenticeships, traineeships or Indigenous employment and skills development • Indigenous employment targets • Results of any Indigenous Participation Plan published or documented.

Accreditation

Some procurement activities will require suppliers to have mandatory qualifications, experience or accreditation. It is important that you are aware of any of these requirements well before the procurement opportunity is advertised to the market. Mandatory requirements typically relate to licensing, accreditation and certification as well as health and safety training and environmental certification that are relevant to your industry or profession.

Power and Water may often stipulate the requirement to hold CAL accreditation. If you need CAL accreditation for future projects with Power and Water, do not leave it until the tender opportunity is advertised to apply for CAL or check if your accreditation is still valid or needs updating. Additional information on CAL and the application process is available at www.accreditation.com.au.

Site inspections, briefings and references

Power and Water may invite you to a pre-tender briefing or site inspection, which aims to ensure that all potential suppliers have a complete and common understanding of the requirement.

These could be optional for smaller or straightforward projects or mandatory for more complex procurements where the level of potential risk requires attendance by all prospective suppliers.

Make sure you attend all mandatory briefing sessions.

If you are interstate or overseas and can't make an optional briefing, you can send a representative. It is good practice to request a copy of the papers and presentation material distributed at the briefing. This documentation is usually available to all potential suppliers via an addendum.

Reference checks are an important element of the tender assessment process. Our staff will follow up with references you provide in your submission.

Select referees you have worked with and that can validate the claims you make in your tender. Choosing referees that are recent and have first-hand knowledge of similar work is also advantageous.

Small and medium-sized business

Some of Power and Water's procurement opportunities may simply be too large or multi-faceted for you to consider.

It may be above your CAL accreditation level or require skills and a commitment that is currently outside your capability. In these cases, you could consider joining with another business in a consortium/joint venture.

This way, you will get an inside look at the kind of skills and investment needed to grow your own business to take on a similar opportunity down the track.

The Northern Territory Government also provides useful information on Joint Ventures at [Tendering with government | NT.GOV.AU](#)

Your industry association could also support and guide you in establishing a consortium to bid for the opportunity. Industry associations are also often experienced in assisting their members with tender applications and other advice.

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade is another useful point of contact in preparing tender submissions and ensuring all your documentation is of a high standard.

Referrals are worth a thousand words

There is nothing more valuable in building your reputation than a strong reference that demonstrates your capability, value for Territory and commitment to a quality outcome.

When an agency, client or other business is pleased with your goods or services, ask if you can use them as a referee for a tender opportunity at Power and Water.

It does not need to be written, just use their name and phone number as a reference in the response schedules.

You might know you are very good at what you do, but having someone independent share the same point of view helps us fully understand your skills and evaluate your experience and knowledge of the project's requirements.

Industry Capability Network Northern Territory

The Industry Capability Network Northern Territory (ICNNT) is the Territory arm of a national independently managed, non-profit organisation that connects buyers and sellers.

Registering with ICNNT can introduce your goods, works and services to business units in Power and Water that may not otherwise be aware of your business.

Don't miss out on opportunities. Take 15 minutes to register your business at www.icn.org.au.

If you don't win

No matter how good they are, not all tender responses, requests for quotation or outcomes of a negotiation process can be successful.

We receive many more tender submissions than we have work to offer, which means there are far more suppliers that miss out on work than those who win it.

Treat an unsuccessful tender or quotation process as an opportunity to learn and improve your offering for the next opportunity when it arises. It is in our interest as well as your own to have your business competitive and firing for the next opportunity.

Tender debriefings

Debriefing sessions are an important part of the tender process because we want to ensure all potential suppliers submit competitive bids in the future.

Smart suppliers use the tender debriefs to illuminate the strengths and weaknesses of their bid so they can make adjustments to it for next time. The purpose of the debrief is not to justify the selection of the winning tender, it is to give you some feedback on your own response to help you put forward a stronger submission in future.

Things usually discussed at tender debriefings include:

- performance of your offer against the assessment criteria
- the strengths and weaknesses of your submission
- your experience, qualifications, references and past performance
- cost competitiveness
- adequacy of your quality management systems
- experience, skills and knowledge of your staff
- facilities and equipment issues
- sub-contracting issues.

We may also use the debrief as an opportunity to improve the quality of our own tender documentation and procurement process, so you may be asked to provide feedback during the debrief session.

Maintaining positive relationships

Even if you do not win a contract, remember that you may have other opportunities to do business with us in the not-too-distant future.

Take a positive approach to the tender debriefing and treat it as an opportunity to continue building your relationship with the business unit and across Power and Water more widely.

Debriefings may help you identify problems with your product, service or pricing. To make the most of it, prepare by reviewing your responses and writing down any questions you want to ask.

During the debriefing, make a note of all issues covered and clarify anything that's not clear. If we are getting back to you about something, ask for a contact name and number so you can follow up if necessary.

Complaint process

After a tender process is finished, you may be concerned that the process was flawed or the assessment inaccurate or unfair. These concerns may arise from poor communication leading to misunderstandings about how the tender process was undertaken.

For this reason, it is always a good idea to first raise concerns informally with your contract manager or the Chief Procurement Officer at Power and Water before proceeding with a formal complaint.

A formal complaint may be made by visiting the [compliments, feedback and complaints centre](#) on our website.

Mutual trust and respect

As a potential supplier, you have the right to be treated fairly, impartially, consistently and equitably throughout the procurement process, this is the very basis of our second key procurement principle.

You also have the right to have complaints investigated promptly and without disadvantage. Making a legitimate complaint should not jeopardise your involvement in ongoing or future procurement opportunities at Power and Water.

Equally, as a supplier you have a responsibility to attempt to resolve complaints with us before seeking external intervention.

It is an expectation that time and resources are not wasted through frivolous and vexatious complaints or attempts to derail a procurement process or win a contract by means other than the merits of your offering.

Power and Water and all of its suppliers should at all times aim to conduct business from a foundation of mutual trust and respect.

Change management and continuous improvement

Review

The requirements of this guideline shall be reviewed and updated periodically for its ongoing effectiveness. This guideline will be reviewed, at a minimum, every three years or in the event of any significant change in our vision, values, long term goals, risk appetite, policy statement business model or organisational structure, or related systems or processes.

Document history

Date of issue	Version	Prepared by	Description of changes
26/06/2020	6.0	M Abe	Updated inline with Procurement Sourcing Rule Update – 1 July 2020
23/08/2023	7.0	M Abe	Migrated to new branding and updated business unit reference. Removed references to 'new' framework and excess/duplicated words.

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D2014/384591 - Vn 7.0

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