

This document is part of a series of Fit To Bid® guidelines, providing invaluable information to help SMEs improve their tender responses and increase their chances of success. Can also be used as a reference during the tender preparation process and as a learning resource for SMEs who are new to tendering.

Maximising Social Value in Public Sector Tenders: a Practical Guide for SMEs

The Social Value Act 2012 has transformed public sector procurement by prioritising social value in tender evaluations. For SMEs, this shift offers both opportunities and challenges. To win public sector contracts, SMEs must effectively showcase their social value contributions.

Take a Strategic Approach

Key steps to help maximise your social value offer and enhance chances of securing public sector work.

1. **Understand Social Value Requirements:** familiarise yourself with social value criteria outlined in tenders, e.g., environmental sustainability, local employment, community engagement.
2. **Develop a Social Value Strategy:** outline your organisation's commitment to social value, including specific initiatives and targets, and integrate the strategy into your overall business plan.
3. **Align with Local Priorities:** research the local authority's strategic objectives, tailor your social value proposals to align with them and demonstrate a clear understanding to strengthen your bid.
4. **Clear Messaging:** develop a clear, concise and consistent message that encapsulates your growth story, covering key milestones, achievements, and future plans.
5. **Calculate Your Impact:** use measurable indicators to quantify social value contributions, including number of local jobs created, carbon emissions reduced, and community projects supported.
6. **Engage with Stakeholders:** collaborate and build strong partnerships with key local stakeholders, such as community groups, charities, and local businesses, to demonstrate community support.
7. **Provide Evidence of Past Performance:** include case studies and testimonials that showcase previous social value achievements, with concrete examples to build credibility and trust.
8. **Offer Innovative Solutions:** go beyond standard practices by proposing new technologies, creative community engagement methods, and unique sustainability initiatives.
9. **Monitor and Report Progress:** regularly update the contracting authority on the progress of your social value initiatives, achievements, and any adjustments made to improve outcomes.
10. **Train Your Team:** providing training and resources on social value principles and practices can help your staff effectively contribute to and communicate your social value efforts.
11. **Seek Feedback and Improve:** after each tender, seek feedback from the contracting authority to understand areas for improvement, and continuously refine your social value approach.

By following these steps, you can effectively demonstrate your social value contributions and improve your chances of winning public sector contracts. Embracing social value not only benefits the community but also strengthens your organisation's reputation and competitiveness.