

Quick-Guide: Response timeframes for suppliers



What does this Quick-Guide cover?

This Quick-Guide supports government agencies in setting appropriate timeframes for approaches to market for procurement purposes – through, for example, requests for information (RFIs), expressions of interest (EOIs), registrations of interest (ROIs), requests for quotations (RFQs), requests for tenders (RFTs) and requests for proposals (RFPs).

Core procurement principles

- Good public services depend on good procurement.
- Good procurement is about getting the best value for money through open and effective competition.
- Eligible suppliers must be given a full and fair opportunity to respond.
- For these reasons, open, competitive processes are the preferred approach to market.

“10 working days is the absolute minimum, not the norm.”

Mandatory Rules for Procurement

Timeframes must be reasonable

Suppliers must be given a reasonable timeframe to complete the required tasks and respond to tender opportunities, whether they are open or closed. In your planning, consider how long it will take a supplier to:

- obtain the full tender documentation
- read and analyse the documents
- seek clarification, if required
- prepare pricing information
- develop and submit a responsive tender, and
- arrange for the tender to be delivered on time.

You should also consider the nature of the procurement activity's and the circumstances of the approach to market, including:

- the goods or services you're purchasing
- the procurement's maximum estimated value over its lifespan
- the risks and their impacts on your agency's business
- how simple it is to define the deliverables
- the complexity of the procurement activity
- how much you need to engage with suppliers (you might need supplier briefings for unique or novel purchases)
- how much clarification suppliers might need, and
- the amount of information and level of detail the suppliers need to provide.

The risks

Unrealistic timeframes can introduce risk, potentially compromising the integrity of the procurement activity and affecting your agency's business credibility.

A rushed process:

- affects the number of suppliers that can respond and the quality of their responses
- affects the level of competition and your agency's ability to get the best value for money
- can limit the choice of solutions offered and your agency's ability to purchase the right goods or services for the purpose.

Remember, ensuring suppliers have enough time to respond to a tender is a requirement of the Mandatory Rules for Procurement.

Approach to market	Suggested timeframes
RFI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 to 20 business days. • More if the procurement activity is complex or unique.
ROI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 to 20 business days.
EOI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More if there are few known suppliers.
RFQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 to 20 business days. • More if the goods or services are complex or a high level of financial detail is required.
RFT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 to 20 business days for simple, straightforward procurements where the goods or services are easy to describe and there is a strong market of known suppliers. • 20 to 30 business days (or more) for more complex procurements or where there are fewer known suppliers. • 30 business days (or more) where the goods or services are high value, high risk, complex to describe or complex to price.
RFP	



Good practice tips

- Decide what's reasonable after fully considering the procurement activity's nature and complexity.
- Avoid posting an opportunity before the Christmas break. Most of New Zealand is on holiday from around 19 December to 15 January.
- Ensure you include additional days to cover statutory holidays.
- Be fair and reasonable to all suppliers.