

REPORT, DOCUMENT

Supply Chain Support - Resource pack

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In this page

Introduction

What is Sell2Wales?

How to register with Sell2Wales

What is Sell2Wales supplier finder?

How to search for a Sell2Wales notice

What are Sell2Wales Project Pages?

How and why to search for information about past contracts on Sell2Wales

Quick Quotes

What are the different tendering portals?

What are procurement frameworks?

What is a Dynamic Purchasing System?

Meet the Buyer events

Top tips when attending a Meet the Buyer event

Case studies

Top tendering tips

Additional guidance to maximise your tendering activity

Useful links

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Introduction

Each year, opportunities worth over £7bn are made available to provide goods and services for Welsh public sector organisations, as well as sub-contracting opportunities for the private sector companies operating throughout its supply chains.

In this resource pack we'll explain how Business Wales can support your company's journey to win public sector business, by discovering and bidding for this work using Sell2Wales, the online gateway, information source and procurement platform set up by the Welsh Government.

At the heart of this process is the growth of the Foundational Economy.

A healthy Foundational Economy relies on the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility, whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns into their business operations.

This approach is becoming more important than ever before in supply chain decision making, with more emphasis being placed on buying locally in order to reduce carbon emissions throughout the supply chain, and to boost local economies.

The public sector has a duty to lead by example here and if Wales is to meet its carbon emissions pledge – to be Net Zero by 2050 – the public sector must buy closer to home wherever possible.

Which is why we need as many Welsh businesses as possible to be aware of the support available from Business Wales, that will help them engage with supply chains and the opportunities advertised by Sell2Wales.

What is the Foundational Economy?

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The services and products within the Foundational Economy provide those basic goods and services on which every citizen relies and which keep us safe, sound and civilised.

In essence, the Foundational Economy is the basic infrastructure of everyday life.

Care and health services, food, housing, energy, construction, tourism, and retailers on the high street are all examples of the Foundational Economy. The industries and firms that are there because people are there.

Estimates suggest they account for four in ten jobs and £1 in every three that we spend. In some parts of Wales this basic Foundational Economy is the economy.

What is Sell2Wales?

Sell2Wales is the Welsh Government's online gateway, information source and procurement platform. It provides companies with a place to find and win public sector business.

It's a great resource for buyers who are looking to appoint companies to fulfil their purchasing requirements, however big or small.

For example, maybe you're a decorating company that could be the ideal candidate to deliver on a new contract to paint public infrastructure, like bridges and transportation hubs.

Or a fruit and veg wholesaler looking to deliver on NHS catering contracts.

Or a security firm that could fulfil the brief to provide contract services for Transport for Wales.

The opportunities available are so diverse and numerous that there is truly something for all businesses to consider bidding for. And if you think your business is too small to be in with a chance of success, you'd be wrong - approximately 80%

are smaller opportunities, so there are tendering options available for businesses of all shapes and sizes.

Another great benefit of Sell2Wales is that it pulls through all of the tendering opportunities available in Wales, and indeed beyond, which could be scattered across multiple procurement portals, and collates them in one place. This saves you time and effort and gives you confidence that you're not missing out on any potential opportunities.

In many cases, tenders won via Sell2Wales have been transformational for the businesses involved and registration is free, so there's nothing to lose by signing up.

For more information and support, please visit www.businesswales.gov.wales

How to register with Sell2Wales

To sign up with Sell2Wales and start searching, bidding for- and winning public sector work, users first need to register with Sign on Cymru.

Sign on Cymru is the single sign-on service for Welsh Government online business support. It provides access to a number of Welsh Government services to help support businesses in Wales, including Sell2Wales.

Follow these steps to register with Sign on Cymru:

- Go to the Sell2Wales homepage at www.sell2wales.gov.wales.
- Click on the Free Registration button. Here users will be transferred to the Sign On Cymru [information page](#).
- Click on Proceed to Sign on / Register and users will be transferred to the Sign on Cymru [log in page](#).
- If you're not already registered, click on the Don't have an account? Sign up now link.

- Follow the instructions and a verification code will be sent to the email address provided.
- Verify the code on the Sell2Wales site and press Create to set up your Sell2Wales account.

For more information and support, please visit www.businesswales.gov.wales

Top tip

It's important to renew your registration every year to avoid having your account archived. You will receive two reminders via email before this happens.

What is Sell2Wales supplier finder?

The **supplier finder** service aims to help connect public and private sector businesses together. It works as a supplier directory which allows buyers to find sellers with live contracts, and it gives sellers the opportunity to advertise their business, detailing the goods and services which they can provide.

Once you have registered on Sell2Wales, make sure you complete your Public Profile by following these steps:

- Enter the details of your business.
- Select the region(s) in which your company wishes to conduct business.
- Enter a company description. You can enter a maximum of 4,000 characters here, so make full use of this to maximise your exposure to buyers. Be sure to include:
 - Your company logo
 - Your website URL
 - A comprehensive description of your business
 - Social media tags and links
 - Relevant insurances

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- Qualifications
- Business awards
- Links to case studies

As well as allowing buyers to find you, you can also search for tendering opportunities listed by buyers with the Search Contracts function.

For more information and support, please visit www.businesswales.gov.wales

Top tip

You can also enter up to 6 keywords which describe the products or services you provide. These act as key search terms, so think about what your buyer could potentially search and choose them wisely.

How to search for a Sell2Wales notice

To search for live tendering opportunities on Sell2Wales, follow these steps:

- Go to the homepage and click on the Search Contracts option.
- You'll be taken to a **search page**, where you can search for opportunities by location and business categories to match your interest.
- A list of notices will appear underneath the search section. You can click on any of these to view the opportunity and register your interest.

For more information and support, please visit www.businesswales.gov.wales

Top tip

If you are looking for a particular contract you can use the advanced search functions to narrow it down by buyer's name, specific keywords and reference numbers.

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How to set up alerts and why they are important

After registering with Sell2Wales, it is important for you to set up your Alert Profile. You can do this at the same time as you set up your *Public Profile*.

This function saves you time by delivering potential new business opportunities directly into your inbox, so it's worth doing properly to ensure that you receive email alerts for opportunities that are relevant to your business.

To set up alerts, follow these steps:

- Find your Alert Profile in the Supplier Control Panel under the heading My Profile.
- Enter the product categories that are relevant to your business. It's important to really drill down here to ensure that you only receive alerts that are relevant for you.
- Select the geographical locations where you are willing to work.

Top tip

Be sure to update your Alert Profile on a regular basis, especially if you are expanding your product or service range.

What are Sell2Wales Project Pages?

When you log onto the Sell2Wales [homepage](#), you'll see a subsection named Projects.

Click through to this section for a list of public sector organisations, and companies within their supply chains, who have their own designated Sell2Wales *Project Pages*

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These companies include Transport for Wales, Welsh Water and the Swansea Bay City Deal, and between them they account for hundreds of millions of pounds of contracts available within Wales amongst others.

Click on each of these Project Pages to see their current tendering opportunities, forthcoming events and other useful information. These lists are frequently updated and growing, so it's worth checking back regularly.

For more information and support, please visit www.businesswales.gov.wales

How and why to search for information about past contracts on Sell2Wales

While the principal function of Sell2Wales is to search and identify new opportunities within public sector supply chains, it can be helpful to review past contracts in order to broaden a company's understanding of the kinds of opportunities available within their sectors.

Using Sell2Wales, you can learn more about past contracts, their values and the companies who won them, and consequently potential sub contract opportunities arising from them.

To do this, follow these steps:

- Click through the Search Contracts tab on the Sell2Wales homepage.
- In the Filter Results section select the Notice Type tab and then Contracts Results to see who won the contract.

This function may be particularly relevant if you missed out on a previous bid, as it can help provide information to increase your chance of success next time.

For more information and support, please visit www.businesswales.gov.wales

Top tip

If a buyer has previously put out opportunities that are of interest, even if it has no current live tenders, it might be worth reaching out to introduce yourself. Use Sell2Wales as a resource to develop your sector relationships, as well as making the most of the other resources available on the Business Wales website.

Quick Quotes

Quick Quotes is Sell2Wales' invaluable tool for smaller contract opportunities. It is a quotation facility within Sell2Wales, which allows public sector buyers to obtain competitive quotes for lower value contracts of up to £25,000.

Via Quick Quotes buyers can look for- and invite companies to quote privately using this mechanism, without having to go through a full open tender process.

To maximise your chance of being invited to quote, it is vital that you set up your Sell2Wales Supplier Finder and Alerts Profiles correctly, completing all of the available data fields.

To use the Quick Quote function, follow these steps:

- Access *Quick Quotes* by selecting My Account in the top menu and logging in to take you to the Supplier Control Panel. Select Interest List under the heading My Notices.
- The *Interest List* will display Quick Quotes for which you have been invited, as well as publicly advertised, and notices you may have recorded an interest in.
- You will be able to identify a Quick Quote by the green arrow symbol on the left hand side of the screen.
- Details of the Quick Quote relating to a particular project are created by the buyer and distributed to suppliers.

- If you're invited to quote you must complete the required details and submit your quotation using the secure Postbox.

For more information and support, please visit www.businesswales.gov.wales

Why use Quick Quotes?

Quick Quotes streamlines the quotation process for both buyers and suppliers. Suppliers in particular are saved the time and effort of putting together a more extensive tender. There's also less competition for buyers, making it easier to win public sector work.

Winning *Quick Quotes* can be the confidence boost that many SMEs require when tendering for work for the first time.

What are the different tendering portals?

When buyers advertise a procurement requirement, they use what's called a Contract Notice, and call for interested suppliers to respond with relevant documentation by a set deadline.

All public sector tenders are advertised on these portals:

- Sell2Wales in Wales
- Contracts Finder in England
- Public Contracts Scotland in Scotland

If you want to find all higher value opportunities from right across the UK, you can find them on the [Find a Tender service](#).

In Wales, the Welsh Government uses Sell2Wales to advertise all contracts above £25,000. Suppliers who want to do business with the Welsh Government must register on Sell2Wales. Once registered you can see all current contract notices.

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As an extension to Sell2Wales, the Welsh Government uses eTenderWales to functionally run procurements over £25,000. This platform gives:

- suppliers easy access to tender documents;
- provides a secure way of returning tenders;
- provides a transparent process for raising queries during the tender process.

With so many platforms outlining thousands of different tendering opportunities, it can be a time consuming exercise to keep up to date with multiple different portals. This is why Sell2Wales is such a vital resource for your business: it pulls through all of the tendering opportunities available in Wales into one digital space, so you can access everything quickly and easily, without worrying about missing potential opportunities.

Just ensure that your Sell2Wales Supplier Finder and Alert Profile are as comprehensive as possible, so the opportunities that you are presented with are in line with your business profile.

For more information and support, please visit www.businesswales.gov.wales

What are procurement frameworks?

Frameworks are agreements between the government and suppliers, otherwise known as businesses, to supply certain types of services under specific terms.

They provide buyers, such as local councils or the NHS, with a list of pre-approved suppliers who are capable of delivering the product or service they require.

Frameworks are often divided into:

- 'Lots' by product or service type
- Region (where necessary)

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This means that suppliers offering certain kinds of specialist goods or services, and operating in a specific area, can bid to join the lot that best suits their business.

The number of suppliers can differ depending on the framework being offered. Some frameworks only require one supplier, others many more. There are a huge number of frameworks available, across numerous sectors, that businesses can be a part of.

For example, if you're a public relations firm, you could be part of the Welsh Government Communication & Marketing framework, whereas a plumber in the Cardiff area might be interested in the Cardiff Council Pool of Small Contractors framework.

Being on a framework provides your business with the potential for consistent revenue. Framework lengths can last for up to 4 years or more before they are re-tendered, ensuring a level of financial stability for businesses.

For more information and support, please visit www.businesswales.gov.wales

What is a Dynamic Purchasing System?

Unlike a traditional framework for the supply of goods, works or services, a Dynamic Purchasing System is an electronic system which suppliers can join at any time.

Watch video It's effectively an 'open market' solution to public sector procurement, which is designed to give buyers access to a pool of pre-qualified suppliers.

Some of the benefits of being on a Dynamic Purchasing System for your business as a supplier:

- The approval process for joining is often quicker and simpler than a framework.
- You don't have to demonstrate suitability and capability every time you wish to compete for a public sector contract.

- It offers your business improved accessibility.
- The award of individual tenders can be quicker.
- A Dynamic Purchasing System remains open to new suppliers throughout the period of the agreement.
- Suppliers can apply for additional lots throughout the life of the Dynamic Purchasing System should their business expand into new areas.

For more information and support, please visit www.businesswales.gov.wales

Meet the Buyer events

Top tip

If you receive an invite to attend a Meet the Buyer event from Business Wales, don't ignore it! Take advantage of what is a specifically targeted opportunity for you to meet the biggest, and most relevant, buyers in your marketplace and grow your business.

What is a Meet the Buyer event?

Business Wales have over 125,000 Welsh businesses on their database, organised by location and by the product or service they provide.

This has been achieved by carefully mapping the supply chain throughout Wales with the intention of matching buyers' requirements with potential suppliers.

Business Wales use this information to invite potential suppliers to Meet The Buyer Events, which take place across Wales each year, both in person and virtually.

Meet the Buyer events are extremely diverse in both their themes and size. For example, an event could be held on behalf of a construction firm who have several large commercial and residential developments underway and are looking to procure trades, from carpentry, to bricklaying, to steel fabrication.

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Or it could be for an NHS Health Board who are looking to procure security, catering and cleaning services.

At the core of these events are one-to-one meetings between buyers and sellers, where the buyer will provide the supplier with detailed information explaining what the project is and the opportunities that are available.

They will also identify any barriers there are to get onto their supply chain so suppliers can consider their options and what they may need to do in order to navigate any obstacles.

At Meet the Buyer events, the supplier also has the opportunity to pitch their business and their services directly to the buyer.

Business Wales's approach supporting Meet the Buyer events has resulted in buyers introducing over 60% more businesses into their supply chain than before, resulting in Welsh SMEs winning millions of pounds of work, that they may otherwise never have even known about, or pitched for.

For more information and support, please visit www.businesswales.gov.wales

Top tips when attending a Meet the Buyer event

Meet the Buyer events, whether in-person or virtual, are an opportunity for a supplier to have one-to-one meetings with a buyer.

Each one-to-one session is planned as a 15-minute meeting. This focusses both parties to provide concise, to the point information.

To get the most out of these short sessions, it's vital to plan in advance. Follow these steps for the greatest chances of success:

- Ensure you know as much as possible about the business or organisation you will be pitching to and if possible, the person you will be meeting.

- Where appropriate bring business cards and marketing material, accreditations, referrals and examples of work you have carried out for similar organisations.
- Come with relevant questions. Ask how the work will be allocated, if they think you are in a good position to win this work, and what you have to do to be successful. Find out what timelines they are working to and their plans for the future.

You may walk away with a whole new business opportunity, or discover that while the opportunity wasn't right for your business at the moment, the buyer's future plans are more suited to your offering.

For more information and support, please visit www.businesswales.gov.wales

Top tip

If you leave with any warm leads, or relationships you'd like to build upon in the future, it's important to follow up with an email or telephone call after the event to develop the connection.

Case studies

Engaging with supply chain opportunities is beneficial to your business, but don't take our word for it. Listen to what some successful businesses have to say and find out more about the impact securing new supply chain opportunities has had on their business.

For more information and support, please visit www.businesswales.gov.wales

Specialist Security Company

Rachel Fleri, owner, manager and director of Specialist Security Company based in Cardiff, South Wales talks about her experiences with support received from Business Wales.

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OTM Groundscare

Ollie Metcalfe, one of the owners of OTM Groundscare which are based in Haye-On-Wye, Mid Wales discusses how his business has benefitted from supply chain advice through Business Wales.

Oren Foods

Gethin Dwyfor, managing director of Oren Foods located in Penrhyndeudraeth in North Wales mentions how Business Wales supported him on bidding and winning public sector work.

Top tendering tips

At the heart of winning public sector business is putting together an excellent tender, that fulfils the brief and ticks all of the boxes, which in turn will elevate your tender above all others.

To achieve this, suppliers must:

- Read the tender instructions carefully - ensure you have read and understood the full tender requirements and make sure that your business fits the brief, rather than making the tender fit your business.
- Ensure you have set aside sufficient time to complete the tender. Don't leave it until the last minute.
- Make sure you have the right accreditations. Every tender will be different but it's vital you meet the standards required, or else your bid will likely fail.
- Read the questions in full and be sure to answer the questions in full.
- Invest time in the planning stage to storyboard and structure your responses.
- There will be a specified window of opportunity at the start of any tendering process where suppliers will be able to ask the buyer questions, so if you are unsure of anything, take advantage of this.

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- Be explicit when it comes to meeting the specifications within the brief. All tenders should be bespoke to the client and project.
- Always evidence any open statements you make. This may include examples of track records, Key Performance Indicators and client testimonials.
- Read up on the Well-being Of Future Generations Act, the Welsh Government's groundbreaking legislation that requires public bodies to think about the long-term impact of their decisions. Make reference to its goals in your submission where appropriate.
- Include any added-value services you could provide over and above the minimum requirements.
- Ensure your bid encapsulates your organisation's culture and capability and evidence this. Don't assume that a buyer knows anything about you.
- Proof-read your response before submitting.
- Adhere to deadlines, word counts, fonts and font size. And attach all the requested documents.
- Try to submit your bid at least 24 hours before closing time to avoid any last minute problems.

For more information and support, please visit www.businesswales.gov.wales

Need some extra help?

Attend one of Business Wales' regular fully funded 'How To Tender' workshops. These are a series of workshops that are aimed at businesses who want to learn more about how to successfully tender for contracts.

Additional guidance to maximise your tendering activity

At both the beginning and the end of the tendering process there are opportunities to maximise your chances of success, now and in the future.

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Before you start the tendering process: bid or no bid?

It's vital to select the most suitable tender for your business as opposed to tendering for every single opportunity available.

When it comes to considering a new opportunity, you'll need to ask yourself a series of questions:

- Are you able to satisfy all the minimum requirements within the qualification stage?
- Is it the right size of contract? For example, the buyer may have concerns if you are tendering for an opportunity where the annual contract value is greater than your annual turnover.
- Do you have experience of delivering a similar contract? Showcasing your experience will give the buyer confidence that you can provide this level of service.
- Do you have sufficient resources to not only complete the new tender, but to maintain service agreements with existing customers? Consider if it will place unnecessary strain on your resources and supply chain.

After the tendering process

On the award of a contract, getting feedback from the buyer and learning from their response is key.

Even if you're the winning bidder, there are always new things to learn about how your submission was received, so request detailed feedback following the award of a contract. This may include:

- Technical scores within the quality section. Is there a particular area you need to invest and improve in?
- Commercial score. Do you have the right pricing strategy?

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- And if you weren't successful, who was the winning tenderer? And what were the winning characteristics of their bid? There are learnings here.

Remember, procurement processes are in a constant state of evolution and businesses need to constantly evaluate their position in the marketplace in order to maximise the chances of tendering success.

For more information and support, please visit www.businesswales.gov.wales

Useful links

- [Foundational Economy](#)
- [Sell2Wales](#)
- [Sell2Wales - Search For Contracts](#)
- [Business Wales](#)
- [Business Wales Events Finder](#)
- [Supply Chain Summits](#)
- [etender Wales](#)
- [Proactis](#)
- [NHS Procurement](#)
- [UK Government Contracts Finder](#)
- [Well-being of Future Generations Act](#)

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