



Ask an Information Officer

I'm interested in selling my product to the provincial government. How do I get started?

Anthony Pouw, Business Information Officer, Canada Nova Scotia Business Service Centre

The Government of Nova Scotia typically buys more than a billion dollars in goods and services each year, most of which are purchased from Nova Scotia businesses. How the provincial government acquires these goods and services from businesses like yours will depend on the value of the purchases. There are two categories of purchases, low and high value, each with a different process to follow.

Low value purchases include goods under \$5,000 and services or construction under \$10,000, and may be handled directly by departments or agencies of the provincial government. For these purchases, a department or agency may:

- go directly to a business that has a standing offer;
- get three or more quotes from known suppliers for a competitive price; or,
- go directly to a supplier that they know to be competitive.

In either case, you will need to make your business known to their purchasing staff. For this, you should get a copy of the Public Sector Purchasing Contacts Directory from Procurement Services

Ask > page 2

Business Article

Public Works and Government Services Canada's Office of Small and Medium Enterprises can help your business

Public Works and Government Services Canada

Have you ever thought about exploring the Government of Canada as a market for your business? If not, you may be missing out on some excellent opportunities. Small and medium-sized enterprises win over 85 percent of federal procurement contracts, representing about one-third of the total value of all contracts. Public Works and Government Services Canada's (PWGSC) Office of Small and Medium Enterprises (OSME) can show you the ropes, and it may not be as hard as you think.

Bidding for federal contracts has been simplified in several ways. The template for new requests for standing offers is more user-friendly. New tenders are now divided by the size of the purchase and there are fewer mandatory requirements. As well, new sub-categories of products make it easier for more specialized companies to qualify. Smaller firms can also take advantage of regional standing offers. In fact, 72 new regional firms recently qualified for regional standing offers for office supplies.

"Smaller businesses don't generally have the resources to wade through complex forms and processes," says Marshall Moffatt, Director General of the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises. "We've tried to make the system much more accessible and we

continue to look at how it can be improved."

Staff at OSME headquarters and six regional offices consult with small and medium businesses and industry associations every day to better understand the challenges of dealing with the federal government. They also provide in-person information briefings where they explain how to identify niche opportunities and navigate the federal government procurement system.

Brooks Industrial Metals Ltd., based in Brooks, Alberta, is one company that gained a new client in the Government of Canada. The company attended an event offered by the local Chamber of Commerce that included a PWGSC information session on business opportunities with the federal government. As a result of the session,

Business > page 4

<h2><u>Contents</u></h2>	
Business Article.....	1
Ask an Information Officer	1
Featured Web Site	4
Hot Topics.....	3
 	

Ask an Information Officer

and you should attend Nova Scotia Supplier Development Reverse Trade Shows.

High value purchases are goods over \$5,000 and services or construction over \$10,000. These purchases go through a formal tendering process that is publicly advertised. Also known as the bidding process, tendering is designed to be competitive, fair, transparent and open to all businesses. There are three ways to find out about tenders:

- visit the Tender Opportunities and User Resources Web page for new tenders or addendums to tenders;
- sign up for the Tender Opportunities Notification Service to receive e-mail notification of opportunities; and,
- read the classified ads in newspapers for publicly advertised tender opportunities.

For tendering, the Government of Nova Scotia uses a centralized purchasing system administered by Procurement Services. For more information or assistance on selling to the Province of Nova Scotia, please contact Procurement Services at:

Procurement Services
Department of Economic Development
6176 Young Street, Suite 200
P.O. Box 787
Halifax, N.S. B3J 2V2
Phone: 902-424-3333
Toll-free: 1-866-399-3377
Fax: 902-424-0780
E-mail: ptenders@gov.ns.ca

With a billion dollars of potential business available every year, even a small fraction can mean

big business for you. But selling to the government doesn't stop with the Province of Nova Scotia; opportunities exist at the municipal and federal levels of government, as well as with other provinces and territories. For more information on other procurement opportunities for your business, please contact the Canada/Nova Scotia Business Service Centre (toll-free at 1-800-668-1010, by e-mail at halifax@cbssc.ic.gc.ca, or on-line at www.canadabusiness.ca/ns).

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Don't miss out on new programs and services geared to supporting your business. Subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter today at <http://www.cbssc.org/ns/newsletter.cfm>.

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Our Mission

To improve the start-up, survival and growth rates of small- and medium-sized enterprises by giving business people in every part of Nova Scotia access to accurate, timely and relevant information and referrals

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1-800-668-1010

Click:

www.canadabusiness.gc.ca/ns/

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Hot Picks

The following books are available from the Canada/Nova Scotia Business Service Centre Library. These books may also be available in our resource centres, located throughout the province.

The Procurers: Accessing Canada's #1 Market

Merhel Crossan

The Procurers is envisioned as a primer for suppliers. It is intended to provide some insight and understanding of the government marketplace in general and the procurement process in particular. This book looks at the realities of the government marketplace and strives to correct the ill-conceived perceptions held by many potential suppliers to governments. It discusses the marketing organization and the resources essential to successfully market to governments, and also explains the government procurement system and the government procurement solicitation processes.

Additional Contents:

- Psychedelic Dreams
- Perception is Reality
- Tenders are Invited
- To Bid, or Not to Bid
- To Bid
- Not to Bid
- Signed, Sealed, and Whatever
- The Persuasion Industry
- When in Rome, Do as the Romans Do

2010 Business Opportunities: A Playmaker's guide to purchasing opportunities

2010 Business Opportunities is a handbook distributed by the Federal Government, and is intended to help you understand the range

of business opportunities associated with the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, as well as other international sports or cultural events. It will provide you with suggestions and advice on how your business can be successful within the competitive bidding process for business opportunities related to the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games. It will also assist your efforts to be a supplier of goods and services to public agencies. It provides business advice, information and reference material to help businesses understand:

Additional Contents:

- The types of business opportunities that are related to the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games
- How to find 2010 business opportunities
- The purchasing process for goods and services
- The considerations businesses should be aware of when bidding
- How to interpret and respond to Requests for Proposals
- How to bid successfully and how to make the most of unsuccessful bids
- Where to get additional information related to 2010 business opportunities

Contracts Canada: How to do business with the federal government

This information package contains several fact sheets and pamphlets on various topics related to government procurement, and is a good starting guide for those who have no experience in selling goods and services to the federal government, and for newcomers to the world of procurement altogether.

Additional Contents:

- Promoting your Goods and Services

- Registering as a Supplier to the Federal Government
- Other Federal Options
- Contracts Canada
- The Buying Process in the Federal Government
- Real Property Contracting/ Alternative Forms of Delivery
- Standing Offers and Supply Arrangements
- Writing Better Proposals
- Trade Agreements and Government Procurement

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www.cbbsc.org/ns

CALL

1-800-668-1010

VISIT

1575 Brunswick St.
Halifax, N.S.

Featured Website

MERX Public Tenders

Christine Theriault, Business Information Officer, Canada Nova Scotia Business Service Centre

MERX is an on-line tendering service that advertises government procurement opportunities to potential bidders. As Canada's leading electronic tendering service, it provides a complete source of public tenders, private tenders, U.S. tenders and private-sector construction news, which are available in Canada. MERX has made it easy and affordable for businesses of any size to access billions of dollars of contracting opportunities with the Government of Canada, participating provincial and municipal governments, the private sector, and the U.S. government, as well as state and local governments.

MERX has the following features:

- provides you with adequate information to place orders on bid documents;
- helps you find all the opportunities that are related to your line of business;
- provides information about contracts that are advertised on the service and/or which business rules need to be satisfied;
- allows businesses to identify the other suppliers who are also ordering bid documents, which helps them to determine who their competitors are;
- provides a Web site that operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in both English and French; and

- offers on-line support by providing additional information on other opportunities that occur federally, provincially, or internationally.

MERX offers four main services to its suppliers:

1. Public tenders service – this service can potentially offer your business thousands of opportunities with government departments and agencies that you may not have considered as potential clients in the past.
2. Private tenders service – this service allows any kind of business to expand into private-sector tendering, and is cost-effective for both parties involved.
3. U.S. tenders service – this service allows Canadian businesses to expand and take advantage of tapping into the American market.
4. Private construction service – this service allows businesses to tap into the billions of dollars in construction project contracts that are currently being reported in Canada. These contracts can exist for services such as the construction of hotels, homes, office buildings, and shopping malls.

To learn more about MERX and its services, please visit their Web site.

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Business Article

the business took a close look at the government electronic tendering system, MERX, and found a bid opportunity. Although with 40 employees Brooks was not the largest company to bid, it won the contract to provide up to \$105,000 of tubing to an employment skills program at Correctional Services Canada.

Williams Direct Dryers, a four-person company in Langley, B.C., also recently expanded its market niche after working with OSME. Seeking ways to expand its government customer base, the company spoke to staff at OSME's Pacific Region office, which helped steer it to the Esquimalt Graving Dock. The company made its first sale of dryers to the Esquimalt Graving Dock in December 2006, receiving an order for another dryer within two months.

"These successes show that Government of Canada's willingness to deal with the businesses that can best meet its needs, regardless of size," Mr. Moffat says. "The opportunities for SMEs are absolutely boundless."

If you have questions about the federal procurement process or wish to attend an information session, visit your nearest OSME office, call toll-free 1-800-811-1148, or access the Web site at: <http://contractscanada.gc.ca/en/index.html>.

If you would like to learn more about how OSME can help you explore new business opportunities, visit <http://www.pwggsc.gc.ca/acquisitions/text/sme/sbrsr-e.html>.