



Practical Tips

# Doing Business with the UN System

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# **1. WHAT IS THE UN MARKET?**

## **1.1 Overview**

The United Nations, including its many affiliated agencies, represents an international market of over US\$ 6 billion for suppliers of virtually all types of goods and services. Such a market is well worth your serious consideration. It provides an excellent springboard to introduce your goods and services to other countries and regions.

## **1.2 Profile of the UN System**

Links to the various organizations concerned with procurement can be located at [www.ungm.org](http://www.ungm.org) and <http://unbiz.un.int>.

## **1.3 List of major goods procured**

- Food
- Pharmaceutical Supplies
- Medical Equipment
- Vehicles
- Telecommunications Equipment
- IT Equipment
- Shelter and Housing
- Water Supply Equipment
- Laboratory Equipment
- Educational Supplies
- Agricultural Inputs
- Domestic/Household Items

## **1.4 List of major services procured**

- Security

- Outsourced Personnel Services
- Engineering Services
- Leasing or Rental
- General Management
- Freight
- Printing
- Consultancy
- Telecommunications
- Construction

## **2.0 HOW DOES THE UN SYSTEM PROCURE?**

**2.1** The UN system operates on budgets funded by its members. Each Agency has a separate budget approved by its respective Executive Board.

**2.2** Competitive tendering is used by the UN system to award contracts. The normal procedures followed for the various procurement levels of individual contracts is as follows (with minor variations among the agencies):

Values of purchase orders up to US\$ 30,000: A direct selection of possible suppliers is done by the procurement officer concerned, normally three suppliers are identified. Based on an analysis of the quotations received, the order is awarded to the supplier that meets the specifications and delivery terms and has the lowest price.

Value of Purchase orders from US\$ 30,000 up to US\$ 100,000: Limited competitive bidding is done by inviting a pre-selected short list of suppliers to respond through sealed bids. The shortlist consists of suppliers from developing countries, including the recipient country; under-utilized donor countries and other donor countries. The order is awarded to the most qualified and responsive contractor submitting the lowest bid.

Value of Purchase orders from US\$ 100,000 and up: International competitive bidding is the rule. If

exigencies of a project so allow, suppliers are invited to bid by advertisement in the UN publication *Development Business* [www.devbusiness.com](http://www.devbusiness.com), IAPSO's *Procurement Notices* on [www.iapso.org](http://www.iapso.org) or on other UN agency websites or trade publications. When requests for proposals have been issued, contracts shall be awarded to the best-evaluated responsive offer.

**2.3** The major emphasis is to achieve best value for money through transparent procurement process.

### **3.0 How to market your company and establish contacts?**

**3.1** With so many UN organizations procuring goods and services, you might feel daunted by the size and complexity of the UN system - don't be!

**3.2** It is unlikely that every UN organization will require your goods and services. You just need to find out what each agency's procurement requirements are, and then market your goods and/or services aggressively. The following publications are useful for this:

- ['The General Business Guide'](#) will help you learn which UN organizations purchase the goods or services your company supplies. The Guide describes the mandates, procurement needs, procedures and contact details for all UN organizations.
- IAPSO provides statistics on procurement data in [The Annual Statistical Report](#). The report provides data on procurement of goods and services from 40 UN organizations and UNDP's network of country offices.
- 'Development Business' is a publication providing a comprehensive source of information on opportunities to supply goods, works and services for projects financed by

the United Nations, governments and the world's leading development banks. Please see [www.devbusiness.com](http://www.devbusiness.com) for more information.

**3.3** Once a supplier has researched the United Nations market and has identified the agency or agencies with which it wishes to conduct business, it is recommended that a company presentation is made to the relevant procurement personnel. Either by requesting a meeting or by providing promotional materials describing the company's products and/or services.



## **4.0 REGISTRATION WITH THE UN SYSTEM**

**4.1** It is recommended to consider registering with the United Nations Global Marketplace. The UN Global Marketplace acts as an important procurement tool to shortlist suppliers for competitive bidding. Its database of active and potential suppliers is available to all UN and World Bank procurement personnel, and is the main supplier database of 15 UN organizations. Potential suppliers of goods and/or services are encouraged to register their company on the UN Global Marketplace.

In order to register, the supplier must complete the initial registration process on [www.ungm.org](http://www.ungm.org). After doing so the supplier will receive login details by email. The supplier uses these login credentials to go in and complete the online registration form, also on [www.ungm.org](http://www.ungm.org). As part of the registration process, the supplier must select at least one UN agency to register with. The supplier's registration form will be evaluated by the chosen agency/agencies, before being accepted on the UN Global Marketplace.

Registration is free of charge.

For more information on the UN Global Marketplace and how to register please refer to [www.ungm.org](http://www.ungm.org), or alternatively contact the UN Global Marketplace Secretariat in Copenhagen at the below address.

## **UN Global Marketplace Secretariat**

UNDP/IAPSO

Midtermolen 3

DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø

Denmark

Fax: +45 35467005

E-mail: [registry@ungm.org](mailto:registry@ungm.org)

Website: [www.ungm.org](http://www.ungm.org)

Please note, however, that even though registration on the UN Global Marketplace is open to all procurement staff, some organizations do have their own supplier database. Therefore, it is important that potential suppliers also register with UN agencies that do not directly support the UN Global Marketplace. For links to other UN organizations please refer to <http://unbiz.un.int> and [www.unsystem.org](http://www.unsystem.org).

## 5.0 IN BRIEF

### 5.1 Do's

- Find out which UN agencies have traditional requirements for your types of goods or services;
- Find out which agencies require formal registration and which don't;
- Familiarize yourself with each agency's procurement procedures;
- Keep information on your company and its products up-to-date;
- Remember that the UN is humanitarian in nature;
- Make an appointment, it ensures that the person you want to meet is there;
- Company profiles should be summarized in one page (annexes can be attached) and presentations should be brief;
- Check procurement notices regularly;
- Always respond promptly to an inquiry or request for proposal from a UN agency. (Note: if you are not interested or unable at the time, always reply in order to keep your organization on the active list);
- Familiarise yourself with the UN General Terms and Conditions for the Procurement of Goods and the Contracting of Services. (You can reference these in the General Business Guide, available on <http://www.iapso.org/information/publications.asp>)

## **5.2 Don'ts**

- Don't give up too easily: developing and establishing contacts and business with UN agencies requires the same time as dealing with another new market.

## **6.0 OTHER RESOURCE MATERIAL**

In addition to the publications listed under 3.3, IAPSO, on behalf of the UN system, offers the following publications for sale:

### **6.1 Emergency Relief Items:**

#### **(a) Volume 1, Compendium of Generic Specifications (US\$ 20)**

Provides specifications for telecommunication equipment, shelter and housing, water supply, food, sanitation and hygiene, and materials handling required during the first phase of an emergency, along with selection guidelines.

#### **(b) Volume 2, Compendium of Basic Specifications (US\$ 20)**

Provides specifications for medical supplies and equipment required during the first phase of an emergency, along with selection guidelines.

## **7.0 CONTACT INFORMATION**

General advice about dealing with the UN system can be obtained from the Procurement Advisory & Development Unit at:

UNDP/IAPSO  
Midtermolen 3  
DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø  
Denmark  
Tel.: +45 35467000  
Fax: +45 35467001  
E-mail: [registry@iapso.org](mailto:registry@iapso.org)  
Website: <http://www.iapso.org>