



How to Tender for Work with Thirteen Group

A guide for contractors, suppliers and service providers

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Procurement rules (Goods, services, works)	3
European Law	3
UK Law.....	3
Thirteen Group – Financial Standing Orders.....	4
3. How to find out about our contracts	5
E-Tendering - How to register.....	5
4. Frameworks/Call off contracts	7
Framework Providers	7
5. Providing information	8
Company details.....	8
Technical and professional capacity	8
Economic and financial standing	8
Quality management	8
Equality and Diversity	9
Health & Safety	9
Environment and Sustainability.....	9
Modern Slavery Act 2015	9
6. The Tendering process	10
Social Value	10
Returning tender documents	10
Evaluating tender documents	10
Awarding the contract.....	11
7. Contract performance	12
Contract monitoring	12
Variations	12

1. Introduction

Thirteen Group spends millions of pounds on the procurement of goods, services and works each year, providing businesses of all sizes with a wide range of commercial opportunities.

This guide aims to help all potential contractors, suppliers and service providers to tender for contracts with Thirteen Group. It explains what legislation affects the Group's tendering requirements and looks at the necessary procedures to tender for any opportunities.

There is of course, a great deal of competition for Thirteen group contracts and this guide cannot assure individual companies of any success. However, this guide should provide sufficient information to help understand the requirements in tendering for Thirteen Group contracts.

Thirteen Group are very interested in suppliers which can offer any new, innovative solutions that will support our overall vision and values.

<https://www.thirteengroup.co.uk/page/vision-and-values>

The guide gives a general summary of Thirteen Group's procurement process, under the following headings:

- Procurement Rules (Goods, Services, Works)
- How to find out about our contracts
- Frameworks/Call off contracts
- Providing information
- The tendering process
- Contract performance

2. Procurement rules (Goods, services, works)

Thirteen Group procures goods, services and works from many organisations ranging in value from a few pounds to millions of pounds.

As well as the Group's own rules 'Financial standing orders', the two other main factors which affect how the Group procures goods, services and works are European and UK law.

European Law

Thirteen Group must follow European law with regard to Public Sector Purchasing. All contracts above a certain value must be advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU), <http://www.ojeu.eu/>

OJEU Procurement thresholds for contracts:

Contract Type	Threshold 1 Jan 2020 - 31 Dec 2021
Construction Works	£4,733,252
Services/ Supplies	£189,330

UK Law

As well as general contract law, Thirteen Group procurement activity is consistent with the approach that all public procurement must be based on value for money. Value for money is

defined as “the best mix of quality and effectiveness for the least outlay over the period of use of the goods or services bought”.

The procurement of all goods, services and works are acquired through competition, unless there are convincing reasons to the contrary such as a business emergency or a proprietary product or service requirement.

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/102/pdfs/uksi_20150102_en.pdf

Thirteen Group – Financial Standing Orders

These are the Group’s rules and procedures that govern its activities, including procurement of goods, services and works.

The group’s financial standing orders reflect the requirements of European and UK law in terms of tendering and contract procedures.



3. How to find out about our contracts

Thirteen Group use an e-tendering system for procuring goods, services and works contracts. The system can be accessed via the following link: <https://in-tendhost.co.uk/thirteengroup>. Registration will allow access to tenders published by the group together with contract management.

Thirteen group tender opportunities over £75,000 are also published on <https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>.

E-Tendering - How to register

In order to use the In-tend e-procurement portal all you will need is a computer with an internet connection and a valid email address. You must complete a new registration process for new suppliers before you are able to view tender opportunities. This is free of charge and can be accessed using this link: <https://in-tendhost.co.uk/thirteengroup>

Once registered, you will be able to express interest in any open opportunities when they are made available.

We would like to highlight that the registered name on the portal must be the same as that on your Companies House registration.

If you encounter any difficulties whilst using the portal you can contact the Support team by phoning 0844 272 8810 or emailing support@in-tend.co.uk

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Thirteen In-Tend e-Tendering portal. The header features the 'thirteen' logo and the tagline 'Managing and building homes'. A navigation menu includes 'Home', 'Buyers Profiles', 'Tenders', 'Register', and 'Help'. On the left, there is a login section with fields for 'User ID', 'e-Mail Address', and 'Password', along with buttons for 'Login', 'Forgotten Details', and 'Register'. Below the login section is an 'in-community' banner for 'in-supply' and a 'PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AND SPONSORSHIP' banner. A central yellow box contains a welcome message and a list of services available on the site, such as viewing tenders, expressing interest, and receiving documentation. A 'NOTE' at the bottom left states that three failed login attempts will lock the account. The footer contains copyright information for 2019, version details (03.10.28.10), a date (30/01/2019), and server information (TRAININGWEB), along with a 'COMODO SECURE' logo.

Click on Register to the left of the screen. As part of the registration form you will be asked to complete your Company Details, Company Contact Details and Primary User

Details. Whilst registering you may only add one additional point of contact, however after the registration is complete you may login to your account and add as many additional contacts as you like. In the Business Classifications tab, you can add a category. Click the blue + symbol to add a category relevant to your company. You can add multiple categories.

Once you have completed the registration process, you will receive your own log on details to access the system and any tender opportunities.

Benefits of registering:

- It is free and easy to use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- You can be notified when new opportunities arise.
- Communications are tracked in a clear and legally binding audit trail.
- You will receive email reminders of important deadlines in the tender process.
- You will receive automatic confirmation of receipt of your response.

Tips on e-tendering:

- Save documents to your PC first.
- Ensure you meet all the requirements outlined within the specification of requirements, technical and commercial criteria.
- Make a note of key deadlines, in particular response time and date.
- Do not alter the original tender documents or any supplied pricing schedules.
- Where applicable you must complete the Standard Selection Questionnaire (SSQ) parts 1 and 2 in order for your quotation to be included in our evaluation.
- Do use the online Q&A facility if you have any queries about the process.
- Do ensure your response is submitted in on time.
- Do not include publicity material in your response unless you've been specifically asked to.
- Do contact us well in advance of the deadline if you have technical problems or are unable to submit your response electronically.

4. Frameworks/Call off contracts

Organisations within the Public Sector are continually being encouraged to participate in collaborative/consortia procurement activity in order to reduce the overall costs of the tendering process and reduce bureaucracy, both for the organisations concerned and the supply base.

Thirteen Group also use a number of framework agreements for the procurement of a wide range of goods, services and works. Frameworks are similar to approved supplier lists but they cover a specific product or service for a specified period of time.

Once in place, frameworks can be used as the basis for placing orders (Direct award) or for mini competition processes with all suitable suppliers listed on the framework agreement being invited to bid. Orders for goods, services and works through a framework agreement are commonly referred to as a 'call off' order.

Whenever Thirteen Group invites organisations to tender, we ensure the following:

- Any needs in terms of outputs wherever appropriate, in order to encourage innovation are specified.
- Invite tenders from enough suppliers to ensure there is genuine competition.
- Make sure tendering processes and documentation are as clear and concise as possible and only ask for information necessary to evaluate bids.
- Inform all tenderers of the evaluation criteria on which the decision to award the contract will be based; and
- Provide all tenderers with the same information and opportunity ensuring openness, transparency and consistency.

Framework Providers

Information with regard to some of the framework providers that Thirteen group engage with have been provided below.

Crown Commercial Service <http://ccs-agreements.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/>

NE Procurement Ltd <http://neprocurement.org.uk/>

PFH (Procurement for Housing) <http://www.procurementforhousing.co.uk/>

Cirrus purchasing <http://www.cirruspurchasing.co.uk/>

5. Providing information

Supplier selection is a key stage in public procurement where you gather information on and make assessments of the prospective bidders' credentials whilst considering their overall tender proposal. This includes gathering information about companies' track records, financial credentials, whether they have been involved in corruption, whether they meet various selection criteria, and so on.

If your company expresses an interest in a specific contract opportunity that has been advertised, the document that you will be required to complete will ask for specific details about your company within the following areas:

Company details

The questions asked on your company details are designed to allow you to provide basic information on your company. This includes main address for correspondence and contact details for both the application process and any future contact. These questions are designed to ensure that Thirteen Group knows exactly with whom it may be entering into a contract.

Technical and professional capacity

Thirteen group will use the information that is provided here to assess whether your company is suitable for carrying out the category of work, service or supply you want to apply for.

This is basically an assessment as to whether your company has the necessary knowledge, technical expertise and competence to deliver the contract requirements.

Economic and financial standing

In this section, you are asked for certain financial information relating to your company such as audited accounts and annual reports. If your company is newly established and cannot provide formal accounts, this will be taken into consideration, but you will need a statement from your accountant or bankers reference.

Thirteen Group will use the information to assess the financial position of your company and to possibly set contract limits.

You will also be asked to submit information on your insurance cover, your company must carry employer's liability and public liability with at least £5m, for some specialist contracts you may be required to hold additional insurances. (This will be documented within the tender opportunity).

Quality management

Whilst it is not a requirement for contractors, suppliers or service providers to be formally quality assured with an accredited certification body, it is a requirement that organisations have adopted a quality management system that is at least to the standard of ISO9001:2000 (Or equivalent). Such a system should take into account the following principles.

- Focus on customers
- Provide leadership
- Involve people within the organization
- Use a systematic approach
- Encourage continual improvement
- Base decisions on facts

- Work with suppliers

If you are accredited through a recognised Quality Assurance body, you will need to provide a copy of your certification; if you are not, but have a quality management system, you will need to provide a copy of that.

Equality and Diversity

Thirteen Group is committed to ensuring that its employees and the people it serves are not discriminated against on the basis of age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation or transgender.

You will need to provide evidence of your policy within this area, and your procedures for implementing it, along with examples of recruitment advertising and where appropriate, workforce monitoring.

Health & Safety

In this section you are asked questions relating to your Health and Safety arrangements, in particular your written policy demonstrating your understanding and commitment to safety.

The Health and safety executive have issued a number of guidance documents regarding health and safety which can be found on their website. www.hsebooks.co.uk

Environment and Sustainability

Thirteen Group is committed to improving its own environmental performance through the best use of materials, practices and technologies. In order to achieve this aim, Thirteen Group expects companies from whom it purchases goods and services to demonstrate similar levels of environmental care and commitment to sustainability.

Modern Slavery Act 2015

All our procurement decisions must ensure that every step has been taken to avoid a potential occurrence of modern slavery in our supply chains.

The Act defines slavery or forced labour as holding “another person in slavery or servitude and the circumstances are such that the person knows or ought to know that the other person is held in slavery or servitude.” You will be asked directly in the tender documents to confirm that you also take every possible check to ensure occurrences of modern slavery do not exist in your supply chain.

6. The Tendering process

Thirteen Group tender documentation usually includes the following information:

- Invitation and instructions to tenderers (often called an ITT)
- Pricing document and/or form of tender
- Specification and/or schedule of rates
- Contract conditions or conditions of purchase
- Method statement requirements (if necessary)
- A social value calculator
- Any relevant supporting information

All bidders must follow the instructions given in the ITT and tender letter, as failure to do so may prevent Thirteen Group from considering your tender.

Social Value

A Social Value calculator will be included in every tender over £75,000. The Supplier will be expected to complete this document as part of their bid, and this will be carried over into the contract. If an updated calculator is not included with the bid documents, then the score given for social value will be zero.

Social value commitment is to be of benefit to Thirteen's customers and the Tees Valley area. For all offers of employment, apprentices and work placements we would expect the contractor to work with our Employability Team (New Directions) to engage with the local community and our customers. We understand that some contracts will not always be able to offer this due to the location of the contractor and / or the type of goods and services being procured, therefore a pledge could be made in the form of an in-kind donation.

An example of this would be: -

Procurement for a waste contract: the bidder is local and is offering 2 apprenticeships as a direct result of winning the contract.

Procurement for a software contract: the bidder is in the South therefore offering an in-kind donation or basic computer familiarity training for our tenants.

As part of a Thirteen framework agreement a social value donation of 1% will be required from any supplier whose spend under the framework is £75,000 or more in each 12 month period of the contract.

Returning tender documents

You will be asked to complete and return your tender documents through the procurement portal by a given time and date. It is important that you allow sufficient time to upload and submit tender documentation to the portal as failure to return tender documents by the specified deadline will see your submission excluded from the evaluation process.

Evaluating tender documents

The tender documents will have indicated how your bid will be evaluated in terms of price and quality. The pricing schedule, method statements, company/commercial information and any other supporting documentation will be evaluated by the evaluation team to

determine which bid provides the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT). Each tender will be scored against pre-determined criteria which will have been weighted according to their relative importance.

You may be required to clarify certain areas of your tender, and may subsequently be interviewed, before a final decision is made. After evaluation, if Thirteen Group is satisfied that you can undertake the work, supply or service you will be awarded the contract.

Awarding the contract

Once a decision to award a contract has been made, the successful and unsuccessful bidders will be notified in writing of the decision.

If you are not awarded the contract you will be notified in writing that you have been unsuccessful, and be given feedback. Feedback is provided in writing and generally includes the comments from the evaluators which marked your tender. If requested, a face to face meeting may also be arranged if necessary in more complex bidding arrangements.

7. Contract performance

Although all contracts differ, there are general procedures in place for monitoring the performance of all companies carrying out contracts for Thirteen Group.

Some contracts are monitored using pre-defined performance criteria such as Key performance indicators (KPI), KPI are documented within the tender package and are agreed/approved by all parties prior to a contract agreement going live.

Contract monitoring

Your company must be capable of delivering the requirements of the contract, you should be aware that contract conditions will be strictly applied especially with regard to quality and general performance.

You will be asked to comment on any adverse performance that is reported, but you should be aware that serious instances of poor performance could lead to suspension or contract termination. Examples of adverse performance would include such areas as: continued failure of KPI, poor quality of work, any instance of modern slavery, poor supervision, poor adherence to legislative practices (H&S, QA, Environmental etc.). All of our contract management is logged via the e-procurement portal.

Variations

Contract variations may be required from time to time throughout the contract. Thirteen Group will always request variations in writing, except in any emergency where instructions may be made verbally but will be confirmed in writing.

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