



CompeteFor

Stakeholder Frequently Asked Questions

Version 6 | August 2011



1. General

What is CompeteFor?

CompeteFor is a free online service that enables businesses to compete for contract opportunities linked to the London 2012 Games and other major public and private sector supply chains. CompeteFor matches businesses of all sizes to thousands of contract opportunities.

Within the London 2012 Games supply chain, it is anticipated there will be up to 75,000 business opportunities - around £6 billion of work. CompeteFor is targeting up to 20% of the opportunities within this supply chain.

CompeteFor also facilitates access to existing business support services; helping to build skills and capacity to ensure UK-wide businesses can access the opportunities linked to the UK hosting the Games in 2012.

Who has endorsed CompeteFor?

CompeteFor is endorsed by the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) and The London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG). Together referred to as, 'London 2012'.

CompeteFor is delivered through a partnership between the private sector and the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) in England and the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

What is the vision and what are the objectives of CompeteFor?

CompeteFor's vision is to ensure the transparency and availability of London 2012 opportunities, maximising the number and diversity of businesses contributing to the London 2012 programme and creating a legacy of increased capacity and expertise.

The Objectives of CompeteFor are:

- Build a business network and brokerage service that develops and grows throughout the delivery of the 2012 programme and into the legacy
- Facilitate the development of UK businesses by promoting links into the business support network
- Provide opportunities for buyers to access a wide and diverse network of businesses
- Allow a wide range of diverse businesses to benefit from London 2012 investment

What is the difference between CompeteFor and other similar websites?

CompeteFor is the only contract opportunities website endorsed by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

In addition, CompeteFor is unique because London 2012 encourages its main suppliers to post their subsequent contract opportunities onto CompeteFor, meaning that there are thousands of opportunities available to registered suppliers, across all sectors and of varying sizes throughout the supply chain.

Therefore, CompeteFor encourages transparency of, and equality of access to, a wide range of opportunities, that suppliers may not otherwise have been aware of.

How do you ensure Buyers use the service?

The Buyer Engagement Team works with major contractors and their sub-contractors throughout the supply chains to help Buyers maximise their use of the service and promote best practice.

In addition, the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) has included a contractual obligation for their 'tier one' contractors and the subsequent supply chain to use the service. When procuring goods and services, LOCOG require their contractors to set-out how they will use CompeteFor.

Other than London 2012, which other buying organisations are using CompeteFor?

CompeteFor is already being used by other public sector organisations outside of the London 2012 supply chain, including the London Development Agency, Transport for London the City of Westminster, Defra, Metropolitan Police and Crossrail as part of their normal procurement procedures. Being the largest civil engineering project in Europe, Crossrail's budget is c. £15 billion.

Will there be a place for CompeteFor after the Games?

It was always envisaged, as part of the legacy of the Games and CompeteFor, that the system would be expanded to other supply chains such as those mentioned above.

The contract management team based at the London Development Agency (LDA) are in discussions with CompeteFor's service providers about possible ways CompeteFor's brand and functionality can be used after the Games. However, no decisions have been made at this stage.

2. Funding

Who runs it and who funds it?

CompeteFor is a UK-wide service and is co-funded by England's nine Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), along with devolved administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

CompeteFor is managed by the London Development Agency (LDA) on behalf of all the RDAs and devolved administrations.

All RDAs and devolved administrations, together with the ODA, LOCOG, Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, the Government

The LDA has contracted Serco to provide the website and Helpdesk functions. The Buyer Engagement Service is provided by BiP Solutions Ltd via a grant to the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA).

3. Functionality

Is CompeteFor an 'e-tendering system'?

No. CompeteFor allows Buyers to find qualifying Suppliers for a shortlist prior to entering into their standard tendering process which happens outside CompeteFor.

Potential Suppliers are able to respond to an opportunity by answering a simple questionnaire created by the Buyer. Answers to the questionnaire are scored automatically by CompeteFor using scoring criteria defined by the Buyer.

After the Response Deadline for the opportunity, the Buyer carries out a shortlisting process on CompeteFor using the automatically calculated scores for each Supplier response. If a Supplier is successful in reaching the shortlist, the Buyer will invite them to participate in their tendering process – which will usually involve submitting further details and documents outside of CompeteFor.

4. Registration

How do businesses register on CompeteFor?

Businesses need to visit www.competefor.com and complete the simple online registration form and then follow the instructions to publish a Business Profile in order to gain maximum benefit from the service.

For help and assistance, contact the CompeteFor Helpdesk on:

0845 2177804 for UK callers

+44 845 2177804 for callers outside UK

18001 0845 2177804 for callers with impaired hearing

What is a Business Profile?

The CompeteFor Business Profile, once it is published, is used to match an organisation's capabilities with contract opportunities.

Completing the Business Profile typically takes around 30 minutes. Once completed businesses should publish their Business Profile to be matched with opportunities.

The Business Profile includes sections requesting the following information:

- General business information
- Insurances & policies
- Financial details
- Ownership diversity & employee diversity information
- Marketing information

Who has access to this information?

Only some of the Business Profile information is visible to other users of the service. This includes the name of the business, contact details (including the organisation's address, telephone number and email address), marketing information, website and the CompeteFor Business and/or Construction Categories selected by the business.

You can check how a Business Profile is publically displayed by using the 'Supplier Search' on the website.

Some information, such as that provided about the ownership and employee diversity, is kept confidential and is not made available to the Buyer or other Suppliers. It is used by stakeholders for statistical purposes only in order to ensure we are successful in reaching a wide section of the businesses.

The other information within a Business Profile is only provided to Buyers when a Supplier applies for a contract and gives permission for it to be used to evaluate their response.

Full details of the CompeteFor Data Protection Policy are available within the Terms and Conditions on the CompeteFor website.

(https://www.competefor.com/business/popup_terms.html;jsessionid=34DD1823FDB85FBDCFE059213E2C8670.server2)

Is there a minimum requirement for organisation in order to publish their Business Profile?

When organisations submit their Business Profile for publication on CompeteFor a simple 'test' is run to see if the business meets some minimum requirements.

The criteria that businesses must meet in order to publish their Business Profile is to have the following in place:

- A Health and Safety Policy – if the organisation has 5 or more staff
- An Equal Opportunities Policy – if the organisation has 5 or more staff
- A Quality Management Statement – stating who is responsible for quality in the organisation and how quality is managed. This must be provided regardless of the number of staff employed.

NEW: With the closure of the regional Business Links in England, how will CompeteFor be affected? E.g. the automatic referral process when an organisation does not meet CompeteFor's 'business readiness' criteria.

The Contract Management Team at the London Development Agency have been working with the Helpdesk, BusinessLink.gov.uk team and Operational Group to ensure there is a seamless transition to a new process from November 2011, when the Business Links in England will close.

New functionality is being introduced which will mean when a business does not meet CompeteFor's 'business readiness' criteria (e.g. does not have a health and safety, and/or equal opportunities, and/or quality management statement), the business will receive a new improved on-screen message and email containing 'next steps' instructions and a link to the BusinessLink.gov.uk website, which will provide help and advice on creating the required policy/ies.

As a 'self-service' solution, it is hoped that rather than reduce the percentage of published business, more businesses will go on to obtain the required policy/ies and publish their CompeteFor Business Profile, enabling them to:

- ◆ Be visible to other suppliers and potential buyers
- ◆ Receive email alerts about opportunities matching their Business/Construction Categories
- ◆ Demonstrate to buyers that they have met CompeteFor's 'business readiness' criteria

There will be no changes to the current process in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales, or for international businesses.

The 'Contact Local Business Link/Business Support' functionality will no longer be available via the CompeteFor website for all users (UK-wide), but a new link to the [BusinessLink.gov.uk](https://www.businesslink.gov.uk) website will be added to CompeteFor's Useful Links page instead.

Management information will continue to be issued to regional business leads across the UK and to their nominated supplier engagement organisations on a weekly and monthly basis. Regional business leads can request information is supplied to a specific organisation by emailing the Contract Management Team, who will ask the requested recipient to complete and return a standard confidentiality agreement.

Will businesses in all parts of the UK be awarded contracts via CompeteFor?

CompeteFor is designed to ensure the London 2012 and other supply chain opportunities are as transparent and open to competition as possible. CompeteFor enables Buyers to create a manageable shortlist to select potential Suppliers from. The names of all potential Suppliers responding to an opportunity remain anonymous to the Buyer, until they have created their shortlist.

So long as potential Suppliers from throughout the UK are registered on CompeteFor and meet the Buyers' requirements, they have equal access to the opportunities and should find their way onto Buyers' shortlists.

Although the standard question available to Buyers, *"How far is your business located from the delivery point?"* has been removed - occasionally a buying organisation has a legitimate and genuine reason to ask about location – for example a Buyer may need a local service provider to respond to an emergency call-out at short notice. There are other occasions when a Buyer asks about geographical location in order to monitor local procurement, but it is not normal for these questions to carry a score/weighting.

Over 65% of CompeteFor opportunities have been awarded to Suppliers based outside of the London region.

UK regions and their business support providers have a responsibility to ensure that potential suppliers maximise CompeteFor, by promoting the service, encouraging organisations to fully complete and publish their Business Profile, selecting appropriate Business and/or Construction categories and maximising their Marketing Information, as well as providing appropriate business support.

Can you tell me the value of individual contracts that have been awarded?

Once registered on CompeteFor, users are able to search for the details of awarded contracts via the 'Opportunity Search' function. Where the Buyer has chosen to do so, the estimated contract value band will be displayed. For commercial reasons, many Buying organisations choose not to reveal the value of their contracts.

The RDAs and the devolved administrations have access to an Awards Detail report on a monthly basis, enabling them to provide regional aggregated data on the estimated value of awards.

National aggregated data can be provided on request by contacting the Contract Management Team at the London Development Agency (please allow a few days for the information to be calculated).

Can organisations based outside of the UK use CompeteFor?

Yes. Non-UK organisations can register on CompeteFor in exactly the same way. However, they will not be able to access any business support services. UKTI will contact non-UK businesses who register on CompeteFor to discuss wider opportunities in the UK.

Should non-UK users need any help or assistance with registering on CompeteFor, they can contact the CompeteFor Helpdesk:

+44 845 2177804 for callers outside UK

5. Opportunities

What sorts of opportunities are being posted and in what sectors?

There has been a wide variety of business opportunities available on CompeteFor, across all sectors that are required for such a major project. Examples include dog kennelling for the Metropolitan Police Service to bridge construction and health & safety training for school children.

Will all opportunities advertised on CompeteFor be awarded to CompeteFor registered businesses?

We do not control who opportunities are awarded to. CompeteFor is a matching and shortlisting service. It is for a Buyer to determine who they choose to award a contract to.

Buyers are asked to record the details of the successful Supplier(s) on the website once an award has been made – even if the successful Supplier isn't a CompeteFor registered business. This helps to demonstrate transparency; businesses have commented this is useful in understanding who is winning business and where future sub-contracting opportunities lie.

Won't larger businesses and organisations win most of these opportunities?

Most of the tier one opportunities (e.g. the Olympic Stadium) have been awarded to large businesses who have the capacity to carry out major contracts. The majority of the lower tier contract opportunities will be awarded to small and medium sized businesses (SMEs).

Around 70% of all opportunities have been awarded to SMEs with over 20% of them going to businesses and organisations employing less than ten staff.

Why haven't all opportunities been awarded yet?

There is always a natural 'time lag' between an opportunity being posted and awarded – this varies depending on the type of opportunity and the complexity of the procurement process, but is on average 3-4 months.

We recognise that once a contract has been awarded by a Buyer, the task of returning to CompeteFor to record the award details is often a low priority. The Buyer Engagement Team have been tasked with following-up on closed opportunities to provide Buyers with support and assistance in creating a shortlist, making an award and recording it on the CompeteFor website.

To-date over 60% of opportunities have been recorded as award. This compares favourably to similar websites, although our aim is to continue to increase this percentage.

It is inevitable that as with any project certain contracts are cancelled for a variety of reasons. This means that some opportunities have to be withdrawn from CompeteFor.

Why don't Buyers provide feedback to unsuccessful suppliers – even if they received a high score?

Feedback isn't given to those suppliers that have not made a shortlist for two reasons:

1. Responses are anonymous at this stage, as Buyers are only presented with a 'long list' of unidentified suppliers together with their scores. This ensures that Buyers can not 'de-select' suppliers based on pre-conceptions or subjective criteria. It is for the Buyer to then determine how many suppliers they wish to take through to the 'shortlist' stage.
2. Due to the often high number of potential suppliers responding to an opportunity (this can at times be over 100 suppliers), it is simply not feasible for Buyers to provide individual feedback to every unsuccessful business.

CompeteFor cannot force Buyers to provide feedback otherwise it is unlikely they would use CompeteFor in the future to post opportunities. However, public sectors Buyers are often happy to provide additional information about their scoring criteria, which can help a supplier understand why they have not been shortlisted. (Suppliers should be referred directly to the public sector Buying organisation directly, rather than the CompeteFor Helpdesk).

Once a supplier has been taken through to the shortlist stage, a Buying organisation will use their own processes and policies to select the successful supplier(s). Public sector Buyers will invariably provide feedback on request and this is becoming increasingly common in the private sector, as well as being encouraged by the Buyer Engagement Team.

Why aren't all opportunities awarded to CompeteFor suppliers?

When the system was developed, it was felt important for reasons of transparency, and in order to encourage buyers to use the service, allowing them to compare existing suppliers with potential new suppliers. This ensures the maximum number of opportunities are available on CompeteFor.

Buyers must name and record the details of an awarded contract whether to an 'external' supplying organisations or by selecting from a list of businesses that have responded via CompeteFor. However, sometimes a buyer makes an award to an 'external' supplier, when in fact that successful supplier is registered on (and possibly responded via) CompeteFor. Once the details of these awards have been input to CompeteFor it is not possible to amend the information. The CompeteFor Helpdesk has previously conducted a review of 'external' awards to obtain a more complete picture – this management information has been circulated to regional business leads. The Contract Management Team will request this exercise is conducted again in the future.

6. Further help and other information

Can I use the CompeteFor logo on my website or marketing material?

The logo is protected by registered trade mark to the London Development Agency. It is available for stakeholders and partners to use on websites, publicity and other marketing material with the LDA's permission. Copies of the logo are available in Jpeg and ESP formats from the contract management team and via the secure 'Huddle' site.

At all times, stakeholders must ensure that the CompeteFor logo is only used as described within the Style Guide. (This is available from the contract management team and via the secure 'Huddle' site).

How to I request management information / statistics?

The CompeteFor Helpdesk's information analyst is able to provide regular and ad-hoc reports for stakeholders. Requests should be submitted via email to the contract management team.

Stakeholders receiving restricted and/or confidential information about users registered on CompeteFor will be asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement prior to information being released.

How can I use the management information about CompeteFor users?

Information provided can be used as described within the CompeteFor Terms and Conditions, available on the website. In summary, this allows the LDA to share the information with you as an agent or partner for the following reasons:

- Provide businesses access to and take action in respect of CompeteFor
- Contact businesses in connection with CompeteFor, Games Opportunities and other business opportunities, and other business support advice and information
- Evaluate CompeteFor
- Monitor diversity
- Target resources

Of course, at all times you must keep confidential the information provided and must not disclose or permit the information to be disclosed to a third party.

Who can I contact if I have further questions?

Stakeholders should speak to the contract management team at the London Development Agency in the first instance:

Patrick Codd
Simon Carlaw

Email: patrickcodd@lda.gov.uk
Email: simoncarlaw@lda.gov.uk

Further information about CompeteFor is available from the 'Help' page on the CompeteFor website or from the CompeteFor Helpdesk (details above).



London Development Agency
Palestra
197 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8AA

T 020 7593 8000
F 020 7593 8002

www.lda.gov.uk
info@lda.gov.uk

Textphone 020 7593 8001

Ref: 3094026