

Transport  
for NSW

# Analyse Your Proposed Solution

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### **About this video series**

The NSW Government is committed to supporting economic participation and social outcomes, developing skills and creating jobs for the citizens of NSW. This includes building a diverse supply base by enabling all types of businesses to engage with procurement opportunities – including small and medium enterprises, social enterprises, disability enterprises and Aboriginal businesses. Numerous policies reflect these priorities and commitments, including the [Small and Medium Enterprise and Regional Procurement Policy 2021](#).

We recognise that our supply chains are complex and that opportunities are not always directly with the NSW Government but indirectly through our supply chains, e.g. with principal contractors.

This video series supports small and medium enterprises and diverse businesses in applying for tenders associated with infrastructure projects. The guidance in the videos is adapted from ‘real life’ examples of tender documentation and minimum requirements related to infrastructure procurement opportunities in NSW. This video series was developed by Transport for NSW and iClick2Learn, a Dubbo-based social enterprise certified under [Social Traders](#).

### **About the author**

Natalie is a tender and grant writer and assessor. Working with enterprises, small businesses and the not-for-profit sector, she has helped raise over 45 million dollars for services and product submissions. Natalie holds an 82.5% grant and 94.2% tender success rate. She teaches and mentors people to apply for tenders and grants and establish grant and tender businesses. Natalie is the author of ‘Win the Grant’ being published in May 2022 and ‘Win the Tender’ scheduled for late 2022.

### **Disclaimer**

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### **Contributors**

Transport for NSW

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### **Present a solution, not an offer**

It's important to understand that the prospective client is seeking a solution to address their needs and requirements. As such, you are not offering them your services and products. You are providing a solution to meet their needs. Of course, the solution includes your services and products, but there is a difference in approach between a 'client solution' and an 'offer'.

Client solutions focus first on what the client wants and second on your proposed solution. When talking about your services and products, you naturally look at them from your perspective. But using a 'client solution' focus changes your frame of reference. Your proposed solution and tender reflect that shift in perspective. Your approach focuses on meeting the client's needs, rather than simply telling them what you have to offer.

Remember, your prospective client is looking for a supplier who deeply understands their own business and industry. They do not have your industry insights. In fact, over the years, I've won a lot of tenders by sharing industry insights. Once I was invited into a closed tender because I was the only person who had researched upcoming changes to an industry act and was sharing these insights publicly.

Sometimes, you will feel there's a better way to deliver the work. Consider offering an alternative proposal. If you want to do this, contact the prospective client to ask if alternative proposals are accepted. Alternately, you can respond to the requirements while offering the alternative. If you choose to go this route, focus on persuading the prospective client that the alternative is the best solution.

If you want to persuade your prospective client to consider the alternative proposal, here's a few things to keep in mind:

- Identify the elements of their requirements you believe could be improved on, won't work the way they believe or won't deliver the best results.
- Walk them through why your approach works better. Demonstrate your knowledge, experience and results.
- Highlight the areas that demonstrate weakness.
- Showcase how the alternative proposal will deliver a better result.

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- Provide a pros and cons table or a features and benefits table of each approach as a visual summary of the strengths of the alternative.
- Declare any assumptions that must be made.

Another approach is to suggest options. For example, option A product or service will meet the client's needs, but option B is the preferred solution, although it might cost more. Outline why B is the better option.

### **Brainstorming with your team**

Now that you've developed a potential solution and any alternate solution, take it to your staff and any contractors to discuss the details. This step is a good 'stress test' as you work through the reality of the proposed solution/s to test viability.

You should involve people who do or have done similar work. Include the project manager, bookkeeper and contractors. Give them an overview of the tender requirements. Talk through the proposed solution, including any options or additional elements.

This step might raise additional questions to address before you apply. Discuss the evaluation criteria and share your response outline, competitive analysis and answer maps. Ask for input on how to demonstrate these areas and strengthen any weaker responses.

Let's say you're looking at a question about how you work with clients to develop an effective approach and the innovation aspect is unclear. You could ask your team whether you have changed or improved anything noteworthy. Have you come up with ideas for clients that have helped? For example, a staff member might discuss a waste reduction solution they developed with a client without your knowledge.

Map out the work processes and walk through the proposed solution or solutions you've provided in the past. You might have this in a procedure or safe working method statement. Doing this helps you identify any changes made since the documents were developed. If the work process has changed from the documented process, it is important to ask why. Often, you'll find the new process is more effective or efficient. If this is the case, use this example in your response to demonstrate innovation.

Work through the evaluation criteria to see if there are any key areas to explore. One example could be innovation. Remember, innovation doesn't have to be big. It might be a simple change to a process.

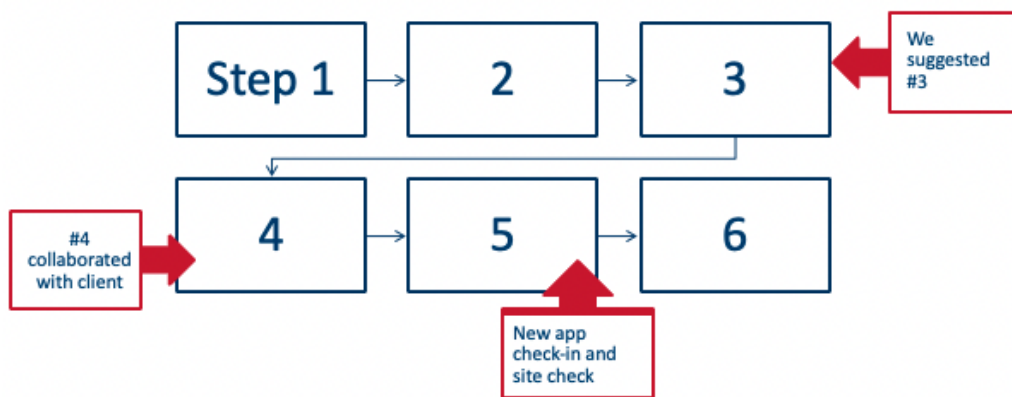
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Maybe you implemented an app that delivers short, bite-sized safety training weekly. That's innovation.

Think about your business as a whole and step out what you're doing. If you closely examine what you do, you'll find areas to share in the tender. It could be how you've worked with clients on a collaborative solution in the past, for example. Think about those moments when someone noted a 'good idea' and what occurred as a result. Consider this as it relates to other criteria and share these examples where relevant.

Following is an example for mapping out the proposed solution or similar solutions and how your staff supports the client to deliver a better result.



Another useful approach is to pretend you're contracting the work. What would you expect a contractor to include in their response? Consider any industry best practice standards and how you meet or exceed them. Gather as much relevant input as you can. File this information in your tender folder for future tenders.

### Six thinking hats



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Source: Design based on the Six Thinking Hats by Dr. Edward de Bono  
<https://www.debonogroup.com/services/core-programs/six-thinking-hats/>

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