



NGĀI TAHU

Puna
Pakihi

PROCUREMENT GUIDE

This guide is designed to support you to build strong knowledge of what Procurement is and how to engage your pākihi in Procurement opportunities.

Procurement is simply the process organisations use to buy goods and services. It includes everything from small jobs to large multi-year contracts, and it applies across government, iwi entities, councils, and private businesses. This guide helps Māori businesses understand where opportunities come from, how to prepare strong submissions, and how to build the relationships that lead to ongoing work.

1. Kaupapa Māori advantage in Procurement.

Māori businesses carry values, whakapapa, and ways of working that naturally align with what many buyers want. Kaupapa Māori principles such as manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, kaitiakitanga, and integrity in delivery strengthen our credibility and help buyers understand the deeper value we offer.

For Ngāi Tahu whānau businesses, these cultural elements can be even more powerful. Demonstrating whakapapa or whānau ties, local knowledge, environmental care, and a commitment to the wider Māori economy is a key part of delivering long-term value. Even where buyers are more commercially driven, kaupapa Māori is simply good business: it strengthens trust, consistency, and long-term relationships.

2. Opportunities.

Practically speaking, procurement opportunities can be hard for some businesses to find. They come from a mix of networks, relationships, past performance, and visibility. Here's what business owners need to know about where to find real procurement opportunities:

How opportunities are advertised.

- **Public Sector (Govt agencies, Councils, etc):** GETS is used for larger open tenders, but many also occur through buyer-initiated closed tenders, specific agency panels, and direct approaches to known suppliers.
- **Iwi organisations:** Often through closed invitation lists, business directories, or existing relationships with whānau and Papatipu Rūnanga.
- **Private sector:** Most organisations have preferred supplier lists and established subcontractor networks; direct engagement with businesses that have a strong track record of reliable delivery is common.

Relationships matter.

Procurement may look like a formal process on paper, but in practice, relationships and reputation shape most opportunities across the public sector, iwi, and the private sector. Visibility, trust, and consistent delivery play a major role in determining who gets invited to tender, and who doesn't.

While large government tenders must be publicly advertised on GETS, many opportunities across all sectors are closed tenders, where only known or trusted suppliers are invited to submit proposals. Buyers minimise risk by going back to businesses they already have confidence in; they consistently go to businesses that invest in relationships, turn up for their community, and deliver well every time.

How to build visibility and trust: There are simple, consistent actions you can take to strengthen your visibility and build trust with potential buyers:

- Build genuine connections with buyers, project leads, and industry partners
- Maintain relationships with local Papatipu Rūnanga, iwi, and Māori business networks
- Register on GETS and set alerts for relevant categories
- Register with third-party intermediaries (e.g. Amotai)
- Keep in touch with procurement teams and project managers in the organisations you want to work with
- Deliver consistently on every contract, no matter the size.

After you submit a tender, the relationship-building doesn't stop. It is recommended that you follow-up your submission by:

- Following up with key people after tenders (successful or not)
- Ask for feedback to strengthen future submissions
- Stay visible and engaged, even between contract opportunities.

3. Are you tender-ready?

Only pursue the right opportunities.

Submitting a competitive tender can take a lot of time and effort, so before you spend time preparing a tender it's important to make sure your business is genuinely ready to compete.

Before you even consider applying, ask yourself the hard questions:

- Do you have the capability, capacity, and track record to deliver?
- Will the opportunity require skills or resources you don't currently have?
- Does the buyer's kaupapa align with how you do business?
- Can you deliver at scale, on time, and to the standard required?

Submitting weak or misaligned tenders hurts your reputation. Declining opportunities politely and asking to be considered for better-fit work shows professionalism, and evaluators will remember this for next time.

If an opportunity is slightly bigger than what you can deliver alone, consider partnering or subcontracting. Many successful tenders are delivered by teams of businesses who combine their strengths. You can position yourself as a specialist for part of the scope, or partner with a larger business that needs local knowledge, cultural capability, or niche skills.

Get your core documentation ready.

Being tender-ready starts with having your key documents organised and up to date before opportunities arise. The following can be prepared ahead of time and used for multiple submissions:

- Health & Safety Prequalification (e.g. SiteWise, IMPAC Prequal, Totika)
- One-page CVs for key staff
- Case studies of past projects, as examples you can adapt
- Business insurance documentation (e.g. public liability, professional indemnity)
- Financial reports showing stability and capacity
- Māori business registration, if applicable (e.g. Ngāi Tahu whakapapa registration).

Understanding tender documents

Different buyers use different types of procurement documents. The most common are:

- ROI (Registration of Interest): A first step to identify capable suppliers. Short, high-level responses only.
- RFQ (Request for Quote): Used for smaller, clearly defined pieces of work. Usually price-driven.
- RFT / RFP (Request for Tender / Proposal): Detailed, structured tenders where you must provide methodology, capability, pricing, and evidence.
- Panel Invitations: Used to create a list of approved suppliers for ongoing work.

These documents can look different, but the goal is the same: to show the buyer you understand the job, can deliver it safely, and offer good value. It is essential to read the tender documents carefully so you understand what the buyer is trying to achieve, the rules of the process, and exactly how they expect you to respond.



Understand how your submission will be evaluated.

Buyers evaluate tenders across multiple criteria; price is only one part of the picture. Most use a weighted scoring system where different sections of your response are each given a percentage:

- Private sector buyers may lean more heavily towards commercial and risk considerations;
- government buyers commonly balance price and other considerations evenly;
- iwi organisations often give heavier weight to cultural alignment and broader value to whānau and community.

To score well, you need to give full, detailed, and tailored answers that clearly show how you will deliver, what experience you bring, and why you are the best fit. Short, vague, or generic responses score poorly regardless of your capability.

4. Creating a winning submission.

A strong submission tells your story with clarity, evidence, and integrity. It shows how your business delivers value, honours relationships, and meets the needs of the buyer and their community.

Always submit before the deadline; late tenders are not accepted under any circumstances!

Focus on 4 areas.

1. Demonstrate understanding

Show that you know the scope, risks, and expectations as outlined in their documentation. Re-state their needs in your own words and show how you'll deliver.

2. Prove capability with evidence

Use real examples that highlight:

- past projects completed successfully,
- outcomes delivered,
- community or cultural impact,
- problem-solving experiences.

3. Align with what buyers care about most.

For government: Emphasise economic value in the form of job creation, regional development, productivity, cost-effectiveness, reliability. Broader impacts (Māori development, environmental care, whānau wellbeing) still matter, but are now supporting pillars.

For iwi and kaupapa-driven buyers: Emphasise whakapapa, whenua and whānau wellbeing, community involvement, cultural safety, environmental stewardship, and alignment with tikanga. A winning submission shows not only that you can deliver the work, but that you add real extra value by lowering risk, simplifying delivery, and helping the buyer achieve their wider organisational outcomes.

4. Price your work carefully

Price is important, but lowest price may not always win. Buyers look for good value: the balance of cost, capability, reliability, and risk.

Avoid underpricing to win the job; this creates delivery pressure and damages trust. Be clear about what is included, what is excluded, and why your price is fair. If your price is higher, justify it with evidence such as quality, safety, local employment, cultural capability, or proven performance. Buyers will pay more for reduced risk and reliable delivery.

Responsible use of AI

AI can be incredibly helpful when used properly, but it must be handled with care to protect the integrity of your submission. If you are using AI, it is recommended that you:

- Use it to draft, summarise, and structure responses
- Never submit AI text unchanged
- Tailor every response to your business
- Every claim must be true; you will need to sign declarations.

5. Where to go for support.

You don't need to navigate procurement on your own. There are strong support networks available to help Māori businesses build capability and access opportunities, including:

- Puna Pakihi and Procurement Tima
- Te Puni Kōkiri procurement resources
- MBIE procurement guidance & government rules
- Local Papatipu Rūnanga and Māori business networks
- Amotai supplier diversity support
- Regional business support agencies.

Buyers may also be willing to help suppliers understand how their procurement processes work and what they typically look for, but these conversations must happen *before* a tender is released, as they cannot provide additional guidance once a live tender is in market.

Procurement is ultimately about trust, relationships, and delivering with integrity. By preparing well and staying true to your kaupapa, your business can grow stronger connections and unlock meaningful, long-term opportunities.

