

THE VENDOR POOL HEALTH ASSESSMENT

A Self-Audit Guide for Public Procurement Teams

Use this assessment to find out where your vendor market is strong, where it's thinning, and what to do about it.

How to Use It

Work through each section using your agency's solicitation history and vendor database. You don't need specialized tools. The data you already have is sufficient to answer every question here, as long as it is organized and accessible.

Once completed, the assessment will give you a prioritized list of vendor pool gaps and a 90-day action plan for addressing the most critical ones first.

01

PARTICIPATION RATE BY CATEGORY

For each of your agency's primary spend categories, calculate your participation rate for the past 12 months.

Participation rate = vendors who submitted / vendors notified x 100

Category	Vendors Notified (avg)	Vendors Submitted (avg)	Participation Rate	Trend vs. Prior Year
Construction/Public Works				
IT Hardware and Software				
Professional Services				
Maintenance and Repair				
Commodities and Supplies				
Consulting and Planning				
<i>Add your own categories as necessary</i>				

WHAT YOUR NUMBERS MEAN

+30%

Reasonable pool health

Monitor but no immediate action required.

15-29%

Marginal

Targeted outreach and vendor development recommended.

0-15%

Weak

This category belongs in your 90-day action plan.

02

SINGLE-BID AND NO-BID REVIEW

List every solicitation from the past 18 months that received one response or none.

Solicitation	Category	Responses Received	Outcome	Notes

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- Do the same categories appear more than once? Those are your highest-risk categories.
- Were these solicitations rebid? What did that cost in staff time and project delays?
- Were any of these awarded as single-bid procurement? What did pricing look like relative to your estimate?

Any categories that appear more than once should be in your 90-day action plan.

03

SOLE-SOURCE HISTORY

List every sole-source award from the past two years.

Solicitation	Category	Responses Received	Outcome	Notes

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

- Are any categories appearing more than once?
- Is the same vendor receiving recurring sole-source awards in the same category?
- Was each award a genuine market limitation or a vendor pool gap?

Recurring sole-source awards in the same category belong in your 90-day action plan.

04

ACTIVE VS. REGISTERED VENDOR COUNT BY CATEGORY

For each primary spend category, count vendors who have submitted at least once in the past 24 months. Compare to your total registered count.

Category	Total Registered	Active (submitted in the past 24 months)	Dormant	Active (%)

An active rate below 40% in any category means your notifications are reaching a smaller effective audience than your list size suggests. High dormant rates are candidates for re-engagement before the next solicitation.

05

CATEGORY CODE COVERAGE

Questions

Are vendors in your highest-volume categories registered under commodity codes that match your solicitations?

Are there vendors registered under codes you rarely use who might be relevant to low-participation categories?

When did you last review your category code structure to confirm it reflects what your agency buys?

Any “no” represents friction that is keeping qualified vendors out of your pool. Those are among the highest-return improvements your agency can make.

06

REGISTRATION PROCESS CHECK

Complete this section from the vendor's perspective. If possible, have someone outside the procurement team attempt to register.

Question	Yes	No	Action Needed
Can a vendor find your registration portal from your agency website in under 2 minutes?			
Can a vendor complete registration without calling, emailing, or visiting your office?			
Is registration free for vendors?			
Do vendors receive automatic notifications for categories they selected at registration?			
Is the process accessible on a mobile device?			

Any "no" represents friction that is keeping qualified vendors out of your pool. Those are among the highest-return improvements your agency can make.

07

PRIORITY GAP SUMMARY

Priority	Category/Issue	Current State	Target State	90-Day Action Plan
1				
2				
3				
4				



YOUR 90-DAY ACTION PLAN

DAYS 1-30

ASSESS AND PRIORITIZE

Complete the assessment.

Rank gaps by category risk: highest spend and criticality combined with lowest participation first.

Identify two or three priority categories for focused attention.

Pull your dormant vendor list for each priority category.

DAYS 31-60

EXPAND AND REENGAGE

Search for vendors active in your priority categories with other public agencies and invite them to register with your portal.

Send reengagement outreach to dormant vendors in priority categories.

Review and simplify your registration process if Section 6 identified any friction points.

DAYS 61-90

IMPROVE YOUR NEXT SOLICITATION

Review scope clarity and timeline for upcoming solicitations in priority categories.

Send non-participation surveys to vendors who received notifications on recent solicitations but did not submit.

Apply what you learn to the next solicitation in each priority category.

AT 90 DAYS

Rerun your participation rate analysis for any solicitations that went out during this period. Note whether the trend is improving, and adjust your approach if necessary based on what the data shows.

VENDOR POOL HEALTH SUMMARY TRACKER

Health Indicator	Current Status	Target	Last Reviewed
Overall participation rate		30%	
Categories below 15% participation		0	
Single-bid events in past 12 months		Declining	
Sole-source awards in past 24 months		Documented and Justified	
Active vendor rate by category		+40%	
Registration process last reviewed		Within 12 months	
Non-participation surveys conducted		After every low-response solicitation	
Vendor database last cleaned		Within 12 months	

Learn More About PlanetBids

PlanetBids centralizes the complete vendor management and solicitation lifecycle in one connected and centralized platform. Every solicitation posted to your agency's vendor portal automatically notifies registered vendors in the relevant category. Participation is logged at the vendor level. When a category is thin, the PlanetBids vendor network gives you access to qualified suppliers registered with other public agencies, searchable by category, region, and certification type. The data this assessment calls for is available in PlanetBids as a standard report, not a manual project.