

Learning resource #9: Not just a formality—Why suppliers should engage in OMCs

Three key recommendations by expert, Elena López Ruiz, Project Manager Ticbiomed

Part 9 of the InnoHSupport learning resources series



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Public procurement is a powerful tool for driving innovation, but despite regulatory reforms and incentives, many healthcare systems across Europe struggle to adopt new solutions. InnoHSupport addresses these challenges by providing a structured framework and capacity-building resources that support the successful implementation of innovation procurement processes. Our mission is to create an inclusive, interconnected, and effective innovation ecosystem for healthcare procurement in Europe. We aim to empower healthcare procurers and suppliers by providing specialised advisory services and fostering a collaborative environment that bridges gaps, reduces barriers, and facilitates the adoption of innovative solutions.

To support our mission, we have developed 10 distinct InnoHSupport learning resources, all of which are freely accessible on the InnoHSupport AGORA platform (<https://innohsupport.eu/agora/>). This set of digital resources is relevant to all key stakeholder groups, with particular focus on purchasing and innovation experts as well as suppliers who are less experienced in healthcare innovation procurement. The resources introduce innovation procurement goals and processes and address implementation challenges through case studies and by exploring cultural barriers. They also include specific guidance on the procurement of R&D services (PCP), public procurement of innovative solutions (PPI), and open market consultations (OMCs). Of the 10 resources, seven are primarily tailored to buyers and three to suppliers. Nonetheless, because a comprehensive understanding of both perspectives is essential, we encourage both buyers and suppliers to explore all 10. While each resource can be used independently, a suggested reading order is provided on the final page of this report.

As part of our mission to create an inclusive, interconnected, and effective innovation ecosystem for healthcare procurement in Europe, we have not only developed our own resources but also established a platform that brings together existing resources from other projects. These can (freely) be accessed at: <https://innohsupport.softtr.app/>.

Introduction to this learning resource

This learning resource focuses on the insights of Elena López Ruiz, project manager at Ticbiomed, who is a true expert in open market consultations (OMCs). She participated in many OMCs for many different innovative procurement projects: INCAREHEART, Procure4Health, eCare, HSMonitor, and Innobuyer. The OMC takes place during the preparation stage, which is before the actual procurement is launched. In this learning resource, Elena will provide three recommendations for suppliers.



Open Market Consultations matter for suppliers

Although suppliers are not legally required to participate in an OMC to submit a tender—since they can still submit offers without taking part—this learning resource presents compelling arguments and practical tips that strongly encourage participation.

For suppliers, an OMC is a valuable opportunity to understand what the buyer is really looking for—well before the tender is published. It's not just about reading what's on paper; it's about picking up the context, nuances, and unspoken priorities that often emerge during discussion. These insights are rarely captured in formal documents but can make all the difference when preparing a competitive offer. By engaging in the consultation, you (as a supplier) position yourself to better align your proposal with the buyer's actual needs and expectations. That gives you a distinct advantage when it comes time to submit your tender.

Elena's 3 recommendations for suppliers

Recommendation 1: Take part, even when it is not mandatory

My first recommendation is simple: **participate**.

*"Even if you don't immediately see the impact, I can assure you—
it's there."*

If you know how to leverage the opportunity, it can make a real difference. Engaging in the consultation gives you a clearer view of the buyer's expectations and positions you to respond more effectively when the tender is published.

Recommendation 2: Understand the buyer's needs before pitching your solution

My second recommendation is to really take the time to understand what the organisation is looking for. Sometimes, suppliers come in with a ready-made pitch—they have their product, they're convinced it's the best on the market, and they want everyone to love it. That's understandable, and of course you should showcase your solution. But don't stop there. Listen carefully. Try to grasp the buyer's actual needs and context. That understanding will help you tailor your offer in a way that truly fits their expectations.

Recommendation 3: Think long term—this is more than a one-off opportunity

“The goal should not only be to win the immediate contract.”

It is important to see participation in an OMC as part of a long-term strategy. You might take part, submit a tender, and still not be selected. That is always a possibility. The goal should not only be to win the immediate contract. By joining the consultation, you start to build a trust-based relationship with the buyer. That can open doors later, including future contracts, other consultations, and new collaborations.

This is especially relevant in sectors like healthcare, where the public sector plays a central role. In countries like Spain, for instance, the healthcare market is largely public. If you don't build relationships with the public players, you may find you have very few clients to work with—public or private. So it's worth the effort to build trust, stay visible, and make sure you're in the mix when opportunities arise.

Explore our other learning resources

- **Learning resource #1:** Introducing Public Procurement of Innovation
- **Learning resource #2:** Well begun is half done: 5 Tips for Buyers on OMCs
- **Learning resource #3:** Recommendations for PPI.
- **Learning resource #4:** How to Plan – or Not Plan – a PCP Project.
- **Learning resource #5:** 5 questions & answers with Samira Bousseta.
- **Learning resource #6:** Key insights from the eCare-PCP project
- **Learning resource #7:** How to develop several PPI projects in a short period of time.
- **Learning resource #8:** Introducing PPI Projects for suppliers.
- **Learning resource #9:** Not just a formality—Why suppliers should engage in OMCs.
- **Learning resource #10:** Key Considerations for Suppliers Entering Healthcare Innovation Procurement.

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