INDIA PROCURE · WHITEPAPER

Winning GeM Bids

A Practical Playbook
for Indian MSMEs

2026 EDITION · FREE TO SHARE

indiaprocure.com · +91 91138 99941

1. Why most sellers lose

Once you're registered on GeM, you'll see dozens of bids matching your categories every week. Most sellers respond to whatever lands in their inbox, price it aggressively, and lose repeatedly.

The pattern of losing bids on GeM is almost always one of these four:

1. Wrong bid picked — chasing bids you have no realistic shot at.
2. Non-compliance on Day 1 — technical bid rejected before pricing is even opened.
3. Bad pricing model — losing L1 by 2%, or winning L1 at a margin that kills the P&L.
4. Weak post-technical position — qualifying technically but folding in the Reverse Auction.

This playbook covers all four.

2. Bid discovery: the 30-minute morning routine

Winning starts before bidding — with disciplined bid discovery.

Every morning, spend 30 minutes doing exactly this:

1. Log in → Bids → Search Bids.
2. Filter by your product categories.
3. Sort by Bid End Date ascending — the ones closing soonest are the ones your competitors are already on. Skip these unless you have a pre-built response.
4. Filter for Estimated Bid Value in your comfort range (usually ₹5L – ₹1Cr for a growing MSME).
5. Filter by Ministry / Department you've worked with before.

For each shortlisted bid, open it and check the Bid Document for these five things — in this order:

Check	If fails, drop the bid
Reservation for MSE / Startup?	You're eligible → keep
Location & Delivery timelines feasible?	Cannot deliver in time → drop
Technical specifications match your product?	Cannot match without over-commit → drop
Turnover / Past-performance criteria	Cannot meet → drop
EMD / Bid security	Non-exempt, and cash-flow tight → drop

If a bid passes all five, it goes into your active pipeline.

3. The Bid/No-Bid decision framework

Not every eligible bid is worth bidding on. Use this simple 8-factor scorecard (adapted from APMP Shipley):

For each factor, score 1 (weak) to 5 (strong):

1. Fit — Does the RFP match our core offering?
2. Competition — How many likely bidders? Fewer = higher score.
3. Margin — Can we deliver at a healthy margin, not just win?
4. Delivery capacity — Can we execute without disrupting existing orders?
5. Buyer relationship — Have we worked with this buyer before?
6. Compliance readiness — Are all certifications in hand today?
7. Strategic value — Does this open doors to bigger future orders?
8. Cash flow — Can we finance execution until payment?

Total ≥ 28/40 → bid. Below → politely walk away.

Discipline on this scorecard is what separates the top 5% of GeM sellers from the noise.

4. Preparing the technical bid

The technical bid is the wall most sellers trip over. Buyers reject on technical grounds first, and evaluate price only for those who pass.

The Compliance Matrix

Never respond to a tender without a compliance matrix — a spreadsheet with three columns:

Clause #	RFP Requirement (verbatim)	Our Response
3.2.1	Product shall comply with BIS IS 4894	Complied — BIS certificate at Annexure C-1
3.2.2	Warranty minimum 3 years	Complied — 3-year warranty as per Annexure C-2
3.2.3	Delivery within 45 days	Complied — 30 days

Rule: Never write "Noted" or "Understood". Write "Complied" with the annexure reference, or "Not Complied — deviation as follows" with justification.

Document set

Prepare a standard document set for every bid:

- Compliance matrix (above)
- Company profile (2-3 pages, updated annually)
- Udyam certificate + MSE self-declaration
- GST + PAN + Incorporation
- Audited financials (last 3 years)
- Past-performance certificates (min 3)
- Product technical datasheets
- OEM authorisation (if reseller)
- BIS / ISI / ISO certifications
- Country of Origin declaration (mandatory)
- Local Content declaration (Class-I / II)
- No-blacklist / non-conviction declaration

Maintain this set in a single Drive folder with dated versions. When a bid comes, you're 80% done in minutes.

5. Pricing: the L1 dilemma

GeM is a lowest-price wins market. Your pricing decides whether you win and whether the win is worth having.

The three pricing models

- Cost-plus — Cost + fixed margin. Safe but often not competitive.
- Market-benchmarked — Look at last 5 similar awards on GeM (searchable under Contracts → Search Contracts). Price 5–10% below the median L1.
- Loss-leader — Break-even or loss on the first order to enter a buyer's Vendor List. Only justified when the buyer runs frequent repeat orders.

For most MSEs, market-benchmarked is the right default.

Reverse Auction (RA) tactics

If your bid qualifies technically and the tender goes to RA:

1. Set your walk-away price BEFORE the auction starts. Print it and tape it above your monitor. Emotion in RAs destroys margins.
2. Watch for two-bidder RAs — if only 2 bidders qualify, the second bidder often over-drops in panic. Sit calm at your walk-away.
3. First bid, first advantage — placing the opening bid signals seriousness and often anchors the auction narrower.
4. Never bid in the last 30 seconds unless you've pre-decided the number. GeM's auto-extend rule triggers a 5-minute extension.

MSE Price Preference

Under Public Procurement Policy for MSEs 2012, if an MSE bid is within 15% of L1 (a non-MSE), the MSE has the right to match L1 and take 25% of the order value at L1's price.

This is genuinely powerful. If you're an MSE and consistently coming in 5-14% above L1, you're still winning — actively invoke your price-matching right on award notice.

6. Post-award execution

The bid is not won until the order is delivered and paid for. Post-award failure is what kills future orders (and your SPRS score).

Days 0–3: Accept + Kickoff

- Accept the PO in GeM within 48 hours.
- Message the consignee with a delivery plan and single point of contact.
- Confirm dispatch address, working hours, gate-pass requirements.

Days 3 → Delivery Date: Manufacture / Procure

- If OEM/reseller: place the back-order the same day. Never wait.
- Track your critical-path items daily.
- If a delay is unavoidable, request a PO amendment for delivery extension before the deadline. Post-facto is treated as breach.

Delivery → CRAC

- Deliver with all documents: invoice, LR/POD, warranty card, test certificates.
- Follow up with consignee for CRAC upload on GeM. Most delays sit here.
- If CRAC isn't uploaded within 10 days of delivery, use GeM's auto-CRAC trigger.

Invoicing & Payment

- Upload GST invoice on GeM within 10 days of CRAC.
- Track payment through PFMS (Public Financial Management System).
- Escalate delays >10 days via GeM Grievance → then MSME Samadhaan for MSE delayed-payment interest (Section 15, MSMED Act).

7. Building repeat business

One-off orders are commodity revenue. Repeat orders from the same buyer are strategic revenue.

To get on a buyer's Buyer's Own Vendor List:

- Deliver early on your first order — set the tone.
- Ask the consignee for a written Performance Certificate (they can generate it in one click on GeM).
- Message the buyer's Nodal Officer thanking them for the order and offering to be on their preferred vendor list.
- Watch their upcoming bids under Bidder → Interested Bids and bid early.

Sellers who win 3 orders from the same buyer typically see 60%+ of their subsequent orders come from that buyer.

8. Common losing patterns — and their fixes

Pattern	Root cause	Fix
Technical bid rejected on Day 1	Missing compliance matrix line	Never skip the matrix
Rejected on OEM authorisation	Expired or wrong OEM letter	Renew annually, use OEM's exact GeM ID
Lost L1 by 1-3%	Cost-plus pricing, no market benchmark	Study last 5 awards before pricing
Won L1 but lost money	Underpriced logistics/GST in BOQ	Build a bid-costing template
Won bid then defaulted	Over-committed on delivery	Bid/No-bid discipline (Section 3)
Payment stuck >30 days	CRAC not uploaded	Chase consignee weekly + Samadhaan

9. The 90-day GeM bidding sprint

For sellers who want to seriously ramp up:

Weeks 1–2

- Build the standard document set (Section 4).
- Build a bid-costing spreadsheet.
- Print the Bid/No-Bid scorecard.

Weeks 3–6

- Bid on 10 well-scored opportunities.
- Track each bid in a shared spreadsheet: bid ID, buyer, bid value, our price, L1 price, outcome, learnings.

Weeks 7–12

- Focus on 3 buyers who showed positive engagement.
- Attend at least one buyer training / vendor meet (GeM lists these).
- Refine pricing based on your data.

By week 12 you should have a clear read on your win rate, average margin, and top 3 buyer relationships. That's the foundation for scaling.

About India Procure

India Procure has evaluated 1,200+ tenders and facilitated ₹40 Cr+ in GeM orders for Indian MSMEs. We handle bid strategy, technical response, and post-award support on a per-bid or retainer basis.

Try our free Tender Analyzer at indiaprocure.com/tender-analyzer — upload any GeM tender PDF and get an APMP-style bid/no-bid verdict in 90 seconds.

Contact: +91 91138 99941 · info@indiaprocure.com · indiaprocure.com

Please share this whitepaper freely with any MSME that would benefit.