

Market survey

Bio-based procurement requires knowledge of what the market can offer. A market survey helps you acquire this knowledge. This document explains when a market survey is useful, how to proceed and the sources that can assist you.

1. When should you use a market survey?

You should carry out a market survey when preparing for a possible procurement. A market survey can help answer a range of questions, such as: Is the solution we are seeking already on sale, or is it still awaiting development? What, broadly speaking, are the available solutions, who are the tenderers and what are the prices? Is it possible to combine existing solutions? What do the tenderers claim to be the advantages and disadvantages of their solutions? Is Innovation Procurement an attractive option, or would it be better to choose a currently-used solution?

2. Step-by-step plan

There are various ways to tackle a market survey. Choose your own methods according to your situation. Doing so involves repeating and combining various steps until the complete picture is sufficiently clear. Provided that you observe the principles of openness, fairness and transparency, intensive contact with the market is permitted.

Be aware that there are sometimes several markets that can offer a solution to your problem. Your focus during the market survey may switch between markets several times.

Here are a number of possible steps involved in a market survey.

Step 1: desk research

There is a world of information available at your fingertips, from your desktop. Use the internet and telephone, and talk with colleagues. Learn from the experience of various procurers, including other governments. [Government category managers](#) know a great deal about facility procurement markets.

Some of the sources you could consult are the following:

- *Existing market surveys.* Banks regularly publish reports about developments in specific markets (Rabobank, ING, ABN AMRO). These reports provide an up-to-date overview, supported by figures, of various sectors. The Netherlands Enterprise Agency offers overviews of innovations in the market. Procurers use [PIANOo-forum](#) to share ideas and interesting articles. Take inspiration from colleagues who have tackled similar challenges in the past. Use the InnovatieMarkt to let people know what you need, and thereby invite other governmental bodies to pool their requirements and to exchange their experiences.
- *Knowledge sources.* Draw up an overview of relevant sources that help you increase your knowledge. Examples in the Netherlands include [Deltares](#) and TNO.

- *Experienced experts.* In various fields governmental bodies, foundations and businesses have internet platforms linked to conferences and seminars. Examples in the Netherlands include

- [Inter-municipal platform for public information \(IGOV\)](#) – public information
- [Smart City Event](#) - network for smart cities
- Municipal climate agencies, such as [Rotterdam Climate Initiative](#)
- [Public Space Week](#)
- [InfraTech](#)
- [Government and ICT](#)
- [Netherlands Coalition for Digital Preservation](#)
- [Digital Cities Agenda](#)
- [Safety - UT Twente](#)

Large government organisations often possess a wealth of experience available to others. Examples include the Rijkswaterstaat and the bigger municipalities.

- *Specialist search engines.*
 - [Hoovers](#) – worldwide search of companies.
 - [Netherlands Chamber of Commerce \(KvK\)](#) – targeted search of Dutch market parties registered with the KvK.
 - [ScienceDirect](#) – for scientific articles (sometimes a fee is payable).
 - [NARCIS](#) – for scientific information and experts in the Netherlands.
 - [LinkedIn](#) – for expert individuals.
 - [Technorati](#) – for the content of weblogs, such as online articles.

An overview of [all search engines](#) is also available.

- *Sector organisations.* The websites of sector organisations often include information about active market parties and innovations in development by the market. For an overview of Dutch sector associations [click here](#).
- *Trade journals.* Often, the latest gadgets are first revealed in trade journals. [Vakbladen.nl](#) provides an overview of Dutch trade journals. At a later stage of the process you can use trade journals for publishing a request.
- *Scientific journals.* A scientific journal will provide a summary of the most important publications within a specialist field within a certain period of time. Most specialist fields have their own journals. See: [overview of scientific journals](#).

Scientific journals are often not freely available to the public, but specific articles can be downloaded on payment of a fee. You therefore need to know exactly what you are looking for. You can also seek out experts to recommend specific papers to you. Some government bodies have accounts to access online scientific publications, for example via an internal library.

- *Patents office.* Patents provide a picture of the state of the art. Technical inventions indicate what is currently possible, or what in any event is known about. A patent can lead you to a party that offers the solution, or to the exploration of an entirely new market.

To discover what solutions have already been found for a problem, it can be useful to consult the online search system for patents, [Espacenet](#), where you can look through the most important collections of international patents. Patent advisers from the Netherlands Enterprise Agency can provide you with free search advice; they will help you find search terms and classification codes so that you can search further yourself in Espacenet.

Step 2: field research

Not everything is discoverable from a desktop. Good sources of information are available outside the door, such as [trade fairs](#) (this is not a complete list) and discussions with market parties. Start, for example, with current suppliers. Look for other experts that know the market well, such as government procurers ([via PIANOo-forum](#)), [someone within a knowledge institution](#) or even a specialised procurement advice agency. Large market parties also organise innovation days, to advertise the innovations they are working on. Many people are happy to share their knowledge or expertise with people who are interested, and they may be willing to offer further help.

To discover more, you could contact a research institution, such as a technical college. It is usually quite easy to obtain the contact details of a professor or researcher via [NARCIS](#), the knowledge institution's own website or the contact person of the knowledge institution. Such persons possess considerable knowledge about the innovations in a specialist field.

Step 3: discussions with market parties

In principle you are free to have discussions with market parties, so long as you observe the general principles of the Aanbestedingswet (public procurements act). Openness, fairness and transparency are important. All information that you share with market parties in such discussions must ultimately be disclosed in a prior information notice or in the eventual tender, with the exception of information that you receive from the market parties.

Step 4: drawing up a balance sheet

Pause to carefully consider the results of the market survey to date. To what extent have your questions been answered? Have you an adequate grasp of the capabilities of the market? Is there any other relevant market that you haven't yet looked at? Is the desired solution already for sale, or has it not yet been fully developed? Does the procurement of an innovation appear attractive, or would it be better to rely on a currently-used solution?

A market survey often leads to a refining of the original description of the problem. This affects the need analysis. You should go through the PIANOo [checklist](#) to refine your search further.

3. Legal framework

There are no rules that apply specifically to a market survey. However, you may not provide one party with an advantage over the other parties by, for example, revealing your requirements in greater detail during discussions.

4. Source

This information was taken from the "Innovation Procurement for Contracting Authorities" document that was prepared by [PIANOo](#) in 2017.