

PROCUREMENT

The CPV Code & Keyword Targeting Guide

How to build a tender-alert filter that surfaces every relevant public contract on Doffin and TED — without drowning in 200 irrelevant notices a week.

- ✓ Print-optimized
- ✓ Expert-curated
- ✓ Actionable tips

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The single biggest reason companies miss winnable public tenders is a badly configured search. Use codes that are too broad and you get hundreds of irrelevant alerts you stop reading. Use them too narrowly and the one contract you would have won is published under a code you never watched. This guide shows you exactly how the **Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV)** works, how to assemble a precise watch list, and how to combine codes with keywords and filters so the right opportunities reach you and nothing else does.

What CPV Codes Are and Why They Decide What You See

Every public tender in the EU and EEA is classified with one or more **CPV codes** — a standardised, 8-digit (plus check digit) vocabulary that contracting authorities are legally required to use on the contract notice. Doffin (Norway), TED (EU-wide), and every national portal index tenders by these codes. If you are not watching the right codes, the tender is effectively invisible to you.

The structure is hierarchical, and understanding the hierarchy is the whole game:

Digits	Level	Example	Meaning
45000000	Division (2 digits significant)	Construction work	Broadest — thousands of tenders
45200000	Group (3 digits)	Works for complete/part construction	Narrower
45210000	Class (4 digits)	Building construction work	Targeted
45213000	Category (5 digits)	Construction of commercial buildings	Specific
45213150-9	Subcategory (full 8+1)	Office buildings	Precise — few, highly relevant tenders

Rule of thumb: the more zeros at the end, the broader the code. 72000000 (IT services) covers everything from cabling to AI consultancy; 72212224-5 (web page editing software development) describes one narrow service.

How matching really works depends on the tool. A precise code only narrows your results if the tool matches on the full code. Tenderen's alerts match CPV codes on the **division — the first two digits** — so an

alert on 72212224 catches every 72... tender, exactly like 72000000 . In Tenderen the code picks the field and the **keywords, regions and value limits do the narrowing** (Step 2 and Step 3). Buyers also often choose a broad code, so a full-code-only filter in any tool risks missing tenders.

The Major CPV Divisions (Your Starting Map)

Find your division first, then drill down. The most-used divisions for SME suppliers:

- **45000000** — Construction work
- **48000000** — Software package and information systems
- **72000000** — IT services: consulting, software development, internet
- **79000000** — Business services: law, marketing, consulting, recruitment, security
- **80000000** — Education and training services
- **85000000** — Health and social work services
- **90000000** — Sewage, refuse, cleaning and environmental services
- **50000000** — Repair and maintenance services
- **34000000** — Transport equipment and auxiliary products
- **30000000** — Office and computing machinery, equipment and supplies
- **71000000** — Architectural, construction, engineering and inspection services
- **55000000** — Hotel, restaurant and retail trade services

Step 1 — Build Your Core CPV List

1. **List what you actually sell** in plain language ("cloud migration", "school catering", "facade insulation").
2. For each, find the **most specific CPV code** that fits — go as deep as the hierarchy allows.
3. Add the **parent (one level up)** as well. Buyers frequently classify at category level, not subcategory, so watching only the deepest code makes you miss tenders filed one rung higher.
4. Add **adjacent codes** for work you can deliver but don't lead with — that's where competition is thinner.
5. Aim for a **focused set of 8–15 codes**, not 50. Precision beats volume.

Worked example — an IT consultancy doing cloud + security: 72000000 (IT services, parent), 72222300 (information technology services), 72514000 (computer facilities management), 72600000 (computer support & consultancy), 79417000 (safety consultancy), 48730000 (security software package).

Step 2 — Layer Keywords On Top of Codes

CPV codes get you in the right room; keywords find the right table. Combine them because buyers describe the same thing in different words, and because a broad code needs narrowing.

Include keywords — the language of your offer and the buyer's problem: migration, modernisation, framework agreement, managed service, SOC, zero-trust, GDPR, accessibility (WCAG), Peppol, EHF

Exclude keywords — the noise you want gone: hardware only, printer toner, cabling, staffing agency, sub-threshold (tune to your business).

Phrase tactics that matter on Doffin/TED:

- Watch for **framework agreements** ("rammeavtale" / "framework") — these are multi-year and high value, and reopen periodically via mini-competitions.
- Track **prior information notices (PIN)** and **market consultations** — they signal a tender 3–6 months before it's published, giving you time to prepare or influence the spec.
- Add buyer-name keywords for **target accounts** (specific municipalities, agencies, hospital trusts).

Step 3 — Add the Filters That Cut the Noise

A precise alert is CPV **plus** keywords **plus** these constraints:

- **Geography** — region, county, or country. Many SMEs only deliver locally; filtering by region alone can halve your volume.
- **Contract value** — set a floor below which it isn't worth bidding, and a ceiling above which you can't qualify on turnover or references.
- **Procedure type** — Open, Restricted, Competitive Dialogue, Negotiated, or a Framework call-off. Some need pre-qualification you may not hold.
- **Above vs. below EU threshold** — above-threshold contracts (see below) follow full EU rules and run on TED; below-threshold contracts are national and often less contested.

EU/EEA Procurement Thresholds

The thresholds decide whether a contract is advertised EU/EEA-wide on TED (and follows the full directive) or handled nationally. There are separate values for central government, other public buyers, utilities, works, and social and other specific services — and works have a far higher threshold than supplies and services.

The values are revised every two years, so this guide does not print them. Check the current figures before you rely on them: in Norway, DFØ publishes them on anskaffelser.no; for the EU, see the European Commission's public procurement thresholds page.

Below the thresholds, contracts are governed by national rules (in Norway, the procurement regulation and Doffin) — often a faster, less crowded route for SMEs to win their first public references.

Step 4 — Test, Measure, and Refine Monthly

A tender filter is never "done". Run this loop every month:

- **Too few alerts?** Your keywords or filters are too narrow — remove an exclude term, widen the region, or add a code from another division.
- **Too many irrelevant alerts?** Identify the codes/keywords producing noise and tighten or exclude them.
- **Missed a tender you should have seen?** Find the CPV code it was published under and add it. This single habit compounds into near-complete coverage.
- Track your **relevance rate** (relevant alerts ÷ total alerts) and keep tightening until most alerts are worth opening.

Your CPV Targeting Worksheet

What we sell	Best CPV code	Parent code	Include keywords	Exclude keywords	Min value	Region
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What we sell	Best CPV code	Parent code	Include keywords	Exclude keywords	Min value	Region

How Tenderen Does This Automatically

Building and maintaining this by hand across Doffin and TED is exactly the work Tenderen automates:

- **Relevance ranking** scores every tender against your company profile — CPV codes, regions and what you deliver — so the best matches come first.
- **CPV + keyword + region alerts** reach you by email (daily on Free, within minutes on Pro and Enterprise), in the app, or in Slack or Teams. Alerts match CPV codes on the division, so add keywords to narrow them.
- **Re-tender alerts and Market Radar** (Pro) surface contracts in your codes that are nearing their end date, before the next competition is announced.

Set up your first smart alert free at tenderen.com and stop missing the contracts you should be winning.

Tenderen — AI-Powered Public Procurement. Find, analyse, and win public tenders across Norway, the EU, and beyond.

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