# CMA tackles bid-rigging in public procurement using artificial intelligence



The U.K.’s Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is addressing the pressing issue of anti-competitive practices within public procurement contracts by leveraging artificial intelligence (AI). As reported by the Financial Times, the CMA has launched a pilot programme aimed at tackling the problem of “bid-rigging,” which involves collusion among competing firms to manipulate bidding processes, potentially inflating contract costs for government projects.

CMA chief Sarah Cardell underscored the significance of the initiative, stating, “We know that procurement markets are at significant risk of bid-rigging. We’ve now got the capability to be able to scan data at scale, bidding data at scale, to spot anomalies in that bidding data, and to identify areas of potential anti-competitive conduct.” This approach allows the CMA to process large volumes of data, enhancing its ability to uncover irregularities that may suggest collusion among businesses.

The CMA’s recent actions come on the heels of its inquiry into bid-rigging related to school roofing contracts and follows the imposition of fines totalling £60 million ($75 million) on ten construction firms for their involvement in rigging contract bids last year. These developments signify a concerted effort by the authority to tighten oversight in procurement processes, utilising advanced technology to bolster its investigative capabilities.

Through this pilot programme, the CMA aims to strengthen competition in public procurement and safeguard taxpayer interests, marking a proactive shift towards the integration of AI in regulatory practices within the UK's business landscape.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.pymnts.com/cpi-posts/uk-government-faces-growing-risk-of-bid-rigging-in-public-contracts-cma-warns/> - Corroborates the CMA's launch of a pilot programme to tackle bid-rigging in public procurement contracts using AI and highlights the significance of the issue.
2. <https://techcrunch.com/2025/01/06/uk-uses-ai-to-tackle-bid-rigging-collusion-in-public-procurement-contracts/> - Supports the CMA's use of AI to identify potential anti-competitive conduct in public procurement contracts.
3. <https://www.pinsentmasons.com/out-law/news/colluding-bidders-uk-public-contracts-risk-debarment-2025> - Details the CMA's use of AI to monitor for bid-rigging and the upcoming debarment regime for colluding bidders.
4. <https://www.pymnts.com/cpi-posts/uk-government-faces-growing-risk-of-bid-rigging-in-public-contracts-cma-warns/> - Provides context on the CMA's recent inquiry into bid-rigging related to school roofing contracts and the imposition of fines on construction firms.
5. <https://techcrunch.com/2025/01/06/uk-uses-ai-to-tackle-bid-rigging-collusion-in-public-procurement-contracts/> - Quotes CMA chief Sarah Cardell on the capability to scan data at scale to spot anomalies and identify potential anti-competitive conduct.
6. <https://www.pinsentmasons.com/out-law/news/colluding-bidders-uk-public-contracts-risk-debarment-2025> - Explains the new debarment regime under the Procurement Act 2023 and its implications for colluding bidders.
7. <https://www.pymnts.com/cpi-posts/uk-government-faces-growing-risk-of-bid-rigging-in-public-contracts-cma-warns/> - Discusses the CMA's historical enforcement actions, including fines imposed on construction firms for bid-rigging.
8. <https://www.pinsentmasons.com/out-law/news/colluding-bidders-uk-public-contracts-risk-debarment-2025> - Highlights the CMA’s increased use of sophisticated technology and data in competition law enforcement.
9. <https://techcrunch.com/2025/01/06/uk-uses-ai-to-tackle-bid-rigging-collusion-in-public-procurement-contracts/> - Mentions the CMA’s efforts to drive savings for the public purse and enhance public sector productivity through the new initiative.
10. <https://www.pymnts.com/cpi-posts/uk-government-faces-growing-risk-of-bid-rigging-in-public-contracts-cma-warns/> - Details the broader context of public procurement in the UK, including the value of the market and past controversies.
11. <https://www.pinsentmasons.com/out-law/news/colluding-bidders-uk-public-contracts-risk-debarment-2025> - Explains the role of the CMA’s Data, Technology and Analytics (DaTA) unit in enhancing competition law enforcement capabilities.
12. <https://techcrunch.com/2025/01/06/uk-uses-ai-to-tackle-bid-rigging-collusion-in-public-procurement-contracts/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data