

Commercial Greenhouse Procurement Guide

A buyer's guide to planning, scoping and comparing quotations for commercial greenhouse projects of USD 250,000 and above.

About the numbers in this guide

This guide deliberately contains almost no figures. The only number used is SeedMatchGroup's own policy: the USD 250,000 minimum project value it reviews. Cost per m², lead times, yields and percentages vary by country, design and market conditions, so they are not printed here — only supplier quotations for your own scope can give them.

1. What is a commercial greenhouse project?

The planned construction and operation of a protected-cultivation facility — from a single-span tunnel to an automated glasshouse — built to produce a defined crop for sale. SeedMatchGroup reviews projects from USD 250,000. The scope usually spans four layers: structure and glazing; climate control; irrigation and fertigation; automation and monitoring.

2. What SeedMatchGroup does — and does not do

SeedMatchGroup is an independent, human-led sourcing specialist. It reviews your brief, writes the scope so it can be quoted consistently, approaches suitable independent suppliers on your behalf and structures returned proposals for like-for-like comparison. The supply contract is signed directly between you and the chosen supplier.

- Not a farm, grower or seed breeder.
- Not a fertilizer, irrigation or greenhouse manufacturer.
- Not an EPC contractor or builder.
- Not a lender, broker-dealer or financial advisor.

3. Greenhouse systems

The right system depends on climate severity, crop value, water, labour cost and available capital.

- Plastic tunnels — lowest-control single- or multi-span structures.
- Multi-span polyhouse — active ventilation, screening, often drip fertigation.
- Glasshouse (Venlo-style) — high light transmission and precise climate control.
- Net or shade house — pest exclusion and light/heat moderation, no full climate control.
- Hydroponic greenhouse — any structure fitted with soilless growing and closed or semi-closed fertigation.
- Vertical farm — fully enclosed, artificially lit, multi-tier indoor facility.

4. Common commercial crops

- Tomato and cucumber — usually substrate with closed fertigation in advanced systems.
- Pepper — longer cycles, sensitive to climate and nutrient stability.
- Berries — substrate or table systems under tunnels or polyhouses.
- Leafy greens and herbs — short-cycle crops suited to hydroponics.
- Cut flowers — climate- and light-sensitive, often in glasshouses.
- Seedlings and propagation — nursery facilities supplying other growers.

5. Local vs international sourcing

Most projects are hybrids: local civil works, labour and consumables combined with imported structures, climate equipment, fertigation and automation. Decide scope line by scope line.

- Compare delivered-and-installed cost in the project country, never ex-works price.
- Imported equipment adds freight, duty, customs clearance and currency exposure.
- Ask each supplier for a written delivery schedule; do not rely on generic lead times.
- Confirm in-country service partners, spare parts and warranty response before selecting.
- Resolve permits, building codes, electrical standards and import licensing before ordering.

6. What drives capital cost (CAPEX)

- Structure and glazing type.
- Climate control equipment: heating, cooling, ventilation, screens.
- Irrigation and fertigation scope and automation level.
- Supplemental lighting, where specified.
- Site preparation, foundations and drainage.
- Utility connections: power, water source, backup generation.
- Import duty, freight and local installation labour.

7. What drives operating cost (OPEX)

- Energy for heating, cooling or lighting.
- Labour for crop management, harvest and maintenance.
- Fertilizer and crop protection inputs.
- Water treatment consumables.
- Packaging, cold chain and logistics to market.
- Maintenance and servicing.
- Insurance and financing cost where leveraged.

8. Common procurement risks

- Undefined boundary between equipment supplier, civil works and installer.
- Missing or outdated water analysis.
- Budget band below the technology level the crop and climate require.
- Assuming financing without a confirmed lender or payment plan.
- Underestimating energy cost exposure.
- Choosing a system before comparing CAPEX against OPEX over the project life.
- Land, permit, duty or customs uncertainty after contracting.
- Treating one unsolicited quotation as representative of the market.

9. Quote-readiness checklist

Have these ready before requesting quotations:

- Recent water laboratory analysis (EC, pH, Na, Cl, HCO₃, Fe, B, hardness).
- Site plan or coordinates with plot dimensions and access.
- Climate data or nearest reference weather station.
- Crop, growing system and target cycles per year.
- Electricity capacity, reliability and backup.
- Scope split: supply only, supply and install, or turnkey.
- Budget band in USD and target commissioning quarter.
- Decision process and contract signatory.

10. The SeedMatchGroup RFQ process

- Project brief — crop, size, location, water, energy, scope and budget band.
- Human review — gaps and unclear scope are followed up.
- Scope normalisation — one comparable written requirement.
- Supplier approach — suitable suppliers approached manually, per brief.
- Comparison — proposals structured like-for-like.
- Direct contracting — you negotiate and sign with the chosen supplier.

Start your project brief: seedmatchgroup.com/rfq-builder

SeedMatchGroup — planning guidance, not engineering, legal or financial advice.