

## Green Requirements for the Maintenance of Parks and Gardens

ERRETERIA, BASQUE COUNTRY, SPAIN

### Procurement objectives

In order to ensure that environmental impacts are minimised during the maintenance of parks and gardens, requirements are made by the Town Council at various stages of the procurement process.

Service providers must fulfil requirements in relation to vehicle emissions and machinery to be used under the contract. A key contract performance clause is the measurement of water used for irrigation.

The contract is broken down into 3 lots, each covering different districts of Errenteria.

The Municipality has been supported in its implementation of GPP by the Public Agency for Environmental Management of the Basque Government (IHOBE).

### Background

Errenteria is a town in the Province of Gipuzkoa in the Basque Country. In 2009, the Town Council launched an Environmental Strategy which incorporates targets on green purchasing and contracting.

As well as for the maintenance of parks and gardens, environmental criteria are used as standard in contracts for vehicle maintenance and cleaning services in municipal buildings. Errenteria has also purchased electric vehicles as part of its effort to reduce local air pollution and the emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs).



### Criteria used

**Subject matter of the contract:** Maintenance of the Parks and Gardens in Errenteria.

The following information must be provided by bidders. It is assessed from a technical and environmental standpoint as part of the award criteria:

- Details of the machinery that would be used under the contract.
- Information about owned or leased vehicles that would be used to carry out contracted work including; make, model, noise emissions, EURO standard, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and other GHG accompanied by a type approval certificate.

**Award criteria:**

- **50%** Price.
- **35%** Technical and environmental quality of the bid. This includes the resources that will be used in the execution of the contract.
- **15%** Proposed environmental techniques, which if undertaken would improve upon the municipality's standard requirements.

**Contract performance clauses:**

- The contractor presents both a weekly and an annual report on total water consumption for the irrigation of each district. This information has to be provided in litres per m<sup>2</sup> or litres per tree and as an aggregate figure.
- In districts where there is no access to water hydrants, irrigation will be carried out using the municipal water tanker. Water consumption data in this instance will be gathered in the same way as with water hydrants, i.e. by attaching a water meter to measure water use.
- If green waste arising from gardening and woodland work is required by the Municipality for raw materials for compost, it must be used as such.
- There is a specific limit on the application of plant fertilizer both in terms of the areas upon which it is used and the concentration. The dose is limited to 50gr/m<sup>2</sup> and fertilizer may only be applied more than once a year if given express permission by municipal contract managers.

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### Results

This was the first time the Municipality awarded points for environmental criteria in a tender for the maintenance of parks and gardens. The division of the contract into lots enhanced competition by making it easier for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to bid alongside other larger organisations.

Companies did not seem to be dissuaded from bidding because of the inclusion of 15% award criteria for purely environmental aspects, but the market was less prepared than expected when it came to providing evidence for verification.

Next year, when Errenteria releases a new tender for this service, contract managers anticipate that there will be an improved response from the market, and that information such as the environmental characteristics of machinery and transportation will be better documented. The original tender advertised in 2009 emphasised the Municipality's commitment to issues such as limiting water use by monitoring consumption, preventing excess noise pollution caused by machinery and minimising vehicle emissions associated with the provision of public services. Therefore the smaller businesses often associated with maintaining parks and gardens, which may have needed more time to adapt to these requirements, should now be better prepared.

### Environmental impacts

There are a number of environmental impacts associated with maintaining green urban spaces including high rates of water consumption for irrigation, high organic waste generation arising from mowing and pruning, and pollution from chemical fertilisers. Also, associated vehicles and gardening machinery that run on fossil fuels contribute towards local air pollution, GHG emissions and noise pollution. These and other aspects discussed in the EU GPP Criteria for Gardening products and services can be minimised by making appropriate requirements of service providers at all stages of the procurement process and throughout the lifetime of the contract.

### Lessons learned

Council staff with the responsibility of monitoring the maintenance of Errenteria's parks and gardens emphasise the importance of looking at the fundamental procurement principle of a thorough needs definition. They advise other public authorities striving to improve the management of their parks and gardens from an environmental standpoint to design or adapt areas that require less intensive maintenance. Minimising areas of grass that needs to be cut and planting fewer trees and shrubs that must be regularly pruned, reduces the need for machinery and equipment, irrigation and chemical treatment. This allows for areas within which habitats can be created to promote increased urban biodiversity. It also leads to a reduction in negative ecological impacts as well as the need for human and financial resources.