

CONSIP, ITALY

Background

Consip SpA, the Italian central purchasing body, identified a need for leasing ICT equipment and management services. Consip established that by purchasing an integrated service, as opposed to a product, several economic and ecological targets could be met. More specifically, Consip felt that by using this approach they could achieve greater energy efficiency, rationalise their IT infrastructure, cut staff costs and reduce the need for regular maintenance.

Consip decided to set up an “incomplete” framework agreement as they felt that this would allow public bodies purchasing through the contract greater flexibility with their individual purchases, while ensuring compliance with Consip’s minimum requirements.

Criteria used

Environmental considerations were made from the very beginning as Consip chose to manage the complete tender process via an e-platform, which reduced the need to use paper and also contributed to cost savings.

To set up the framework agreement, Consip established the minimum requirements (see below), as well as the cost requirements. These requirements were then valid for all ‘call-offs’ carried out under the framework agreement. This meant that it was easier for the public bodies to call-off from the framework agreement. Green criteria were included in the contract.

Technical specifications:

- Compliance with the minimum environmental criteria set by the Italian Ministry of Environment (Official Gazette No.64 - 19 March 2011), following the Italian National Action Plan on GPP.
- Compliance with Energy Star for computers and displays version 5.0, and Energy Star for printers version 1.1.
- Maximum limit of noise emissions for computers (≤ 40 dB(A) in idle mode and ≤ 45 dB(A) in active mode), laptops (≤ 35 dB(A) in idle mode and ≤ 40 dB(A) in active mode) and printers (Lwad ≤ 75 dB (A) in active mode).
- Maximum limit of weight for laptops (2.8 Kg) and tablet-notebook (1.8 Kg).
- Use of 100% recycled paper for printers and multifunctional devices.
- Double-side printing set by default.

Award criteria:

- Reduction of energy consumption below the Typical Energy Consumption (TEC) set by Energy Star for computers (version 5.0). Points are awarded according to the reduction of energy consumption achieved by the products that will be leased (TEC value).
- Products must be designed for disassembly and plastic parts heavier than 25 g must be marked.
- Reduction of substances emissions (tropospheric volatile organic compounds (TVOCs), ozone, dust) for printers and multifunctional devices.
- Reduction of noise emissions for printers beyond the limits set in the technical specifications.
- 90% (weight) of case parts (both plastic and metal parts) must be separable and ready for recycling.
- Other environmental criteria related to weight. The battery efficiency of laptops was awarded by the procurement body during the specific procurement procedure.

Procurement objectives

In 2013, Consip set up a framework agreement over 24 months for ICT services covering 160,000 workstations located on the premises of various Italian public bodies. The contract is valued at approximately €380 million. The desktop sourcing services included the management of ICT platforms, leasing of hardware, software licenses and virtualisation services.

Consip chose to establish an “incomplete” framework agreement as part of their tendering strategy. They set the minimum requirements for the agreement; however, the public bodies permitted to purchase from the contract could establish their own award criteria and technical specifications on a case by case basis.

Results

The framework agreement was launched in June 2013 and the first call-off is currently being carried out. It is therefore too early to provide information on the individual call-offs.

Sustainability criteria contributed to the selection of brand new products on the market with low energy consumption, without increasing risks (litigations, delay of the procedure, formal complaints, etc.). Suppliers were able to meet the standards specified in the tender documents mainly due to the following:

- The initial market analysis carried out by Consip prior to tendering. Environmental criteria were not influencing the participation process but were important for the award phase.
- The sustainability criteria included in the tender were the Minimum Environmental Criteria issued by the Italian Environment Ministry.

Environmental impacts

Consip wished to reduce paper by introducing a system to manage documents electronically and to manage electronic waste in a more efficient manner. This included introducing double sided printing, which generates savings of 19-50% of the total life-cycle cost of the service. Additional paper was saved by carrying out the procurement process electronically. This included establishing the framework agreement and the subsequent call-offs. Submission of offers was carried out via a digital platform. The following should also be noted:

- Consip will achieve yearly savings of up to €5 million by leasing Energy Star compliant, energy efficient, personal desktop computers or laptops, compared to those purchased through the previous tender. This will lead to a yearly reduction of 14,000 tonnes in CO₂ emissions.
- Thanks to process decentralisation, every specific agreement issued by a public authority through Consip's framework agreement saves on average €42,000. This is due to the fact that, as Consip is running and publishing the tenders on behalf of the public authorities, the authorities save time, personnel costs, average costs which could arise from litigation, and part of the costs for publishing the tender.
- Shifting from personal printers to working group printers could generate savings of up to €20 million.
- The contract is so structured that it is in the suppliers' interest to offer more durable products as this will in turn reduce their maintenance costs.

Lessons learned

An important feature of Consip's experience was the decision taken to tender for the provision of a service as opposed to purchasing products. Tendering for a service has allowed for greater flexibility and has enabled Consip to reach their GPP targets: reductions in the consumption of energy, waste and avoidance of dangerous substances.

Consip recognises the importance of involving all relevant stakeholders from the beginning of the procurement process.

In order to further reduce the amount of paper and other materials (such as toner cartridges) used, a conscious change needs to be made from procuring goods to procuring services.