

Green and healthy cleaning services in Tuscany

ARPAT (AGENZIA REGIONALE PER LA PROTEZIONE AMBIENTALE DELLA TOSCANA), ITALY

Procurement objectives

ARPAT successfully piloted GPP for cleaning services in 2004 for two of its 19 offices. Due to the results, in March 2009, the procedure was replicated on a broader scale to encompass all of its offices. The procurement was an open procedure for a three year contract worth €2.2 million – 11 bids were submitted.

Background

ARPAT is the Environmental Protection Agency for the Tuscan Region. It employs 900 people and has 19 offices around Tuscany. One of ARPAT's functions is to provide technical support on sustainable procurement to local governments in the region. ARPAT participates in the national Committee for the Italian GPP National Action Plan.



Criteria used

- **Subject matter of the contract:** Cleaning services, sanitation, washing services for laboratory glassware, with a low environmental impact, and other integrated services for ARPAT facilities in Tuscany.
- **Technical specifications:** Requirements were for the use of environmentally friendly and healthy cleaning products, defined by limiting the presence of volatile organic compounds, perfumes, dyes and surfactants, for example. Bidders were also required to provide instructions for using cleaning products in a sustainable manner.
- **Award criteria:** Formulation was based on the most economically and environmentally advantageous offer. 40 points were allocated to price and 60 points for quality – such as for employing 'green' cleaning techniques, reduced packaging, environmental product performance (share of products complying with ISO Type I labels or equivalent) and environmental quality of training programmes.
- **Contract performance:** The successful contractor was required to implement an 'informal' environmental management system (EMS) for the service provided, to improve the entire environmental performance. The contractor was required to put the following three steps into effect: 1) Carry out an initial environmental review of the service; 2) Initialise an environmental programme; 3) Ensure steps are taken to monitor the programme.

The contractor was also required to provide data on product volumes used (on a half yearly basis); to ensure that the quantity of products used will decrease by a certain percentage each year, while ensuring that the quality of the service does not suffer by carrying out regular quality checks; and to regularly train its cleaning staff on sustainable cleaning techniques. Social responsibility criteria, addressing gender issues and equal opportunities, for instance, were also included as contractual clauses.

The approach to sustainability adopted by ARPAT in the pilot (from 2004) and in the 2009 tender was based on the recommendations from the [Procura+ Sustainable Procurement Campaign](#).

Results

A consortium made up of three cooperative societies was awarded the cleaning services contract. Two of them are [ISO 14001](#) certified and one of them holds a certified corporate social responsibility (CSR) management system in compliance with the [Social Accountability 8000 standard](#). The third operator plans to obtain ISO 14001 certification of its system during the course of 2010.

The three operators did not experience any problems with implementing the contract clause concerning the 'informal EMS', or with finding products with lower environmental impacts. As a group, the consortium uses 12 different types of cleaning products, nine of which are certified with the [European Ecolabel](#).

Environmental Impacts

The main environmental impacts associated with cleaning services are related to the use of cleaning products, such as air pollution, ozone formation, bioaccumulation or food chain exposure, and hazardous effects on aquatic organisms, etc. The various measures included in the technical specifications, award criteria and contract performance clauses, serve to increase the quality of the products used and reduce quantities.

The cleaning service provider ensures that cleaning staff are aware of important issues such as dosage and dosage devices, new techniques and cleaning products (for example, refraining from using products with the sole function to freshen or deodorise), awareness of health risks and usage guidance.

Lessons learned

- Following an initial market analysis during the pre-procurement phase, ARPAT decided not to include any environmental criteria as Selection Criteria – such as requiring bidders to hold a certified EMS. Consequently, given the market for cleaning service providers at the time, participation in the bidding process was acceptable (11 bids were submitted). ARPAT will review and evaluate the market situation again in the preparation of future tenders with the goal of devising more ambitious criteria to achieve an even higher environmental performance.
- Some difficulties were experienced in monitoring the 'informal' EMS – such as the frequency of reporting product consumption levels. This particular aspect is one which is being monitored and will possibly be changed in future contracts.
- ARPAT aims to increase the social responsibility requirements for contractors in future tenders.

For more information, please see European GPP criteria for [cleaning products and services](#), as well as the [background report](#) identifying the main environmental impacts and [ARPAT](#).