

CENTRAL PROCUREMENT OFFICE, WIESBADEN, GERMANY

Procurement objectives

Public procurement for all of Wiesbaden's public authorities is organised by the city's Central Procurement Office within the Office for Economy and Property. Many products and services are provided through a digital catalogue – thus enabling each authority or even individuals to procure independently.

The digital catalogues for specific product groups and services are based on more than 30 framework agreements with a variety of contractors. A tender was launched in May 2010 to establish a single-contractor framework agreement for office stationery. The framework started in October 2010 and is valid for a period of two years. It covers general office stationery for over 190 city authorities.

Background

Wiesbaden is committed to continually optimising its approach to procurement. One of the city's main goals aside from high economic efficiency is including more social and environmental criteria. The 2010 framework agreement for office stationery includes environmentally friendly alternatives for most products. Similar framework agreements for paper and toner cartridges also apply green criteria.

Raising awareness regarding environmentally friendly alternatives is high on the list of priorities for Wiesbaden's Central Procurement Office. It promotes those alternatives and provides updates and training for procurement officers throughout the city's authorities.



Criteria used

Subject matter of the contract:

Framework agreement on office stationery (writing utensils, files, notepads, hole punches, etc. – approximately 200 products) with both conventional and environmentally friendly alternatives.

Technical specifications:

Tenderers are required to provide an online ordering service with delivery within three to four working days. Prices tendered must be fixed for the duration of the framework. Conventional products are allowed, but environmentally friendly alternatives must be provided where available. A list with all products where eco-alternatives are available was included in the tender documents.

Specifications for products to be considered as eco-alternatives:

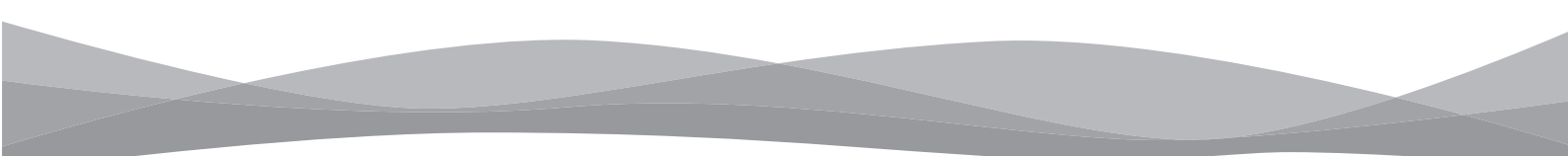
- All products that contain paper or are made of paper must use 100% recycled, chlorine-free paper
- All products must be solvent-free (only exceptions are felt markers: if not water-based, solvents based on ethyl or isopropyl alcohol may be used)
- Products that use plastics must be PVC-free and contain at least 60% recycled plastic
- Products must be refillable and reusable if applicable (e.g. text markers)

Verification:

Products which carry a relevant eco-label such as [FSC](#) or [Blue Angel](#) will be deemed compliant with the specifications. Other appropriate evidence such as data from the manufacturer will also be accepted.

Award criteria:

Lowest price.



Results

It is mostly brands that offer eco- alternatives - these often cost the same or are only a little more expensive than their conventional counterparts. However, many large scale stationery suppliers offer private label (generic) products which are significantly cheaper than their branded counterparts, but have no eco-alternative.

All environmentally friendly alternatives are marked with the word "Öko" ("Eco") in the digital catalogues; alternatives exist for approximately 75% of all stationery products. The Central Procurement Office actively promotes eco-alternatives through trainings, newsletters and e-mail updates for the city's procurement officers. Additionally, there are regular updates on environmentally responsible behaviour and good practices such as how to save paper and toner when printing. Reactions show that this information is appreciated and implemented.

Environmental impacts

The main environmental impacts addressed are the use of unsustainably produced timber and plastic products as well as solvents or other hazardous and toxic substances often used in office materials. With more than 190 authorities and offices, stationery and other office supplies such as paper or toner cartridges make up a major part of Wiesbaden's public procurement. Stationery that is made out of recycled materials often has a better environmental balance and lower climate impact, considering the reduced amount of resources needed for these products.

Lessons learned

The framework agreement was established one year ago and as of December 2011 initial audits are underway on costs and the environmental impact. Results are expected by the beginning of 2012. Indicators show that costs may rise where eco-alternatives are chosen over a conventional product. However, with raised awareness, constant market evolution, and increasing competition, costs for environmentally friendly alternatives may decrease in the future.

The Central Procurement Office of Wiesbaden has had good experiences with the offers it received and plans to repeat this process while furthering its approach to GPP. For example, for future tenders the use of award criteria to encourage offers that surpass the minimum environmental requirements will be considered. Similar framework agreements for other office supplies, such as paper and refurbishment of toner cartridges have been established.