

Socially responsible cleaning framework using green cleaning products

Government of Catalonia (Spain)

Background

The [Government of Catalonia](#) is an autonomous government within Spain, responsible for certain legislative and policy areas for the region of Catalonia. Its [Ministry of Territory and Sustainability](#) acts as an expert body for environmental policy and the promotion of green public procurement (GPP).

The Ministry of Territory and Sustainability works closely with the government's Central Purchasing Authority (the Central Supplies Commission of the Ministry of Economy) to incorporate environmental criteria into framework agreements, and since 2005, this cooperation has resulted in most framework agreements of the Catalan Government including environmental criteria, including its framework agreement for cleaning services.



Procurement objectives

The Catalan Government uses GPP to support several strategic policies, including: reducing the negative impacts of production and consumption; ensuring the environmental performance of government actions; promoting eco-innovation and market transformation to transition towards a circular, green and competitive economy; and supporting other policies and instruments pursuing these objectives.

The framework agreement for cleaning services, valid between December 2014 and November 2017, was divided into six territorial lots (Barcelona City Council, the rest of the province of Barcelona, as well as the provinces of Girona, Lleida, Tarragona, and the offices of the Government of Catalonia based in the city of Madrid).

Criteria used

Subject matter of the contract:

The purpose of the Framework Agreement is to carry out environmentally-friendly cleaning services in buildings, premises and facilities with an administrative use and that come under the responsibility of parties of the agreement.

Technical specifications:

Bidding companies are required to provide a list of cleaning products, hand soap, paper products and garbage bags to be used in the execution of the service, with accompanying documentation proving compliance with the technical specifications.

Cleaning chemicals: Tendering companies must provide a product safety sheet and handling instructions for all cleaning products. Spray products with propellant gases may not be used (or if necessary, only bottles that can be filled with a manual spray head are allowed). Cleaning products should not contain chemicals that have been identified as Substances of Very High Concern (SVHC), according to Article 59 of [Regulation \(EC\) 1907/2006](#) (REACH Regulation), at concentrations higher than 0.01%, and must fulfill the environmental criteria for chemical components of a type I ecolabel.

Verification: The bidding companies must submit either a declaration from the manufacturer accompanied by the product safety data sheet; a Type I ecolabel (that is, an ecolabel awarded by a third party which meets the principles set out by [ISO 14024](#)) certificate that includes this requirement for the product, or; other equivalent evidence with specific reference to the mentioned criterion. Type I ecolabels include the [EU Ecolabel](#), the [Catalan Ecolabel](#), [Nordic Swan](#), [Blue Angel](#), among others.

Hand soap: Products should not contain chemicals that have been identified as SVHC, according to Article 59 of [Regulation \(EC\) 1907/2006](#) (REACH Regulation), at concentrations higher than 0.01%.

Verification: As above.

Toilet paper and other paper products: In principle, paper products consisting of 100% recycled fiber are preferred.

Verification: The bidding companies must submit either a declaration from the manufacturer, accompanied by the product safety data sheet; a Type I ecolabel certificate that includes this requirement for the product, or; other equivalent evidence, with specific reference to the mentioned criterion. The '[Distintivo de Garantía de Calidad Ambiental](#)' and Blue Angel ecolabels can be used as verification of 100% recycled fiber content. Products bearing the EU Ecolabel, Nordic Swan, [FSC](#), or [PEFC](#), or equivalent, need to be accompanied by documentation that specifies the recycled fiber content.

If a non-recycled paper product alternative is offered, it will also have to comply with the environmental criteria. Specifically, all virgin fiber must come from legal sources, and at least 50% comes from forests of sustainable forest management.

Verification: Bidding companies must present a declaration from the manufacturer accompanied by documentation that proves the origin of the wood. If it comes from a country signatory to the [FLEGT Voluntary Association Agreement](#), the same FLEGT license will serve as evidence. Type I ecolabels that include this requirement will also be accepted, such as chain of custody certificates issued by FSC or PEFC, as well as other tracking systems certified by third parties within environmental or quality management systems.

Garbage bags: At least 80% of all the plastic used in garbage bags must come from post-consumer recycled plastic, and the product has to meet the resistance requirements as described in the [UNE-EN 13592: 2003 + A1: 2007](#) standard for plastic bags for the collection of domestic waste. In addition, it is foreseen that the collection of organic waste will be introduced, and the bidding companies of the Framework Agreement are also required to be able to provide compostable garbage bags if required. Compostable bags must biodegrade within 180 days, as described in standard [UNE-EN 13432: 2001](#), and meet the resistance requirements for plastic bags, as above.

Verification: Bidding companies must submit either a declaration from the manufacturer (with specific reference to the percentage of recycled content and/or biodegradability, and compliance with resistance requirements or the UNE-EN standard certificate) accompanied by the product card, and either a Type I ecolabel certificate for the product that includes this requirement, or other equivalent documentation with specific reference to the mentioned criteria.

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Award criteria:

Quality plan adapted to the Framework Agreement (40 points in total): Includes points being awarded for occupational health and safety aspects, measures to reconcile work, personal and family life.

Training (25 points): Points will be awarded for the annual delivery of training related to the provision of the service to all the personnel assigned to the execution of the respective derivative contracts.

Training centres (10 points)

Environmental criteria (15 points): Points will be awarded for the use of automatic dosing systems. To verify this, tenderers will have to submit the documentation or product data sheet/dosing system, accompanied by a declaration of commitment to install these systems in the contracts derived from this framework agreement.

Quality in the provision of services (10 points): Points will be awarded according to the management structure of the company and its ability to monitor the benefits of the contract according to the framework agreement, and to resolve conflicts and exceptional incidents which may occur during the course of the contract.

Bids will be ranked according to points scored and cost to identify the most economically advantageous bids, with the top bidders being included in the framework up to the maximum specified number of companies per lot (from six to 25).

Results

The estimated value of the framework agreement was set for its entire duration, including its possible extension, at €94,587,850 and the basic bidding budget, corresponding to the initial duration of the Framework Agreement, was €47,293,925. The value of the agreement corresponding to the departments of the Government of Catalonia, is set at €63,975,968 and the bidding budget at € 31,987,984.

As the Government of Catalonia has been greening this framework agreement over many years, and there is a fairly large market for ecolabeled cleaning products available, the vast majority of bidding companies were able to fulfill the environmental requirements, with only a few being excluded from the competition.

Environmental impacts

A first audit of environmental clauses took place between November and December 2016. Seven out of the 16 companies in the framework were audited by technicians from the Directorate-General for Environmental Quality and Climate Change (Ministry of Territory and Sustainability) through onsite visits.

It was found that only 28% of the cleaning service companies used the same cleaning products, paper products and bags in the performance of the contract as was stated in the framework agreement proposal; 43% of cleaning services companies partially complied and 29% did not comply. The prohibition of the use of sprays was complied with by 57% of the cleaning service companies (while 14% partially complied and 29% did not comply). And the use of dosing systems or single-dose products was complied with by 43% of the cleaning services companies (57% did not comply). A second audit will take place in 2019 where the remaining nine companies will take part.

An audit of all 16 companies and their compliance with the social clauses of the Collective Bargaining Agreement was also conducted between December 2016 and March 2018, conducted by technicians from the Directorate-General for Labour Relations and Quality at Work (Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Families). It was found that there was non-compliance with requirements to record daily working time, as well as irregularities in overtime, social security contributions, and some partial non-payment of salaries.

In order to improve future compliance, the results of the Audit were presented to the Monitoring Committee of the Framework Agreement, composed, among others, of the main trade unions and business associations of the cleaning sector, and will be used to train the officials in charge of monitoring the performance of the contracts which include sustainability requirements.

To define the criteria of the new Framework Agreement for cleaning services 2016 (which will be valid between January 2018 and January 2020), prior market consultation was carried out. In addition to the market consultation and audit of the 2014-2017 framework, a questionnaire was published on the Government of Catalonia's [online public procurement platform](#), where the inclusion of new environmental criteria as award criteria was consulted upon, including: the use of low emissions vehicles as part of the service; the use of concentrated products or single-dose products, low environmental impact soaps and low environmental hand washing detergents; and limiting the hazardous substances present in the textiles of uniforms. These have since been included in the most recent Framework Agreement.

Lessons learned

- Having sustainability oriented contract clauses is only effective if compliance with these clauses is properly monitored. It is therefore necessary to design a monitoring plan, and to train contracting authorities responsible about the practical implementation of social and environmental clauses.
- Resources for monitoring and appropriate penalties for non-compliance should also be designed in from the start, with measures being taken to penalise non-compliant suppliers when necessary. The latest Framework Agreement includes the planning of an annual audit.

Contact persons:

Anna Esteve Traveset, aesteve@gencat.cat and
Pilar Baldellou García, pbaldellou@gencat.cat, Government of Catalonia.

For related information, please see European GPP criteria for [Indoor Cleaning Services](#) and the [Technical Background Report](#).