

The Estonian Police and Border Guard Board - green cleaning products and services

Background

Over 5,000 people are employed at the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board (PBGB), which is the authority responsible for internal security in Estonia. The PBGB is one of the largest state agencies in the Country.

The majority of procurement undertaken for the PBGB, including contracts for cleaning services, is carried out centrally by the organisation's procurement unit. The impetus for including green criteria in this tender arose from a training session undertaken to establish an internal Environmental Management System.

On the national level, a series of training workshops are now taking place with the aim of encouraging public sector authorities to implement GPP and initial indications show that this is proving to be an effective approach.



Procurement objectives

PBGB's procurement team demonstrated their commitment to sustainability by including green criteria in the 2014 tender for the provision of cleaning products and services.

A thorough background study was carried out beforehand. The procurement team consulted with counterparts, principally the Ministry of Environment, who had previously used GPP criteria in contracts for cleaning services. The Ministry gave advice on how to green the tender and provided PBGB with sample criteria.

Market consultation was also carried out to see if potential suppliers could fulfill the proposed criteria and to examine the effect that the requirements may have on the cost of the contract.

Criteria used

Both market analysis and final results showed that there are no significant cost implications for a green cleaning service in Estonia.

Criteria included requirements for limiting harmful substances, dosing requirements and waste minimisation.

The three successful contractors are providing cleaning services to a total of 10 locations using ecolabelled products.

Technical specifications:

1. Substances with the risk phrase classification R42 and/or R43 (may cause sensitisation by inhalation and/or skin contact) must not exceed 0.1% by weight of the product.
2. Substances classified as R45, R46, R49, R60 or R61 (carcinogenic or toxic for reproduction) must not exceed 0.01% by weight of the final product.
3. All products must be delivered with clear dosing instructions.
4. A mechanical dosing device must be provided wherever necessary.
5. The contractor must opt for low environmental impact cleaning methods and must ensure that the methods chosen to clean, coat and maintain equipment and furnishings do not pose a danger to persons in the building.
6. The service provider must follow the building's waste management rules (for example, paper must be collected separately).

Environmental impacts

An environmentally responsible cleaning service leads to a healthier working environment for employees due to the reduced use of hazardous chemicals. Specific provisions were made in the technical specifications to limit the use of substances that may cause sensitisation by inhalation and/or skin contact and those that are carcinogenic or toxic for reproduction.

As a result of the improved use of cleaning products and the re-use of materials, resource consumption and waste production is being minimised. Through the use of safer and greener cleaning products and proper dosages, the negative effect on the aquatic environment is decreased.

7. The service provider must use refillable containers (including spray bottles) and minimise the amount of waste generated as part of the provision of the cleaning service.
8. Low environmental impact bathroom products, including liquid soap, two-ply hand towels and toilet tissue must be provided.

Verification: Cleaning products, liquid soap, hand towels and toilet tissue with Type I ecolabels (such as EU Ecolabel, Nordic Swan, Blue Angel or equivalent) will be considered to meet the product-specific criteria.

Results

The procurement was divided into three lots according to geographical region, covering 10 locations in total, all of which are relatively small in size. The duration of the contract is 2 years. There were 6 bidders and the contract was awarded to 3 companies, one for each lot, with the total contract price of 39,000 euros. All bidders met the requirements set out in the procurement documentation and the successful bidders proposed products carrying Type I ecolabels.

There was no significant difference in cost between a regular previous cleaning service, and that which included environmental criteria. The fact that no significant cost premium was implied by the contract was positive news for the procurer, but this was previously assured thanks to the pre-procurement market analysis.

Lessons learned

As a result of this procurement, the Estonian PBGB learned that it is definitely worth introducing such GPP requirements and that the more procurers ask for more environmentally conscious products, the more the providers are likely to offer such products and services as standard.

As a result of this successful procurement, the Estonian PBGB has decided to use these types of criteria in its next cleaning service tender, which is currently being prepared. Some modifications are being considered that will facilitate more effective contract monitoring, such as requesting the list of products the service provider is using and the organisation wants to go further in terms of requiring a description of the proposed green cleaning methodologies.

Staff at the Estonian PBGB had previously heard that procuring products and services with a lower environmental impact can be more expensive than procuring standard products and services. Following their experience with this tender, they would therefore recommend to other public authorities that they engage in market consultation prior to launching a procurement exercise. This will provide the contracting authority with the relevant information needed to determine what is available on the market and also to establish what the market price for an alternative product or service with a lower environmental impact will be. Knowing and understanding the market makes it easier for the public authority to adjust its GPP criteria in accordance with what is available and realistic to request from suppliers, without necessarily paying more.

For more information, please see European GPP criteria for [Cleaning products and Services](#).

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