

BRUSSELS ENVIRONMENT (IBGE), BELGIUM

Background

Brussels Environment (IBGE) is the public administration that manages almost all environmental and energy matters within the boundaries of the Brussels-Capital Region. Designed as a body for research, planning, advice and information, it is also a body for authorisation, monitoring and supervising the compliance of environmental legislation and permits.

The BCR has a sustainable development policy, which includes green purchasing, in place since 2009. Brussels Environment has ample experience in GPP and offered to take the lead with this tender, via a framework contract.

Procurement objectives

The idea behind this stationery framework contract was to allow all departments and agencies in the Brussels-Capital Region (BCR) to access what they needed through an in-house store, which includes the supply of green products. The in-house store has 150 items which are kept permanently on stock; other items can be ordered via the framework contract using a catalogue. A 40% discount on the listed price is given to all orders made from the organisations participating in the framework contract.

An information event was held for all potential clients at the beginning of 2012 when the store first opened.

Criteria used

Subject matter of the contract: Framework contract for 36 months for the running of an in-house store for green stationery and paper. A certain list of products has to be permanently available, while other products can be ordered from a catalogue. All of which cost 40% less than the base price (bulk order reduction).

Technical specifications: A selection of these with environmental relevance are presented below

General:

- The products have to be delivered in solid and recyclable bulk packaging; any individual packaging is to be avoided. The transport packaging has to be standardised and easily separable.
- At least 80% of the packaging has to be made of fibres which can be recycled after use.
- The packaging does not contain any PVC or PVDF.
- All products have to be delivered using re-usable or recyclable timber pallets.

1) For paper, cardboard and products made of paper and cardboard:

Products must be made of fibres containing at least 80% recycled content. These cannot be bleached except using the following processes: TCF (totally chlorine free) or ECF (elemental chlorine free).

Packaging: No extra individual packaging except for the regularly used product packaging; the packaging used for transportation must be comprised of at least 80% recycled fibres; all packaging must be standardised and easily separable; and the packaging shall not contain any polyvinyl chloride (PVC).

2) For A4 and A3 size paper:

- Paper will be made of fibres containing 100% recycled fibres, with at least 80% fibres from post-consumer paper and 20% fibres from post-production.
- Paper shall not contain glyoxal, optical brighteners, ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (EDTA) or diethylene triamine pentaacetic acid (DTPA).
- Paper should be free of synthetic polymers, glue, water-proofing agents or colours considered carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic according to Directive 67/548/CEE.
- Paper may only contain formaldehyde below 1 mg/dm² of paper.
- The pigments and colours used cannot contain any chemical composition of copper, lead, chrome, nickel or aluminium. Nor may it contain more than 20 ppm cadmium or more than 4 ppm mercury, lead, cadmium or chrome.



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These green technical specifications are guaranteed by a type 1 ecolabel such as: the European Ecolabel for copy and printing paper; the Nordic Swan: Nordic Ecolabelling, Ecolabelling of printing Paper or the Blue Angel (German environmental label) for Recycled Paper.

Verification:

The environmental quality has to be verified using (one of) the following documents: the ecolabel attached to the product, a technical sheet for the product prepared by the supplier which states its environmental properties relating to the technical criteria stated in the tender, or any other certificate or result of analysis from a public institute or a accredited laboratory (the certificate has to be valid for at least the current year).

Award criteria: 60% weighting given to price and 40% weighting given to environmental quality, such as for the following: recycled paper for certain paper and cardboard supplies; 100% recycled paper for cardboard files; recycled plastic used for the body of many writing materials.

Results

IBGE began planning the in-house store in 2010. Four bids were presented and the tender was awarded in 2011, with operation beginning in 2012.

Most of the 150 items available on stock (in-house) meet certain green criteria, with the exception of those products where green alternatives are not available, for example, staples.

Following ten months of operation, the store has 27 associated organisations (including regional and municipal bodies) using it, out of a possible 57 organisations. The store has sold €190,000 worth of stationery until now and 56 percent of all the items sold were green.

Due to the large quantities ordered the price of several products was lowered further at the beginning of 2013.

Environmental impacts

The environmental specifications used aim to reduce the environmental impact of the production process and the consumption of paper by:

- Reducing the amount of energy needed for production
- Reducing the amount of environmentally harmful substances used during production
- Preventing waste
- Ensuring the recyclability of the product and its packaging at the end of the life-cycle

Lessons learned

- Monitoring and control procedures (e.g. checking the contents of the orders made by procurers, checking products delivered meet all requirements) are very difficult to set up and implement for such large contracts. These are not in place for this contract – IBGE are working on such procedures for future contracts.
- As it was the first framework contract of this nature, the purchases predicted were underestimated. Had predictions been more realistically estimated, better prices could have been offered by the provider. This information will be reviewed for future purchases.