

Using award criteria to purchase ecolabelled cleaning products

Generalitat Valenciana, Ministry of Finance and Economic Modelling (Spain)

Background

The [Generalitat Valenciana](#) is the government of the Valencian Community, which is the fourth most populous region of Spain with more than five million inhabitants. It is responsible for procuring services and goods for the public sector within the region, and is committed to including environmental criteria in their framework agreements for products and services. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals are used as a framework for the Generalitat Valenciana's work, which is guided by their strategy "[Valencian Strategy for Climate Change and Energy 2030](#)".



Procurement objectives

When the need for a new contract for cleaning services for the administration of the Generalitat, its public institutions and its entities arose, the importance of sustainability was emphasised in the procurement. The EU GPP criteria for [indoor cleaning](#) services were used as the foundation for the sustainability criteria included in the tender.

The procurement was set up as a framework agreement for a two-year service contract (extendable for one more year). Due to the size of the contract, it was decided to split the contract into four lots, three for the different provinces of the Valencian Community (Alicante, Castellón and Valencia), and a fourth lot for the so-called Ciutat administrative 9 d'octubre (administration building). The suppliers could submit offers for one or more lots.

The [tender](#) was launched in September 2018 as an open procedure.

Criteria used

Subject matter of the contract:

Framework agreement for the contracting of cleaning services for the administration of the Generalitat, its public institutions, and its entities.

Award Criteria:

The sustainable performance of the cleaning services was evaluated by five award criteria, which counted for 55 of the 100 points available. Bidders had to score a minimum threshold of 25 points in order to be considered.

1. Use of ecolabelled cleaning products (32 points)

All product units in one of the following product categories have an officially recognised Type I ecolabel, according to [UNE-EN ISO 14024: 2001](#):

- General purpose cleaning products: for indoor hard surfaces (walls, floors and pavements) and other fixed surfaces (tables, shelves, doors and screens) (4 points)
- Cleaning products for bathrooms and kitchens (including descalers, degreasers and dishwashers) (4 points)
- Glass cleaning products (including multi-purpose glass and tile) (4 points)
- Toilet paper (4 points)
- Hand drying paper (4 points)
- Hand soap (4 points)
- Mops and mops (4 points)
- Microfibre cloths (4 points)

Verification: list of all the products to be used will be presented, for each category, detailing their commercial name, manufacturer's name, function and name of the eco-label they hold, accompanied in an orderly and correlative manner, of the corresponding certificates of that label.

2. Use of concentrated undiluted cleaning products (6 points)

All product units of any of the following product categories must have a minimum dilution rate of 1:100:

- General purpose cleaning products for indoor hard surfaces (walls, floors and pavements) and other fixed surfaces (tables, shelves, doors, screens, etc.) (2 points)
- Cleaning products for bathrooms and kitchens (including descalers, degreasers and dishwashers) (2 points)
- Glass cleaning products (including multi-purpose glass and tile) (2 points)

Verification: A list of all cleaning products to be used should be provided for each category. Describing trade name, name of the manufacturer, function and dilution rate, accompanied in an orderly and correlative manner, by its corresponding supplier's technical data sheets, showing this dilution rate.

3. Use of paper from sustainable managed forests or recycled sources (8 points)

All product units of the listed product categories should have a minimum content of 70% of sustainable recycled and/or virgin fibres (covered by valid sustainable forest management certificates), with the following assessment:

- Toilet paper (4 points)
- Hand drying paper (4 points)

Verification: For each category a list of all products to be used shall be provided, detailing its trade name, name of the manufacturer, percentage of sustainable recycled and/or virgin fibres, and the name of the certificate stating that the product complies with this criterion, accompanied by the relevant certificates:

- valid chain of custody certificate, issued by a third party certification scheme, such as [PEFC or FSC certification systems](#), or equivalent.
- or an officially recognised Type I ecolabel certificate (according to [UNE-EN ISO 14024:2001](#)), which includes this requirement.

“The advantage of using the GPP criteria is the guarantee that the criteria are based on scientific assessment studies of the environmental impacts of the cleaning services for each part of its life cycle (e.g. Life Cycle Assessment studies) and consider different environmental aspects such as air quality, water quality, soil protection, waste reduction, energy savings, natural resource management, GWP, ozone layer protection, environmental safety, noise and biodiversity”

4. Use of recycled or compostable plastic waste bags (4 points)

All garbage bags comply with the resistance requirements of the [UNE-EN 13592:2017](#) standard (Plastic bags for the collection of domestic waste. Types, requirements and test methods), or equivalent, and containing at least 80% recycled post-consumer plastic or are fully compostable in accordance with the requirements of the standard [UNE-EN 13432:2001](#) or equivalent.

Verification: A list of all the products to be used shall be provided, detailing their trade name, name of the manufacturer and whether they have a Type I ecolabel including this requirement, accompanied by either the label certificates, or a declaration of conformity ensuring compliance with this requirement and the above standards.

5. Energy efficiency of vacuum cleaners (5 points)¹

Vacuum cleaners are classified with an energy efficiency of class A (for those purchased before 1 September 2017) or class A+ (for those purchased after 1 September 2017):

- If 81 % to 100 % of the total number of vacuum cleaners to be used to perform tasks related to the contract is met: 5 points
- If 61 % to 80 % of the total number of vacuum cleaners is met: 4 points
- If 41 % to 60 % of the total number of vacuum cleaners is met: 3 points
- If 21 % to 40 % of the total number of vacuum cleaners is met: 2 points
- If 1 % to 20 % of the total number of vacuum cleaners is met: 1 point

Verification: A record sheet shall be provided for each vacuum cleaner which complies with the [Delegated Regulation No 665/2013](#) or equivalent documentation, together with a complete list of the vacuum cleaners used in the provision of the cleaning service.

Contract performance clauses:

- The contractor must keep records, available on request of the contracting authority, on the following: consumed quantity of all cleaning products, with their corresponding updated safety data sheets, their technical dates (with instructions for application, use and dosage) and verification of the requirements established in the technical specifications.
- Training received by cleaning staff (on cleaning products, saving water and energy, waste, health and safety).

Results

There were many interested bidders in the cleaning service contract, and about 17 offers were received for each lot. A total of 18 suppliers were able to qualify for the tender, scoring high enough on the environmental criteria. The service contract was awarded to the best valued offers in June 2019. In general, the selected suppliers had the highest score on the environmental award criteria. Most of the ecolabelled products offered by the bidders held the EU Ecolabels, although all Type I ecolabels were accepted.

The estimated contract value is € 33,239,151.

¹ Energy labelling for vacuum cleaners has been annulled in 2019, EU Regulation (EU) 665/2013 is no longer valid

Environmental impacts

The main environmental impacts associated with cleaning services are ecotoxicity and human toxicity from chemicals in the products and production of cleaning products and accessories, as well as energy and water consumption for the cleaning operation. These issues were addressed in the award criteria, giving the suppliers with environmental focus an opportunity to gain extra points. The criteria on ecolabelling were given a high weighting as ecolabelled cleaning accessories can provide a reliable way of lowering impacts associated with cleaning services. Ecolabel type I puts strict limitations on the chemical composition and formulations of products, and ecolabelled accessories are durable and reduces water and cleaning product use.

Energy efficient vacuum cleaners can reduce the total energy consumption up to 50%, depending on the cleaning situation, e.g. if floor cleaning is a major task. The suppliers were also encouraged to use undiluted products as these reduce emissions due to lower packaging material requirements and fuel use for transportation.

Lessons learned

The advantage of using the GPP criteria is the guarantee that the criteria are based on scientific assessment studies of the environmental impacts of the cleaning services for each part of its life cycle (e.g. Life Cycle Assessment studies) and consider different environmental aspects such as air quality, water quality, soil protection, waste reduction, energy savings, natural resource management, GWP, ozone layer protection, environmental safety, noise and biodiversity.

The overall aim of using the criteria is to support as much as possible the incorporation of requirements that will support efforts to encourage a shift towards a circular economy approach. With our procurement we want to make sure that the cleaning services are executed in a way that reduces the associated environmental impacts. The purpose of these criteria is to get cleaning services with the best environmental performance and promote a more environmentally friendly public consumption.

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For related information, please see European GPP criteria for [indoor cleaning services](#) and the [Technical Background Report](#).