The European Ecolabel in public procurement – Case study series

Avigliana – Cleaning Services

Introduction
The Municipality of Avigliana, Italy, successfully tendered for cleaning services in 2007, including requirements on the cleaning products to be used based on the European Ecolabel criteria. The activity took place within the context of the ongoing APE project, co-ordinated by the Province of Torino and ARPA Piemonte, the regional environment agency for the Piedmont region.

Implementation
Within the tendering process, European Ecolabel criteria were introduced into both the specifications and also the award criteria.

The specifications (i.e. minimum criteria) included restrictions on certain chemical substances used which were derived from the European Ecolabel criteria – covering, for example, products and ingredients classified as harmful to human health or the environment, and the bioaccumulation potential of preservatives, amongst other aspects. It was clearly stated in the specifications that products carrying the European Ecolabel would be considered in compliance with the criteria.

Additionally, in the evaluation/award stage of the tender, environmental aspects were given a weighting of 20% in the evaluation (with 50% for price, and 30% for other aspects). Within the environmental award criteria, products which met the requirements of a Type-I ecolabel (such as the European Ecolabel), were awarded additional points. Again, the European Ecolabel was referred to directly in the wording as one possible means of proving compliance.

The tender also included other environmental aspects, for example requiring the winning contractor to closely monitor and report on the quantities of detergents used in carrying out the service, and further award criteria relating to the packaging and transportation of the products used.

Context
The APE project was an initiative established in 2003 by the Province of Torino and ARPA Piemonte, and was in part driven by the revised European Procurement Directives containing a direct mention of the possibilities for using ecolabels in public procurement.

Currently 25 organisations in the Piedmont region participate in the project, including 9 municipalities ranging in size from the City of Torino, with a population of nearly 1 million, the Municipality of Avigliana, with a population of 10,000.

Common environmental criteria for tendering certain products and services are developed by the group, and each participating organisation must establish a politically approved green procurement policy, which contains procurement criteria within an annex.

In developing the criteria, if the product is covered by the European Ecolabel then the criteria are based on these. These criteria are used for a number of reasons: a sound scientific basis to their preparation, easing the verification process, and the group’s principle that they should be consistent with criteria used elsewhere rather than developing new approaches.
In addition to the activity covered here, a number of other tendering actions have also used European Ecolabel criteria, including tenders for office paper and envelopes, hard floor coverings, and other cleaning service contracts.

In 2007, at least €12 million was spent by the participating organisations on products meeting the APE-developed criteria.

**Results achieved and lessons learned**

The tender was successful with all the products used by the winning bidder were compliant with the criteria, and the majority in fact carry the European Ecolabel.

In price terms, the municipality reported no difference in cost between this, and previous cleaning contracts. This is also indicative of the relatively small role played by the products used in cleaning services in the overall budget for the services, with personnel costs dominating.

The tender has also raised the interest of municipalities within the APE project, and further afield in using the same approach. The municipality of Colorno, for example, in the Province of Parma has used the same criteria when tendering itself.

In the past year in the Piedmont region, three companies have obtained the European Ecolabel for cleaning products, including for professional use. The Italian body responsible for the European Ecolabel in the country (APAT – the national environmental protection agency) considers green public procurement (GPP) to be one of the key drivers in the large number of Italian companies obtaining the label.

**Further information**

For more information please contact:

Enrico Degeorgis
Arpa Piemonte

[e.degiorgis@arpa.piemonte.it](mailto:e.degiorgis@arpa.piemonte.it)

+39 011 196 80 179