

# **Annex I.A**

## ***TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS***

**Open procedure**

**Green Public Procurement Helpdesk for EU Institutions and -Bodies**

**EMAS-2020-003**

## 1. TITLE OF THE CONTRACT

Operation of a Green Public Procurement Helpdesk for the following EU-Institutions and -Bodies:

- The European Parliament (EP), as the lead Institution
- The Council's Secretariat (CONSILIUM)
- The Committee of the Regions (ECOR)
- The Court of Justice of the European Union (CURIA)
- The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX)
- The European Central Bank (ECB)
- The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP)
- The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)
- The European Commission (EC)
- The European Court of Auditors (ECA)
- The European Defence Agency (EDA)
- The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- The European External Action Service (EEAS)
- The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)
- The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EUROFOUND)
- The European Global Navigation Satellite Systems Agency (GSA)
- The European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA)
- The European Investment Bank (EIB)
- The European Medicines Agency (EMA)
- The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA)
- The European Training Foundation (ETF)
- The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (EUROPOL)
- The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)

## 2. BACKGROUND

Green public procurement (GPP) is a way of pursuing goals set out in the environmental policy. It is an established practice in Europe, where the European Commission defines it as *'a process whereby public authorities seek to procure goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle when compared to goods, services and works with the same primary function that would otherwise be procured.'*

The aim of GPP is to influence the market for environmental benefit. Public sector spending is an important part of the economy in many countries. In EU, in 2017, the public purchase of goods and services was estimated to EUR 2 trillion or 13.3% of GDP. By using this purchasing power for goods and services with lower environmental impact, public authorities can influence sustainable production and consumption. It can help stimulate a critical mass of demand for more sustainable goods and services which otherwise would be difficult to get onto the market. GPP is therefore a strong stimulus for eco-innovation. Public authorities increasingly use GPP to contribute to sustainable development by also including social aspects.

Because of the strong focus of the EU on sustainability policies, the concrete actions of its institutions and bodies should be exemplary in that domain. For these actors, Public

Procurement appears to be the most obvious and efficient aspect to leverage in order to achieve this exemplarity.

To be effective, GPP requires the inclusion of clear and verifiable social and environmental criteria for products and services in the public procurement process. The European Institutions and Bodies have developed guidance in this area. The challenge of furthering take-up by more public sector bodies so that GPP becomes common practice still remains.

The following have been identified among the obstacles to applying GPP:

- Insufficient awareness regarding the existing sustainable solutions, due to lack of necessary resources for market analysis
- Lack of knowledge on existing sustainability criteria and how to verify them in tenders
- Lack of awareness of the benefits of green and sustainable procurement
- Insufficient access to legal and technical expertise and to GPP help resources.

In the wake of the implementation of the 2014 Directive on Public Procurement<sup>1</sup>, the existence of these obstacles justified the need for reliable and efficient expertise on the matter, hence the setup of a GPP helpdesk managed by an external contractor.. The current GPP helpdesk contract ran for the period of 2017 to 2021 and will end March 2021.

The above mentioned challenges and advantages related to GPP are similar in all EU Institutions and Bodies. Hence, the decision was taken to extend the service of the GPP helpdesk to interested EU Institutions and Bodies.

EU Institutions and Bodies have similar logistical and service needs to run their operations. By providing the same shared GPP Helpdesk service to several interlocutors, all participating Institutions and Bodies are bound to benefit from each other's experience and share best practices.

The operation of GPP Helpdesk will focus on the areas listed below in all participating Institutions and Bodies:

- Cleaning products and services
- Food and Catering
- Furniture
- IT and Imaging Equipment<sup>2</sup>
- Lighting
- Paper
- Vehicles and Transport
- Sanitary and Water Equipment
- Waste Management
- Textiles
- Office supplies<sup>3</sup>
- Refurbishment<sup>4</sup>
- Maintenance of green areas and interior hydro culture plants

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement

<sup>2</sup> e.g. Printers, desktops, servers, telecommunication equipment, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Excluding IT consumables and paper

<sup>4</sup> e.g. Supplies and services for renovation and fitting-in premises, like: paintings, floor and wall coverings, metal structures, masonry, wood joinery, etc.

The support given should include, but not be limited to the use of GPP selection and exclusion criteria, green labels and certificates, evaluation of tenderers, life cycle analysis, contract performance clauses and monitoring contract compliance and performance.

GPP Helpdesk operations should also cover other dimensions of sustainability, especially social aspects of public procurement.

### **3. OBJECTIVES AND NATURE OF THE CONTRACT**

The objective of this service contract is to provide efficient, direct and practical helpdesk service to assist staff dealing with public procurement in relation to the implementation of the GPP approach in the participating Institutions and Bodies.

It aims at providing support to procurement units and to staff dealing with procurement procedures in the participating Institutions and Bodies to integrate green criteria into all stages of their procurement procedures, thus contributing to the reduction of all participating Institutions and Bodies' environmental impact and promoting sustainable consumption.

The requirements of the present technical specifications are **minimum requirements**.

The items proposed by the tenderer in their bid in view of exceeding the minimum requirements outlined in the Technical Specifications shall be considered in the awarding of the contract on the basis of awarding quality criteria defined in the administrative clauses of the specifications. During the execution of the contract, the Contractor shall be responsible for providing all the additional items proposed in their bid, including those exceeding the minimum requirements.

### **4. TYPE OF CONTRACT**

Framework contract of one year renewable three times (implying a potential maximum total period for contract performance of four years).

### **5. TARGET GROUP**

All staff involved in public procurement procedures of the participating EU-Institutions and -Bodies.

### **6. DESCRIPTION OF TASKS TO BE CARRIED OUT BY CONTRACTOR**

GPP Helpdesk is envisioned as an addition to the support on financial matters provided to all participating EU-Institutions and -Bodies (by their internal financial service, helpdesk, environmental/sustainability experts or similar) with focus on provision of efficient and quality support to staff dealing with procurement procedures in their daily work in relation to greening tender procedures in all participating Institutions and Bodies. Contractor will secure both **general** and **customized** support to staff involved in procurement procedures in all participating Institutions and Bodies.

The Contractor must have appropriate human and technical resources to process all enquiries related to green and social aspects of procurement received directly from staff in participating Institutions and Bodies, replying by telephone or electronic mail in a timely and reliable manner.

The GPP Helpdesk will process enquiries (receiving, dealing with, and replying, via telephone and electronic mail), collect good practices and frequently asked questions and compile them into a knowledge database.

The contractor will set-up and manage a tool for storing and consulting the database, making the content accessible to all EU-Institutions and -Bodies. The content of the existing database will be transferred to the contractor who should upload it to the new database under the following categories; market research, presentations, good practices, frequently asked questions and tender documents related to specific procurement procedures that the participating Institutions and Bodies have sent to the Helpdesk for the purpose of sharing best practices.

This database will be the property of the European Parliament. The transfer of ownership of assigned rights and the various methods of exploiting those rights shall be free. The database will have to be transferred to the EP at the latest 15 days before termination of the contract.

Inquiries are to be handled in writing by electronic mail or orally by telephone. The requests and replies made must be logged, archived and reported.

All replies provided by the Helpdesk to its users should be specific, supportive and of high quality. They should relate directly to the needs of the enquirers and propose adequate solutions to their problems. The Contractor shall keep a record of all requests and replies.

It is generally not within the competence of the contractor to advise enquirers on policy issues or to interpret the various Regulations which define the policy instruments, but should they be required to do so by a particular client, this type of request should be dealt with in cooperation and consultation with the responsible services of respective participating Institutions and Bodies.

Helpdesk tasks will be carried out in English and French.

Helpdesk operation will be based in contractor's premises. There is a potential for occasional field work, like giving presentations, in Brussels and Luxembourg, if needed. The purpose of the presentations is increase knowledge of GPP among staff of the EU-Institutions and -Bodies.

### **Related initiatives**

In view of achieving possible synergies with other initiatives currently on-going at European level, the contractor shall follow developments, in particular, opportunities for presentations and other updates related to GPP from the following stakeholders:

- DG Environment of the European Commission  
[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/index_en.htm)
- Procura Plus  
<http://www.procuraplus.org/>

## **6.1. Reply to inquiries (35 %)<sup>5</sup>**

### **6.1.1 Answering to written inquiries by electronic mail**

The Helpdesk will operate a functional inbox to receive all written inquiries related to the green public procurement from staff in all participating Institutions and/or Bodies. Questions received will be answered within specific time frames and classified as category A, B and C according to the explanation below. All questions received under A-/B-type should be answered within 24 hours from its receipt. Category C request must be answered within 72 hours from its receipt.

Inquiries may consist of specific questions related to the drafting of environmental aspects in the tender documents or related to the evaluation of the environmental aspects of offers received during a tender procedure.

In either of the following special cases, the pertinent elements of the reply shall be added by the Contractor to the knowledge database, for future use.

#### **Category A: Standard answers**

A standard answer to an enquiry already exists, or needs only a minor modification, and can be prepared on average within 15 minutes.

##### Actions required for Category A requests:

- 1) Analyse the question and dispatch notification of receipt.
- 2) Refer to the knowledge database, and make necessary modifications to the standard answer
- 3) Dispatch the answer through the appropriate channel
- 4) 4) Send evaluation form to inquirer

#### **Category B: Specific answers**

A personalised reply can be prepared on the basis of existing documentation and other information at the disposal of the Helpdesk, requiring an average processing time of 30 to 60 minutes.

##### Actions required for Category B requests:

- 1) Analyse the question and dispatch notification of receipt
- 2) Refer to available documentation and other relevant information sources.
- 3) Dispatch the answer through the appropriate channel
- 4) Send the evaluation form to inquirer

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<sup>5</sup> The percentage following the heading for each task in the lists represents a general estimate of the proportion of time and resources the Contractor is expected to devote to each of the task. This percentage is therefore also an indication of the relative importance of individual tasks in the framework of contract execution.

## Category C - Complex answers

Queries that cannot be answered within the standard documents, prepared by or available to the Contractor and, requiring more than 1 hour but no more than 3 hours to be answered.

### Actions required for Category C requests:

- 1) Analyse the question and dispatch notification of receipt
- 2) Identify the contacts for help with the research, if necessary, and perform the research on all non-standard aspects of the question(s)
- 3) Prepare reply based on information researched by the Contractor and approved by the responsible service of the Institution and/or Body concerned and/or the information received directly from the concerned responsible service
- 4) Dispatch answer by appropriate channel
- 5) Send the evaluation form to inquirer

Should the preparation of answer to the question from Category C require more than 3 hours and foresees need for involvement of external resources<sup>6</sup>, it will be upgraded into case and treated under customized service (under the conditions set out in point 6.2. below)

### **6.1.2. Answering to telephone inquiries**

Any telephone enquiries shall be answered directly during working hours of the Helpdesk, which shall be every **Monday through Friday from 9:00am - 4:00pm**, with the exception of the office closing days of the participating Institutions and Bodies<sup>7</sup>. In the exceptional circumstance of the unavailability of the Helpdesk, an answering machine will be available 24h/day and a message will be taken and responded to within 24 hours.

Telephone calls where a reply can be given immediately during the call shall be considered as category A, standard answers (in the context of the classification outlined above).

For requests involving more detailed or lengthy answers, a contact address should be registered, the question recorded, and the inquiry then handled as a written request, of category A, B or C as appropriate.

### **6.2. Provide customized support on development of green tender specifications (50%)**

In addition to handling of GPP related inquiries (6.1), Contractor shall provide **customized support** to procurement officers on the basis of an adequate methodology (*tenderers should describe this methodology in their offer; 3 pages maximum*) with development of green and social tender specifications, primarily, but not limited, to the 13 product groups mentioned above.

For successful and highly professional support with development of tender specifications, the contractor shall have access to a "List of Experts"<sup>8</sup> with profound knowledge in areas of environmental and social aspects of procurement which will provide highly focused, confidential and punctual support to procurement officers in charge of the particular tender. List of experts shall be included in the offer. The list will specify the name, origin, affiliation, field(s) of expertise, years of experience, and languages spoken for each expert listed.

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<sup>6</sup> Experts from Roster of Experts

<sup>7</sup> Contractor will be provided with official calendar for all participating Institutions and Bodies every year.

<sup>8</sup> Experts can be external and engaged based on need for particular task or part of the task within the Contract.

Procurement officers in all participating Institution and Bodies may request the following **types** of support from the contractor:

- **Standard support** - basic consultations, advice, guidance, market research - maximum 4h (1/2 working day) of work/research per request
- **Extended support** - maximum 8 h (1 working day) of work/research per request
- **Case based support** for more comprehensive tenders of higher value and ecologic impact - 24 h (3 working days) of work/research per request

Customized support is envisioned as an important means of greening participating Institutions and Bodies' public procurement procedures and will be offered to all staff dealing with procurement procedures based on needs and calendar of each service, whenever possible<sup>9</sup>. Request for customized support shall be sent directly to the Contractor. However, requests will be processed only upon approval by the responsible service of the participating EU-Institution and -Body concerned for provision of customised support.

### **6.3 Provision of market research on new sustainable products/services (5%)**

Staff dealing with procurement procedures should be kept up-to-date with new developments regarding particular product groups of their interest, innovative solutions and green variants.

The contractor should propose the methodology for delivery of the research documentation on the latest innovations in the field of GPP (2 pages maximum). The documentation should focus on, but not be restricted to, innovations in the field of the 13 priority products.

The contractor shall finally determine, prior to the signature of the contract and in cooperation with the EMAS Unit in the EP, the most appropriate methodology and frequency for disseminating this information (minimum twice a year).

Possible means of disseminating information shall include as e.g. targeted information leaflets, newsletters, targeted mail and email, press communications, etc.

Each participating Institution and Body shall undertake an in-depth needs assessment of all DGs, identifying in particular all stakeholders, their fields of interest and needs. Special attention would be paid to greening of tenders related to 13 identified priority product groups (Cleaning, Food and Catering, Furniture, IT and Imaging Equipment, Lighting, Paper, Vehicles and Transport, Sanitary and Water Equipment, Waste Management, Refurbishment and Maintenance of green areas and interior hydro culture plants).

Based on the prior needs assessment and planning, the contractor will provide interested parties with timely and accurate information concerning the various instruments for greening of public procurement (GPP toolkit updates, EMAS, EcoLabels) and help them with market research as needed.

### **6.4 Give presentations at inter-institutional events (5%)**

The contractor shall organize two events per year with presentations on sustainable public

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<sup>9</sup> Cases of previously unforeseen but ecologically impacting procedures will be dealt on a case by case basis, based on request by services concerned and the approval from the EMAS Unit of the Institution or Body concerned

procurement. The first two presentations should be held already in 2021. The first event will have the aim of presenting the service of the GPP Helpdesk to procurement officers of all participating Institutions and Bodies. Presentations will take place on the premises of participating EU Institutions and Bodies in conference rooms equipped with videoconference equipment.

For each event, a theme related to sustainability will be proposed by the contractor and approved by the leading Institution, after consultation of participating EU-Institutions and -Bodies. Presentations should promote a common approach to GPP by informing and educating staff on recent developments in GPP and sharing of best practices.

#### **6.5. Establishing and maintaining the knowledge database (5%)**

The successful tenderer will take over the content and management of the knowledge database from the current operator.

The management of the database will include the following:

- A list of good practices and ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ (FAQs) (points 6.1 and 6.2)
- The Contractor shall establish and regularly update a list of FAQs in order to provide (regularly) updated answers to standard enquiries. FAQs section shall consist of genuine but anonymous examples catalogued by Institution or Body/DG/Directorate/Service concerned/product type or group/year and keywords. It should be easily searchable.
- Market research on new sustainable products/services (point 6.3)
- Presentations held at inter-institutional events (point 6.4)
- Tender documents related to specific procurement procedures that the participating Institutions and Bodies have sent to the Helpdesk for the purpose of sharing best practices.

The database has to be user-friendly, secured and accessible to staff designated by the EU participating Institutions and Bodies.

The tenderer must describe the features and functioning of knowledge database created for the needs of the participating Institutions and Bodies as outlined above and its transfer to EP upon contract expiry.

Content and management of the knowledge database will be shifted from the contractor to the EMAS Unit at the European Parliament in April 2022.

#### **Data protection**

The knowledge database will be stored in the EU and the service provider will be bound by EU law. In case the service provider uses subcontractors or third party services, those should offer the same guarantees. The service provider should be accountable for them, and should be the sole point of contact for conflict resolution, should any arise. The service provider should detail their guarantees concerning data availability, continuity, and integrity, including the possibility to retrieve the data after an incident, natural catastrophe, or end of business. Security information, such as EP system passwords or EP user credentials can only be stored in systems or devices where the EP holds full control. If the EP wants to conduct a security audit of the systems and processes involved in the management of its data (for example, if required in the context of an incident or of larger scale audit), the service provider will agree to facilitate the

audit.

The knowledge database will contain information of purely technical nature and only generic questions and answers will be stored, avoiding any reference to personnel data.

## 7. ESTIMATION OF THE VOLUME OF THE CONTRACT

The estimated number of inquiries (art. 6.1) per year and per participating Institution and Body is as follows:

Type of questions	Average of occurrences per Institution/ Body	Average total occurrences per year for all 23 Institutions/Bodies	Total hours
Cat.A (within 15')	1	23	6
Cat.B (within 60')	2	46	46
Cat.C (within 180')	4	92	276
<b>Total</b>			<b>328</b>

The estimated volume of Customized services (art.6.2) per year and per Institution and Body is as follows:

Type	Average of occurrences per Institution/Body	Average total occurrences per year for all 23 Institutions/Bodies	Total hours
Standard (4 hours)	0.5	11.5	46
Extended (8 hours)	0.5	11.5	92
Case-based (16 hours)	0.5	11.5	184
<b>Total</b>			<b>322</b>

Estimated volume of Market research services (art 6.3) per year:

Type	Total hours
Market research	<b>50</b>

The total estimated number of hours from the above tables is **700 hours per year**. The estimated quantities for each type of service are subject to change and may increase or decrease over the course of execution of the contract. **An additional 100 hour** of services exceeding the above-mentioned quantities in a given year can be invoiced separately in addition to the flat rate. Any instance of additional services will need the approval of the responsible service in the respective participating Institutions and Bodies. The EMAS Unit in the European Parliament will be informed of all approvals.

## 8. DELIVERABLES AND REPORTING

- 1) The contractor shall provide quarterly an executive summary report (interim technical report) concerning the execution of the contract, and containing statistical trends with explanatory text. The data in the executive summary report should at least cover contacts/queries/tasks performed, which will be classified per month, per Institution or

Body, per product group and per means of contact (telephone, mail, email). The data should be illustrated in graphs whenever possible.

In addition to the synthetic presentation of the helpdesk operation, data should also be analysed and presented separately for activities specified in each of the sections (6.1-6.4), with particular emphasis on activities under Sections 6.1. 'Handling GPP related inquiries' and 6.2. 'Customized support for development of green tender specifications'.

The quarterly reports shall be delivered electronically by email to the European Parliament for approval. These reports shall summarize all the activities performed over a quarter.

- 2) The contractor shall provide a final execution report (final technical report) concerning the execution of the contract no later than 1 week before the contract end date. The final report shall be structured in the same manner as the quarterly reports described under point 1 of this chapter, but it will contain the data for the entire contract period and more detailed and exhaustive written explanations. The final technical report shall be delivered to the European Parliament in electronic form,

The contractor shall deliver a draft version of the final execution report to the European Parliament 4 weeks before the end of the contract in electronic form, and will receive comments and suggestions to be taken into account when producing the final version of the report.

- 3) The contractor shall make available to the European Parliament a knowledge database in electronic form, which will be searchable according to multiple parameters, and in a user friendly form. The database will contain the following elements: answers to frequently asked questions, the market research on new sustainable products/services and the power point presentations at inter-institutional events. This database will be the property of the European Parliament. The database will have to be operationally transferred to the EP at the latest 15 days before termination of the contract.

### **General considerations for reporting**

It is underlined that all reports have to be written in clear, high quality English. Reports should be concise, focussing on main messages and use effective layout and style to enable easy absorption of information. Each report will include an up-to-date and detailed table illustrating the use of the contract's budget, broken down per participating Institutions and -Bodies activity.

### **Meetings between the Contractor and the EMAS Unit in the EP**

The contractor shall organise, in close co-ordination with the EMAS Unit in the EP, a kick-off meeting of the project at European Parliament premises<sup>10</sup> in Brussels, at the latest two weeks after the contract enters into force. One representative of each participating Institution and Body will take part in the meeting.

A final meeting will be held in Brussels no later than 4 weeks before the end of the contract period. During this meeting the contractor will present achievements, lessons learned during

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<sup>10</sup> It is possible, as a function of the situation with the current Covid-19 pandemic, that the meeting will be organised by videoconference instead of in person, at the request of the EP's EMAS Unit

the contract execution, and feedback received from the participating Institutions' and Bodies' services.

The contractor shall take minutes during all meetings and send them to the EMAS Unit in the EP who will dispatch the document to all participating Institutions and Bodies for comments and approval within 2 weeks after the meeting.