



Implementation example for the CFIT Commitment

“We challenge the need to buy and we replace only what needs to be replaced”



Buy less

Case study

Avoiding unnecessary accessories when buying monitors

Swiss Government | Switzerland

Based on 2021 procurement

Impact categories:



Product categories:



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This case illustrates elements of the following CFIT Commitment:

- We challenge the need to buy and we replace only what needs to be replaced.

The purpose of this series of cases is to illustrate what the implementation of commitments of the CFIT framework for circular and fair procurement of ICT can look like. Please note that these case descriptions focus on one element of a tender or process which generally includes many more sustainability requirements

Avoiding unnecessary accessories when buying monitors

Introduction

In the role as the central procurement agency for the Swiss Federal Administration, the Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics (FOBL) was commissioned to issue a call for tenders for the procurement of computer monitors in 2021. The intended outcome of this call was a framework contract for the supply of computer monitors to the Swiss Federal Government[1]. The duration of the contract is approximately 3.5 years (until June 2025) and it has an estimated budget of 150.9 million CHF (152 million euros) for the whole contract period.

To comply with various commitments of the Federal Government regarding sustainable procurement and environmental performance[2], the tender documents included strict sustainability criteria to ensure the purchase of goods that would meet high economic, environmental, and social requirements throughout their entire life cycle. All these environmental and social requirements had to be met as technical requirements.

This document highlights avoiding the supply of accessories (mainly cables) which are not needed by the user, one of the many sustainability requirements in this tender. This requirement was included in the call for tenders to ultimately reduce raw materials consumption and waste generation. It also contributes to the optimisation of IT managers' experience; it avoids confusion on which cables need to be used and reduces storage needs. It also reduces manufacturers' costs and signals to the industry that only materials that are actually needed should be supplied.

What was implemented?

To avoid the supply of the full set of accessories (and their packaging) that normally comes with new equipment and limit delivery to those accessories that actually needed, the following award criterion was introduced:

Reduction of raw materials: accessories (1000 points)

The manufacturer confirms to not include, from the factory, unnecessary accessories such as connecting cables, accessories' plastic bags, plastic twist ties, etc. at the request of the buyer.

Examples of unnecessary connecting cables are German power cables (so-called Schuko plugs), 3.5 audio cables, and HDMI, DVI-D and VGA cables.

Proof shall be deemed to have been provided if the offer explicitly confirms that unnecessary accessories and their packaging will not be included in the product package during the entire framework agreement.

This criterion represented 6% of the quality award criteria (and 2.4% of all evaluation criteria). The tender was evaluated on the basis of the Best Price Quality Ratio (40% quality vs. 60% price). Overall, 16 500 points (40%) were awarded for quality criteria. Out of these, 16 000 points related to ecological and social criteria.

How was it put in place?

- The first step was to consult the government's internal regulation PO25 defining the minimum environmental criteria for the procurement of ICT infrastructure, which all tenders of Federal agencies must comply with [3].
- In addition an internal and external market analysis and market consultation was conducted. These were used to identify the latest improvements and advancements, and find out if there were any updates in the latest ecolabel standards that could be relevant for the tender. This process took three to four months.

- One of the issues that emerged from the analysis concerned the need to increase resource efficiency by avoiding unnecessary accessories and procuring only what was really needed. Practice had shown that certain cables –especially the German power cable (Schuko) and DVI-D cable – as well as paper manuals and driver CDs (all packed in plastic bags) were never used, but always enclosed in the product packages. Furthermore, some clients mistakenly requested support from FOITT when they could not connect all the cables provided in the packages. Also, one of the manufacturers interviewed during the market analysis mentioned that power cables were always added at the end, so they could be easily omitted.
- Based on the information gathered, the criterion on unnecessary accessories was included as an award criterion. This was the first time this was introduced in a tendering process, because of which there was a desire to confirm that the market would respond positively, not only based on the market consultation responses, but in the actual tendering phase as well.
- In the tender documents both the specifications and the means of proof for each criterion were included (see previous page).

Who was involved?

- The Federal Office of Information Technology, Systems and Telecommunication was responsible for defining the tender specifications, the contract, and conducting spot checks.
- The Federal Office of Buildings and Logistics was in charge of the tendering process and is responsible for the strategic monitoring of the contract.
- The Federal Office for the Environment – supported by an external IT sustainability consultant – helped selecting and defining the environmental criteria.
- Several manufacturers participated in the market consultations.

What were the outcomes and lessons learned?

Outcomes

- In general, suppliers responded positively to the tender, mentioning that the document was clear and criteria easy to understand and respond to.
- Three out of the four bidders received points for the criterion on unnecessary accessories. According to FOITT, the fact that bidders were brand owners and not resellers, and the fact that a preliminary market consultation had taken place before the publication of the tender, could explain the positive response.
- Currently, only the power cable and the display port cable are required for monitors. In the exceptional cases that buyers (i.e. the different federal departments and offices participating in the framework contract) required additional cables, they had to order them separately.



Before 2021



After 2021

Lessons

- Starting the process early generates time for the internal consultation and external market analysis and consultations, which is key when introducing new sustainability criteria in any tendering process.
- The favourable reception of this criterion in an actual call for tender is a positive result, prompting replication in upcoming ICT calls for tenders.
- There is still some progress to be made as some cables are not excluded at the factory, but removed by suppliers before delivery. However, the sector is beginning to change and manufacturers are already adapting their processes, so this practice is expected to become commonplace in the future.
- Having the requirements followed by the means of proof in the tender, makes the tendering process easier to both the procurer and the bidder as all parties know the information to be provided.

References:

[1] See published notice in the EU Tenders Electronic Daily platform ([145373-2022](#))

[2] Such as the Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 ([DE](#), [FR](#), [IT](#)) and the Procurement strategy of the federal administration 2021-2030 ([DE](#), [FR](#), [IT](#)).

[3] [PO25 - Ressourcen- und Umweltstandard für die Beschaffung der IKT-Infrastruktur](#)

Disclaimer:

This case has been described to provide inspiration. If, after careful reflection, this example offers added value to your procurement practises, adapt it to fit your organisation and make sure it is compliant with the applicable rules and regulations for procurement.