ANNEX IV
Procurement by grant Beneficiaries in the context of European Union external actions

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

If the implementation of an Action requires procurement by the Beneficiary, the contract must be awarded to the most economically advantageous tender (i.e., the tender offering the best price-quality ratio), in accordance with the principles of transparency and fair competition for potential contractors and taking care to avoid any conflicts of interest.

To this end, the Beneficiary must comply with the rules set out in sections 2 to 7 below, subject to section 8.

In the event of failure to comply with the rules referred to above, expenditure on the operations in question is not eligible for Community financing.

The Commission will carry out ex post checks on Beneficiaries' compliance with the rules.

The provisions of this Annex apply mutatis mutandis to contracts to be concluded by the Beneficiary's partners.

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR CONTRACTS

2.1. The nationality rule

Participation in tender procedures administered by the Beneficiary is open on equal terms to all natural and legal persons of the Member States and the States and territories of regions expressly covered and/or allowed by the Financial Regulation, the basic legislation or other instruments governing the aid programme under which the grant is being financed. Tenderers must state, in the tender, the country of which they are nationals by presenting the usual proof of nationality under their national legislation.

This rule does not apply to the experts proposed by service providers taking part in tender procedures or service contracts financed by the grant.

2.2. The rule of origin

If the basic act or the other instruments applicable to the programme under which the grant is financed contain rules of origin for supplies acquired by the Beneficiary in the context of the grant, the tenderer must state the origin of supplies. For the purpose of this annex, the term "origin" is defined in articles 23 and 24 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 2913/92 of 12 October 1992 establishing the Community Customs Code and other Community legislation governing non-preferential origin. Contractors must present proof of origin to the Beneficiary no later than when the first invoice is presented, for equipments and vehicles of a unit cost on purchase of more than € 5 000. The certificate of origin must be made out by the competent authorities of the country of origin of the supplies and must comply with the rules laid down by the relevant Community legislation.

Where the basic act or other instruments applicable to the programme under which the grant is financed do not contain rules of origin for supplies acquired by the Beneficiary in the context of the grant, the origin of those supplies is free and no certificate of origin is required.

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2.3. Exceptions to the rules on nationality and origin

Where an agreement on widening the market for procurement of goods or services applies, the procurement contracts must also be open to nationals of other countries under the conditions laid down in that agreement.

In addition, in duly substantiated exceptional cases, the Commission may allow nationals of countries other than those referred to in section 2.1 to tender for contracts (or supplies of goods originating in such countries) on the basis of the specific conditions laid down in the basic act or other instrument governing the programme under which the grant is financed.

2.4. Grounds for exclusion from participation in procurement

Candidates or tenderers will be excluded from participation in a procurement procedure if:

1. they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;

2. they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata;

3. they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the Beneficiary can justify;

4. they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the Beneficiary or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;

5. they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities’ financial interests;

6. they are currently subject to an administrative penalty referred to in section 2.3.5 of the Practical Guide to contract procedures for EC external actions.

Candidates or tenderers must certify that they are not in one of the situations listed above.

2.5. Exclusion from award of contracts

Contracts may not be awarded to candidates or tenderers which, during the procurement procedure:

(a) are subject to a conflict of interests;

(b) are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the Beneficiary as a condition of participation in the contract procedure or fail to supply this information.

3. Rules common to all tender procedures

The tender documents must be drafted in accordance with best international practice. If they do not have their own documents, Beneficiaries may use the models published on the European Commission’s web site relating to external actions. The European Commission will not publish the tender documents established by the Beneficiary.

The time-limits for receipt of tenders and requests to participate must be long enough to allow interested parties a reasonable and appropriate period to prepare and submit their tenders.

January 2012