UNFCCC Procurement Policy and Procedures - Annex B

Guidelines on environmentally sustainable procurement

1. The UNFCCC secretariat bears responsibility for the environmental impact of its activities, including of the goods and services it acquires from external sources in order to fulfil its mandates and institutional needs. Moreover, as an intergovernmental organization entrusted with the mandate to support the efforts of Parties world wide to address climate change, the secretariat has a special obligation to minimize its carbon and other environmental footprint in an exemplary manner. In conducting its procurement activities, the secretariat seeks to balance these environmental responsibilities with its commitments to social and economical sustainability and to effective international competition.

2. The secretariat is committed to procuring goods and services:
   (a) that are environmentally sustainable across their entire life cycle; and
   (b) whose providers, both manufacturers and vendors, operate in an environmentally sustainable manner.

3. To that end, environmental sustainability criteria shall form an integral part of the procurement process which, inter alia, includes: vendor sourcing and registration; technical specification; evaluation and selection of offers; and vendor performance evaluation.

4. This policy sets forth the procedural steps and general framework for establishing criteria to be used to ensure the environmental sustainability of the products procured and the vendors selected. Specific environmental criteria will vary depending, first, on the required product, the respective market and vendors, and second, on the evolution and advancement of green products, technologies and practices over time. Therefore, specific criteria for specific goods and services shall be determined individually for each requirement and procurement case, within the framework of this policy. The specific criteria however must not be too restrictive, in order to allow for an adequate degree of effective competition between, and fairness to, local and global vendors.

5. The responsibility for defining these criteria, in line with the state of the art in the respective domain lies with the requisitioning programme. The responsibility of AS/PGSU is to compile such criteria and information sources for a variety of products and markets, in order to assist the requisitioner in defining the specific criteria, and to ensure that the provisions of this policy are adhered to.

6. In sourcing potential vendors, AS/PGSU shall collect and record information on the environmental standard of the vendor’s products and operations. Vendors with a demonstrably poor environmental record shall not be invited to participate in solicitation processes.

7. At the stage of registering vendors, these shall be requested to document their environmental responsibility policies in writing. Vendors who fail to submit these documents, or submit unsatisfactory, e.g., ad-hoc documentation, shall not be registered and hence not qualify for an award, in line with the secretariat’s Vendor Registration and Performance Evaluation Policy and Procedure.

8. In each solicitation exercise for goods and/or services, the technical specifications shall include a documented sustainability policy and operations of the vendor, including the vendor’s list of subcontractors and detail of supply chain for the specific requirement, where applicable. Evidence of such policy and operation shall ideally include certification against international norms and standards such as the ISO 14000 series on environmental
standards or comparable, membership in the UN Global Compact, environmental business associations, or similar.

9. In each procurement exercise for goods, the technical specifications shall include specific state-of-the-art environmental criteria as may apply for the respective item. Such criteria shall be determined based on existing United Nations green procurement guidelines, advanced international or national standards, practices or recommendations. Wherever environmental labels or certificates exist for a given type of product, these shall be included in the specifications as appropriate.

10. In each procurement exercise for services, the technical specifications shall include an exhaustive presentation of the environmental sustainability of the operations relating to the respective service, including, e.g., the environmental impact of the production of materials related to the service, shipping and travel activities, etc. Offsetting of shipping and travel related GHG emissions shall be a mandatory requirement.

11. In solicitation processes with defined minimum technical requirements (RFQ and ITB), advanced environmental sustainability standards shall be predefined and evaluated as one of the minimum requirements. Failure to meet these shall be considered as disqualifying the quotation/bid from further consideration.

12. In solicitation processes where technical proposals are evaluated in comparison to each other (RFP), proposals with superior environmental friendliness of the product, sustainable vendor operations and environmental policies shall score higher than those with inferior environmental quality products, operations and/or policies. Environmental sustainability criteria shall constitute at least 10 per cent of the weight in the technical evaluation and rating.