

Directive 2014/25/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors and repealing Directive 2004/17/EC (Text with EEA relevance)

## TITLE II

### **RULES APPLICABLE TO CONTRACTS**

#### *CHAPTER I*

##### ***Procedures***

##### *Article 48*

##### **Competitive dialogue**

1 In competitive dialogues, any economic operator may submit a request to participate in response to a call for competition in accordance with points (b) and (c) of Article 44(4) by providing the information for qualitative selection that is requested by the contracting entity.

The minimum time limit for receipt of requests to participate shall, as a general rule, be fixed at no less than 30 days from the date on which the contract notice or, where a periodic indicative notice is used as a means of calling for competition, the invitation to confirm interest was sent and shall in any event not be less than 15 days.

Only those economic operators invited by the contracting entity following the assessment of the information provided may participate in the dialogue. Contracting entities may limit the number of suitable candidates to be invited to participate in the procedure in accordance with Article 78(2). The contract shall be awarded on the sole basis of the award criterion of the tender presenting the best price-quality ratio in accordance with Article 82(2).

2 Contracting entities shall set out and define their needs and requirements in the call for competition and/or in a descriptive document. At the same time and in the same documents, they shall also set out and define the chosen award criteria and set out an indicative timeframe.

3 Contracting entities shall open, with the participants selected in accordance with the relevant provisions of Articles 76 to 81, a dialogue the aim of which shall be to identify and define the means best suited to satisfying their needs. They may discuss all aspects of the procurement with the chosen participants during this dialogue.

During the dialogue, contracting entities shall ensure equality of treatment among all participants. To that end, they shall not provide information in a discriminatory manner which may give some participants an advantage over others.

In accordance with Article 39, contracting entities shall not reveal to the other participants solutions proposed or other confidential information communicated by a participating candidate or tenderer in the dialogue without its agreement. Such agreement shall not take the form of a general waiver but shall be given with reference to the intended communication of specific information.

4 Competitive dialogues may take place in successive stages in order to reduce the number of solutions to be discussed during the dialogue stage by applying the award criteria laid down in the call for competition or in the descriptive document. In the call for competition or the descriptive document, the contracting entity shall indicate whether it will use that option.

5 The contracting entity shall continue the dialogue until it can identify the solution or solutions which are capable of meeting its needs.

6 Having declared that the dialogue is concluded and having so informed the remaining participants, contracting entities shall ask them to submit their final tenders on the basis of the solution or solutions presented and specified during the dialogue. Those tenders shall contain all the elements required and necessary for the performance of the project.

Those tenders may be clarified, specified and optimised at the request of the contracting entity. However, such clarification, specification, optimisation or additional information may not involve changes to the essential aspects of the tender or of the procurement, including the needs and requirements set out in the call for competition or in the descriptive document, where variations to those aspects, needs and requirements are likely to distort competition or have a discriminatory effect.

7 Contracting entities shall assess the tenders received on the basis of the award criteria laid down in the call for competition or in the descriptive document.

At the request of the contracting entity, negotiations with the tenderer identified as having submitted the tender presenting the best price-quality ratio in accordance with Article 82(2) may be carried out to confirm financial commitments or other terms contained in the tender by finalising the terms of the contract provided such negotiations do not have the effect of materially modifying essential aspects of the tender or of the procurement, including the needs and requirements set out in the call for competition or in the descriptive document and does not risk distorting competition or causing discrimination.

8 Contracting entities may specify prizes or payments to the participants in the dialogue.