

Directive 2004/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 on the coordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts (repealed)

## TITLE II

### **RULES ON PUBLIC CONTRACTS**

#### CHAPTER VII

##### **Conduct of the procedure**

###### Section 1

##### **General provisions**

###### *Article 44*

##### **Verification of the suitability and choice of participants and award of contracts**

1 Contracts shall be awarded on the basis of the criteria laid down in Articles 53 and 55, taking into account Article 24, after the suitability of the economic operators not excluded under Articles 45 and 46 has been checked by contracting authorities in accordance with the criteria of economic and financial standing, of professional and technical knowledge or ability referred to in Articles 47 to 52, and, where appropriate, with the non-discriminatory rules and criteria referred to in paragraph 3.

2 The contracting authorities may require candidates and tenderers to meet minimum capacity levels in accordance with Articles 47 and 48.

The extent of the information referred to in Articles 47 and 48 and the minimum levels of ability required for a specific contract must be related and proportionate to the subject-matter of the contract.

These minimum levels shall be indicated in the contract notice.

3 In restricted procedures, negotiated procedures with publication of a contract notice and in the competitive dialogue procedure, contracting authorities may limit the number of suitable candidates they will invite to tender, to negotiate or to conduct a dialogue with, provided a sufficient number of suitable candidates is available. The contracting authorities shall indicate in the contract notice the objective and non-discriminatory criteria or rules they intend to apply, the minimum number of candidates they intend to invite and, where appropriate, the maximum number.

In the restricted procedure the minimum shall be five. In the negotiated procedure with publication of a contract notice and the competitive dialogue procedure the minimum shall be three. In any event the number of candidates invited shall be sufficient to ensure genuine competition.

The contracting authorities shall invite a number of candidates at least equal to the minimum number set in advance. Where the number of candidates meeting the selection criteria and the minimum levels of ability is below the minimum number, the contracting authority may continue the procedure by inviting the candidate(s) with the required capabilities. In the context of this same procedure, the contracting authority may not include other economic operators who did not request to participate, or candidates who do not have the required capabilities.

4 Where the contracting authorities exercise the option of reducing the number of solutions to be discussed or of tenders to be negotiated, as provided for in Articles 29(4) and 30(4), they shall do so by applying the award criteria stated in the contract notice, in the specifications or in the descriptive document. In the final stage, the number arrived at shall make for genuine competition insofar as there are enough solutions or suitable candidates.

## Section 2

### Criteria for qualitative selection

#### Article 45

#### Personal situation of the candidate or tenderer

1 Any candidate or tenderer who has been the subject of a conviction by final judgment of which the contracting authority is aware for one or more of the reasons listed below shall be excluded from participation in a public contract:

- a participation in a criminal organisation, as defined in Article 2(1) of Council Joint Action 98/733/JHA<sup>(1)</sup>;
- b corruption, as defined in Article 3 of the Council Act of 26 May 1997<sup>(2)</sup> and Article 3(1) of Council Joint Action 98/742/JHA<sup>(3)</sup> respectively;
- c fraud within the meaning of Article 1 of the Convention relating to the protection of the financial interests of the European Communities<sup>(4)</sup>;
- d money laundering, as defined in Article 1 of Council Directive 91/308/EEC of 10 June 1991 on prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering<sup>(5)</sup>.

Member States shall specify, in accordance with their national law and having regard for Community law, the implementing conditions for this paragraph.

They may provide for a derogation from the requirement referred to in the first subparagraph for overriding requirements in the general interest.

For the purposes of this paragraph, the contracting authorities shall, where appropriate, ask candidates or tenderers to supply the documents referred to in paragraph 3 and may, where they have doubts concerning the personal situation of such candidates or tenderers, also apply to the competent authorities to obtain any information they consider necessary on the personal situation of the candidates or tenderers concerned. Where the information concerns a candidate or tenderer established in a State other than that of the contracting authority, the contracting authority may seek the cooperation of the competent authorities. Having regard for the national laws of the Member State where the candidates or tenderers are established, such requests shall relate to legal and/or natural persons, including, if appropriate, company directors and any person having powers of representation, decision or control in respect of the candidate or tenderer.

2 Any economic operator may be excluded from participation in a contract where that economic operator:

- a is bankrupt or is being wound up, where his affairs are being administered by the court, where he has entered into an arrangement with creditors, where he has suspended business activities or is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure under national laws and regulations;
- b is the subject of proceedings for a declaration of bankruptcy, for an order for compulsory winding up or administration by the court or of an arrangement with creditors or of any other similar proceedings under national laws and regulations;
- c has been convicted by a judgment which has the force of *res judicata* in accordance with the legal provisions of the country of any offence concerning his professional conduct;
- d has been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authorities can demonstrate;
- e has not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which he is established or with those of the country of the contracting authority;
- f has not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which he is established or with those of the country of the contracting authority;
- g is guilty of serious misrepresentation in supplying the information required under this Section or has not supplied such information.

Member States shall specify, in accordance with their national law and having regard for Community law, the implementing conditions for this paragraph.

3 Contracting authorities shall accept the following as sufficient evidence that none of the cases specified in paragraphs 1 or 2(a), (b), (c), (e) or (f) applies to the economic operator:

- a as regards paragraphs 1 and 2(a), (b) and (c), the production of an extract from the 'judicial record' or, failing that, of an equivalent document issued by a competent judicial or administrative authority in the country of origin or the country whence that person comes showing that these requirements have been met;
- b as regards paragraph 2(e) and (f), a certificate issued by the competent authority in the Member State concerned.

Where the country in question does not issue such documents or certificates, or where these do not cover all the cases specified in paragraphs 1 and 2(a), (b) and (c), they may be replaced by a declaration on oath or, in Member States where there is no provision for declarations on oath, by a solemn declaration made by the person concerned before a competent judicial or administrative authority, a notary or a competent professional or trade body, in the country of origin or in the country whence that person comes.

4 Member States shall designate the authorities and bodies competent to issue the documents, certificates or declarations referred to in paragraph 3 and shall inform the Commission thereof. Such notification shall be without prejudice to data protection law.

#### *Article 46*

#### **Suitability to pursue the professional activity**

Any economic operator wishing to take part in a public contract may be requested to prove its enrolment, as prescribed in his Member State of establishment, on one of the professional or trade registers or to provide a declaration on oath or a certificate as

described in Annex IX A for public works contracts, in Annex IX B for public supply contracts and in Annex IX C for public service contracts.

In procedures for the award of public service contracts, insofar as candidates or tenderers have to possess a particular authorisation or to be members of a particular organisation in order to be able to perform in their country of origin the service concerned, the contracting authority may require them to prove that they hold such authorisation or membership.

#### *Article 47*

### **Economic and financial standing**

1 Proof of the economic operator's economic and financial standing may, as a general rule, be furnished by one or more of the following references:

- a appropriate statements from banks or, where appropriate, evidence of relevant professional risk indemnity insurance;
- b the presentation of balance-sheets or extracts from the balance-sheets, where publication of the balance-sheet is required under the law of the country in which the economic operator is established;
- c a statement of the undertaking's overall turnover and, where appropriate, of turnover in the area covered by the contract for a maximum of the last three financial years available, depending on the date on which the undertaking was set up or the economic operator started trading, as far as the information on these turnovers is available.

2 An economic operator may, where appropriate and for a particular contract, rely on the capacities of other entities, regardless of the legal nature of the links which it has with them. It must in that case prove to the contracting authority that it will have at its disposal the resources necessary, for example, by producing an undertaking by those entities to that effect.

3 Under the same conditions, a group of economic operators as referred to in Article 4 may rely on the capacities of participants in the group or of other entities.

4 Contracting authorities shall specify, in the contract notice or in the invitation to tender, which reference or references mentioned in paragraph 1 they have chosen and which other references must be provided.

5 If, for any valid reason, the economic operator is unable to provide the references requested by the contracting authority, he may prove his economic and financial standing by any other document which the contracting authority considers appropriate.

#### *Article 48*

### **Technical and/or professional ability**

1 The technical and/or professional abilities of the economic operators shall be assessed and examined in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3.

2 Evidence of the economic operators' technical abilities may be furnished by one or more of the following means according to the nature, quantity or importance, and use of the works, supplies or services:

- a (i) a list of the works carried out over the past five years, accompanied by certificates of satisfactory execution for the most important works. These

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certificates shall indicate the value, date and site of the works and shall specify whether they were carried out according to the rules of the trade and properly completed. Where appropriate, the competent authority shall submit these certificates to the contracting authority direct;

- (ii) a list of the principal deliveries effected or the main services provided in the past three years, with the sums, dates and recipients, whether public or private, involved. Evidence of delivery and services provided shall be given:
  - where the recipient was a contracting authority, in the form of certificates issued or countersigned by the competent authority,
  - where the recipient was a private purchaser, by the purchaser's certification or, failing this, simply by a declaration by the economic operator;
- b an indication of the technicians or technical bodies involved, whether or not belonging directly to the economic operator's undertaking, especially those responsible for quality control and, in the case of public works contracts, those upon whom the contractor can call in order to carry out the work;
- c a description of the technical facilities and measures used by the supplier or service provider for ensuring quality and the undertaking's study and research facilities;
- d where the products or services to be supplied are complex or, exceptionally, are required for a special purpose, a check carried out by the contracting authorities or on their behalf by a competent official body of the country in which the supplier or service provider is established, subject to that body's agreement, on the production capacities of the supplier or the technical capacity of the service provider and, if necessary, on the means of study and research which are available to it and the quality control measures it will operate;
- e the educational and professional qualifications of the service provider or contractor and/or those of the undertaking's managerial staff and, in particular, those of the person or persons responsible for providing the services or managing the work;
- f for public works contracts and public services contracts, and only in appropriate cases, an indication of the environmental management measures that the economic operator will be able to apply when performing the contract;
- g a statement of the average annual manpower of the service provider or contractor and the number of managerial staff for the last three years;
- h a statement of the tools, plant or technical equipment available to the service provider or contractor for carrying out the contract;
- i an indication of the proportion of the contract which the services provider intends possibly to subcontract;
- j with regard to the products to be supplied:
  - (i) samples, descriptions and/or photographs, the authenticity of which must be certified if the contracting authority so requests;
  - (ii) certificates drawn up by official quality control institutes or agencies of recognised competence attesting the conformity of products clearly identified by references to specifications or standards.

3 An economic operator may, where appropriate and for a particular contract, rely on the capacities of other entities, regardless of the legal nature of the links which it has with them. It must in that case prove to the contracting authority that it will have at its disposal the resources necessary for the execution of the contract, for example, by producing an undertaking by those entities to place the necessary resources at the disposal of the economic operator.

4 Under the same conditions a group of economic operators as referred to Article 4 may rely on the abilities of participants in the group or in other entities.

5 In procedures for awarding public contracts having as their object supplies requiring siting or installation work, the provision of services and/or the execution of works, the ability of economic operators to provide the service or to execute the installation or the work may be evaluated in particular with regard to their skills, efficiency, experience and reliability.

6 The contracting authority shall specify, in the notice or in the invitation to tender, which references under paragraph 2 it wishes to receive.

#### *Article 49*

### **Quality assurance standards**

Should they require the production of certificates drawn up by independent bodies attesting the compliance of the economic operator with certain quality assurance standards, contracting authorities shall refer to quality assurance systems based on the relevant European standards series certified by bodies conforming to the European standards series concerning certification. They shall recognise equivalent certificates from bodies established in other Member States. They shall also accept other evidence of equivalent quality assurance measures from economic operators.

#### *Article 50*

### **Environmental management standards**

Should contracting authorities, in the cases referred to in Article 48(2)(f), require the production of certificates drawn up by independent bodies attesting the compliance of the economic operator with certain environmental management standards, they shall refer to the Community Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) or to environmental management standards based on the relevant European or international standards certified by bodies conforming to Community law or the relevant European or international standards concerning certification. They shall recognise equivalent certificates from bodies established in other Member States. They shall also accept other evidence of equivalent environmental management measures from economic operators.

#### *Article 51*

### **Additional documentation and information**

The contracting authority may invite economic operators to supplement or clarify the certificates and documents submitted pursuant to Articles 45 to 50.

#### *Article 52*

### **Official lists of approved economic operators and certification by bodies established under public or private law**

1 Member States may introduce either official lists of approved contractors, suppliers or service providers or certification by certification bodies established in public or private law.

Member States shall adapt the conditions for registration on these lists and for the issue of certificates by certification bodies to the provisions of Article 45(1), Article 45(2) (a) to (d) and (g), Articles 46, Article 47(1), (4) and (5), Article 48(1), (2), (5) and (6), Article 49 and, where appropriate, Article 50.

Member States shall also adapt them to Article 47(2) and Article 48(3) as regards applications for registration submitted by economic operators belonging to a group and claiming resources made available to them by the other companies in the group. In such case, these operators must prove to the authority establishing the official list that they will have these resources at their disposal throughout the period of validity of the certificate attesting to their being registered in the official list and that throughout the same period these companies continue to fulfil the qualitative selection requirements laid down in the Articles referred to in the second subparagraph on which operators rely for their registration.

2 Economic operators registered on the official lists or having a certificate may, for each contract, submit to the contracting authority a certificate of registration issued by the competent authority or the certificate issued by the competent certification body. The certificates shall state the references which enabled them to be registered in the list/to obtain certification and the classification given in that list.

3 Certified registration on official lists by the competent bodies or a certificate issued by the certification body shall not, for the purposes of the contracting authorities of other Member States, constitute a presumption of suitability except as regards Articles 45(1) and (2)(a) to (d) and (g), Article 46, Article 47(1)(b) and (c), and Article 48(2)(a)(i), (b), (e), (g) and (h) in the case of contractors, (2)(a)(ii), (b), (c), (d) and (j) in the case of suppliers and 2(a)(ii) and (c) to (i) in the case of service providers.

4 Information which can be deduced from registration on official lists or certification may not be questioned without justification. With regard to the payment of social security contributions and taxes, an additional certificate may be required of any registered economic operator whenever a contract is offered.

The contracting authorities of other Member States shall apply paragraph 3 and the first subparagraph of this paragraph only in favour of economic operators established in the Member State holding the official list.

5 For any registration of economic operators of other Member States in an official list or for their certification by the bodies referred to in paragraph 1, no further proof or statements can be required other than those requested of national economic operators and, in any event, only those provided for under Articles 45 to 49 and, where appropriate, Article 50.

However, economic operators from other Member States may not be obliged to undergo such registration or certification in order to participate in a public contract. The contracting authorities shall recognise equivalent certificates from bodies established in other Member States. They shall also accept other equivalent means of proof.

6 Economic operators may ask at any time to be registered in an official list or for a certificate to be issued. They must be informed within a reasonably short period of time of the decision of the authority drawing up the list or of the competent certification body.

7 The certification bodies referred to in paragraph 1 shall be bodies complying with European certification standards.

8 Member States which have official lists or certification bodies as referred to in paragraph 1 shall be obliged to inform the Commission and the other Member States of the address of the body to which applications should be sent.

### Section 3

#### **Award of the contract**

##### *Article 53*

#### **Contract award criteria**

1 Without prejudice to national laws, regulations or administrative provisions concerning the remuneration of certain services, the criteria on which the contracting authorities shall base the award of public contracts shall be either:

- a when the award is made to the tender most economically advantageous from the point of view of the contracting authority, various criteria linked to the subject-matter of the public contract in question, for example, quality, price, technical merit, aesthetic and functional characteristics, environmental characteristics, running costs, cost-effectiveness, after-sales service and technical assistance, delivery date and delivery period or period of completion, or
- b the lowest price only.

2 Without prejudice to the provisions of the third subparagraph, in the case referred to in paragraph 1(a) the contracting authority shall specify in the contract notice or in the contract documents or, in the case of a competitive dialogue, in the descriptive document, the relative weighting which it gives to each of the criteria chosen to determine the most economically advantageous tender.

Those weightings can be expressed by providing for a range with an appropriate maximum spread.

Where, in the opinion of the contracting authority, weighting is not possible for demonstrable reasons, the contracting authority shall indicate in the contract notice or contract documents or, in the case of a competitive dialogue, in the descriptive document, the criteria in descending order of importance.

##### *Article 54*

#### **Use of electronic auctions**

1 Member States may provide that contracting authorities may use electronic auctions.

2 In open, restricted or negotiated procedures in the case referred to in Article 30(1)(a), the contracting authorities may decide that the award of a public contract shall be preceded by an electronic auction when the contract specifications can be established with precision.

In the same circumstances, an electronic auction may be held on the reopening of competition among the parties to a framework agreement as provided for in the second indent of the second subparagraph of Article 32(4) and on the opening for competition of contracts to be awarded under the dynamic purchasing system referred to in Article 33.



The electronic auction shall be based:

- either solely on prices when the contract is awarded to the lowest price,
- or on prices and/or on the new values of the features of the tenders indicated in the specification when the contract is awarded to the most economically advantageous tender.

3 Contracting authorities which decide to hold an electronic auction shall state that fact in the contract notice.

The specifications shall include, *inter alia*, the following details:

- a the features, the values for which will be the subject of electronic auction, provided that such features are quantifiable and can be expressed in figures or percentages;
- b any limits on the values which may be submitted, as they result from the specifications relating to the subject of the contract;
- c the information which will be made available to tenderers in the course of the electronic auction and, where appropriate, when it will be made available to them;
- d the relevant information concerning the electronic auction process;
- e the conditions under which the tenderers will be able to bid and, in particular, the minimum differences which will, where appropriate, be required when bidding;
- f the relevant information concerning the electronic equipment used and the arrangements and technical specifications for connection.

4 Before proceeding with an electronic auction, contracting authorities shall make a full initial evaluation of the tenders in accordance with the award criterion/criteria set and with the weighting fixed for them.

All tenderers who have submitted admissible tenders shall be invited simultaneously by electronic means to submit new prices and/or new values; the invitation shall contain all relevant information concerning individual connection to the electronic equipment being used and shall state the date and time of the start of the electronic auction. The electronic auction may take place in a number of successive phases. The electronic auction may not start sooner than two working days after the date on which invitations are sent out.

5 When the contract is to be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender, the invitation shall be accompanied by the outcome of a full evaluation of the relevant tenderer, carried out in accordance with the weighting provided for in the first subparagraph of Article 53(2).

The invitation shall also state the mathematical formula to be used in the electronic auction to determine automatic rerankings on the basis of the new prices and/or new values submitted. That formula shall incorporate the weighting of all the criteria fixed to determine the most economically advantageous tender, as indicated in the contract notice or in the specifications; for that purpose, any ranges shall, however, be reduced beforehand to a specified value.

Where variants are authorised, a separate formula shall be provided for each variant.

6 Throughout each phase of an electronic auction the contracting authorities shall instantaneously communicate to all tenderers at least sufficient information to enable them to ascertain their relative rankings at any moment. They may also communicate other information concerning other prices or values submitted, provided that that is stated in the specifications. They may also at any time announce the number of participants in that phase of the auction.

In no case, however, may they disclose the identities of the tenderers during any phase of an electronic auction.

7 Contracting authorities shall close an electronic auction in one or more of the following manners:

- a in the invitation to take part in the auction they shall indicate the date and time fixed in advance;
- b when they receive no more new prices or new values which meet the requirements concerning minimum differences. In that event, the contracting authorities shall state in the invitation to take part in the auction the time which they will allow to elapse after receiving the last submission before they close the electronic auction;
- c when the number of phases in the auction, fixed in the invitation to take part in the auction, has been completed.

When the contracting authorities have decided to close an electronic auction in accordance with subparagraph (c), possibly in combination with the arrangements laid down in subparagraph (b), the invitation to take part in the auction shall indicate the timetable for each phase of the auction.

8 After closing an electronic auction contracting authorities shall award the contract in accordance with Article 53 on the basis of the results of the electronic auction.

Contracting authorities may not have improper recourse to electronic auctions nor may they use them in such a way as to prevent, restrict or distort competition or to change the subject-matter of the contract, as put up for tender in the published contract notice and defined in the specification.

#### *Article 55*

#### **Abnormally low tenders**

1 If, for a given contract, tenders appear to be abnormally low in relation to the goods, works or services, the contracting authority shall, before it may reject those tenders, request in writing details of the constituent elements of the tender which it considers relevant.

Those details may relate in particular to:

- a the economics of the construction method, the manufacturing process or the services provided;
- b the technical solutions chosen and/or any exceptionally favourable conditions available to the tenderer for the execution of the work, for the supply of the goods or services;
- c the originality of the work, supplies or services proposed by the tenderer;
- d compliance with the provisions relating to employment protection and working conditions in force at the place where the work, service or supply is to be performed;
- e the possibility of the tenderer obtaining State aid.

2 The contracting authority shall verify those constituent elements by consulting the tenderer, taking account of the evidence supplied.

3 Where a contracting authority establishes that a tender is abnormally low because the tenderer has obtained State aid, the tender can be rejected on that ground alone only after consultation with the tenderer where the latter is unable to prove, within a sufficient time limit fixed by the contracting authority, that the aid in question was granted legally. Where the contracting authority rejects a tender in these circumstances, it shall inform the Commission of that fact.

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- (1) [OJ L 351, 29.12.1998, p. 1.](#)
- (2) [OJ C 195, 25.6.1997, p. 1.](#)
- (3) [OJ L 358, 31.12.1998, p.2.](#)
- (4) [OJ C 316, 27.11.1995, p. 48.](#)
- (5) [OJ L 166, 28.6.1991, p. 77.](#) Directive as amended by Directive 2001/97/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 December 2001 ([OJ L 344, 28.12.2001, p. 76.](#)).