

Country case: Quality assurance plan: an example of cleaning services in France

Description

The Union des groupements d'achats publics (UGAP, Union of Public Purchasing Groups) is a French central purchasing body that buys products and services and sells them to the government and government agencies, regional authorities and hospitals. Its purchasing categories include vehicles, information technology (IT), furniture and equipment, medical supplies, maintenance and technical services and facility management services.

In 2014, UGAP concluded a framework agreement for cleaning services. The agreement has a duration of four years and is divided into 26 regional lots. For each lot, seven to ten suppliers are selected. When buyers wish to place a purchase order, they conduct a mini-tender in which suppliers submit bids to win the order, in accordance with the mini-tender award criteria defined in the framework agreement.

This agreement includes a quality assurance plan to evaluate the quality of the services rendered by the supplier and assess whether it is within specific thresholds established by UGAP. The quality assurance plan formed part of the tender documents, so bidders were aware that they would be bound to it if they won the contract.

In order to evaluate the quality of services, the quality assurance plan foresees with three different kinds of inspections of the services, to take place at agreed intervals (once a month or a trimester):

1. self-inspections carried out by the supplier
2. planned inspections carried out by the supplier and the public buyer
3. unplanned inspections carried out by the supplier and the public buyer.

For the self-inspection, the supplier has to monitor itself the quality of the services, carrying out verification operations and taking immediate corrective measures where needed. At the end of the inspection, the supplier has to evaluate the level of services according to a predefined index and is responsible for the accuracy of the information.

For the planned inspections, the buyer has to inform the supplier at least 48 hours before the inspection. At the end of the inspection, the supplier has to evaluate the level of services according to the predefined index. If the rating is under a certain threshold, the supplier has 48 hours to solve the problem and is liable for a penalty. The amounts of penalties depend on the extent of the defect in performance, *i.e.* their amounts increase as quality levels fall.

Public Procurement
Principle: **Integrity,
Efficiency, Evaluation**

Procurement Stage:
Tendering, Post-award

Audience: **Policy Maker,
Procuring Entity, Private
Sector**

The unplanned inspections are carried out after an obvious worsening of the quality of the services that does not correspond to the agreed quality levels. The supplier and buyer carry out the inspection 24 hours following a demand. At the end of the inspection, the supplier has to evaluate the level of services according to the predefined index. If the rating is under a certain threshold, the supplier has 48 hours to solve the problem and is liable for a penalty.

In addition, any buyer who notices defective performance of services has to inform UGAP through a webpage. UGAP monitors that and forwards the information to the supplier. The supplier has 48 hours to solve the problem otherwise he can be excluded from the next phases of the framework agreement.

Source: OECD (2016), [The Korean Public Procurement Service: Innovating for Effectiveness](#), OECD Publishing, Paris.