



Decision

Revisions to the EFI Procurement Rules shall come into force 5 May 2017. Consolidated EFI Procurement Rules are enclosed. The revisions shall not be applicable to tendering processes where an invitation to tender has been sent, or a contract notice has been published, before 5 May 2017.

Joensuu, 3 May 2017



Marc Palahí

Encl.

Consolidated EFI Procurement Rules

EUROPEAN FOREST INSTITUTE
PROCUREMENT RULES

The EFI Procurement rules have come into force on this day.

Joensuu, 15 February 2008

Amended on 16 March 2009

Amended on 25 September 2009

Amended on 21 May 2010

Amended on 1 July 2010

Amended on 1 September 2011

Amended on 19 June 2014

Amended on 9 December 2015

Amended on 5 May 2017

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SECTION I – GENERAL

ARTICLE 1 APPLICABILITY

1.1. Applicability

These rules shall be followed when purchasing or renting services, goods or works (“procurement”) at the European Forest Institute (“EFI”).

Section II regulates procurement with a value of no more than EUR 50,000 (article 5-8), and procurement following unsuccessful tendering (article 9). Section III regulates procurement with a value exceeding EUR 50,000 (article 10-26). Section IV regulates modifications of contracts (article 27).

1.2. Exemption

These rules shall not apply to procurement for the following types of contracts:

- (i) Employment contracts, pursuant to the EFI Staff regulations
- (ii) Contract as Special adviser, pursuant to the rules on Special adviser to the European Forest Institute
- (iii) Contract as In-house Consultant, pursuant to the EFI rules for engagement of In-House Consultants
- (iv) Contracts which lawfully – including but not limited for reasons of intellectual property rights, or due to the economic operator having a de jure monopoly standing – or due to requirements in funding agreements only can be concluded with a particular economic operator.

Contracts under this subsection can only be concluded if approved by the Director or a person with delegated authority, having ensured that the reasons why only a particular economic operator can be contracted are correct and well documented.

- (v) Contracts for Real estate rental, Insurance, Electricity and water, Arbitration, Financial services, Audit, and Legal representation in judicial proceedings or in preparation of such proceedings.

To ensure best value for money EFI shall before concluding contracts under this subsection solicit quotes from three economic operators, or less if justified and documented, to be evaluated by an evaluation committee set up by decision of the Director or a person with delegated authority.

As this is an internal process there is no appeals or claims procedure for external parties.

These rules shall not apply to costs incurred as part of duty travel. Costs for duty travel is regulated in the EFI travel instructions.

ARTICLE 2 BASIC PRINCIPLES

The main objectives and the principles that are to be followed in procurement are to ensure transparency of operations, to obtain the desired quality of services, supplies or work at the best possible price, to ensure the equality of the economic operators, and to promote effective competition.

All procurement activities must be based on an absolute need and careful planning. Procurement risks should be identified and attempts made to manage them. It is useful to make a calculation of the total costs and attained benefits.

The purpose of the procurement planning is to provide foresight on what kind of contracts are required to enable the planned operations, to prioritise the presented procurement needs in order to provide optimal support for the implementation of tasks and meeting the performance target, and to define product groups included in framework agreements. Carefully prepared procurement also helps in gaining an overall picture of the procurement activities.

Environmental considerations shall to the greatest extent possible be taken into account when procuring.

ARTICLE 3 CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

A person who is subject to a conflict of interests shall not participate in any part of the procurement process.

There is a conflict of interests where the impartial and objective exercise of the functions of any person is compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other shared interest with another party.

A person becoming subject to a conflict of interests during the course of a procurement process shall not take any further part in the process, and a new person shall be appointed in accordance with the applicable provisions.

ARTICLE 4 VALUE OF THE CONTRACT

The calculation of the estimated value of procurement shall be based on the total amount payable, net of value added tax. This calculation shall take account of any form of options and any foreseen renewals of a contract.

Procurement can be divided into lots. The value of the procurement shall then be calculated as the total value of all such lots.

The value of a contract without end date shall be calculated as the monthly value multiplied with 48.

The value of a framework agreement shall be calculated as its estimated value over its lifetime.

No procurement may be divided into lots or calculated using artificial methods with the intention of excluding it from the scope of these rules. It is however recognized that it might be difficult for EFI to foresee the full extent of its procurement needs and possible amendments to a contract.

Due to EFI being exempt from value added tax (VAT), all sums stated in these rules are excluding VAT.

ARTICLE 5 ARCHIVING

Documentation relating to procurement can be archived and stored electronically. In such case, the corresponding physical papers do not have to be archived and stored.

SECTION II – DIRECT CONTRACTING

ARTICLE 6 SIMPLIFIED PROCEDURES

6.1. Lower value

For procurement with a value of EUR 300 or less, the following procedure shall apply:

- Staff members do not need to request approval of the purchase in advance of the procurement.
- The procuring staff member shall seek to obtain value for money, but it is not required to obtain any documentation demonstrating this.

6.2. Higher value

For procurement with a value of more than EUR 300 but not more than EUR 2,500, the following procedure shall apply:

A staff member wanting to procure shall in writing request approval from the cost center/project manager, or another EFI staff member appointed for this purpose by the Director. Requests from the cost center/project manager, or other EFI staff member specifically appointed to approve requests, shall be decided on by that person's line manager.

The procurement request shall be submitted according to instructions by the Finance unit.

The procuring staff member shall seek to obtain value for money, but it is not required to obtain any documentation demonstrating this.

As this is an internal approval process no appeals or claims can be made by external parties.

ARTICLE 7 STANDARD PROCEDURE

For procurement with a value of more than EUR 2,500 but not more than EUR 25,000 the procedure in this article shall apply.

A staff member wanting to procure shall in writing request approval from the cost center/project manager, or another EFI staff member appointed for this purpose by the Director. Requests from the cost center/project manager, or other EFI staff member specifically appointed to approve requests, shall be decided on by that person's line manager. The person deciding on approval is hereinafter referred to as Approver.

The procurement request shall be submitted according to instructions by the Finance unit.

The procurement request shall, to ensure value for money, include three procurement comparisons, or justification why less than three procurement comparisons have been obtained. A procurement comparison does not have to take the form of a written quote.

A procurement request may only be approved if:

- it is clearly defined and documented what is being procured and for what purpose it is procured
- value for money has been ensured
- all applicable rules and contractual provisions have been complied with
- the funds needed for the procurement are available.

If the request is approved, Approver shall send the request and the documentation for authorisation to a person appointed for this purpose by the Director. This person is referred to as Authoriser.

Procurement may only be authorised if:

- the required documentation has been submitted
- value for money has been ensured
- all applicable rules and possible contractual provisions have been complied with
- all required funds are available

Approver shall if requested by Authoriser provide additional information needed.

A signed contract or similar document is required, unless otherwise decided by Authoriser.

As this is an internal approval process no appeals or claims can be made by external parties.

ARTICLE 8 EXTENDED PROCEDURE

For procurement with a value of more than EUR 25,000 but not more than EUR 50,000, an extended procedure shall be applied.

A staff member wanting to procure shall in writing request approval from the cost center/project manager, or another EFI staff member appointed for this purpose by the Director. Requests from the cost center/project manager, or other EFI staff member specifically appointed to approve requests, shall be decided on by that person's line manager. The person deciding on approval is hereinafter referred to as Approver.

The procurement request shall be submitted according to instruction by the Finance unit.

The procurement request shall, to ensure value for money, include quotes in writing from three different economic operators, or justification why less than three quotes have been obtained.

A procurement request may only be approved if

- it is clearly defined and documented what is being procured and for what purpose it is procured
- value for money has been ensured
- all applicable rules and contractual provisions have been complied with
- the funds needed for the procurement are available

If the procurement request is approved it shall be sent, together with the documentation, by Approver for authorisation to a person appointed for this purpose by the Director.

Authorisation of the procurement shall be taken by an evaluation committee consisting of three members appointed by the Director or by an EFI staff member appointed for this purpose by the Director. One of the members shall be appointed to be Chair. The evaluation committee shall convened by the Chair and shall take decisions by simple majority.

The evaluation committee may only authorise the procurement if:

- the required documentation has been submitted
- that any justification, as to why less than three quotes have been obtained, is acceptable
- value for money has been ensured
- all applicable rules and possible contractual provisions have been complied with
- all required funds are available

Following approval in the second stage procedure, a signed contract or similar document is required.

As this is an internal approval process no appeals or claims can be made by external parties.

ARTICLE 9 DIRECT PROCEDURE

The direct procedure for procurement may, regardless of the value of the procurement, be used following a tender process having been conducted in accordance with section III if:

- no tender was received before the deadline;
- no qualitatively acceptable tender was received before the deadline;
- all qualitatively acceptable tenders received exceeded the financial resources available; or
- no requests for participation was received before the deadline.

provided that the description of what is to be procured is not substantially altered, and that the value does not exceed the maximum value of the contract as stated for tender process.

Head of the procuring unit may request procurement through the direct procedure. Such a request shall be in writing and be addressed to a person appointed for this purpose by the Director.

The procurement request shall, to ensure value for money, include comparable quotes in writing from three different economic operators, or justification why less than three quotes have been obtained.

A decision authorising the procurement shall be taken by an evaluation committee consisting of three members appointed by the Director or by an EFI staff member appointed for this purpose by the Director. One of the members of the evaluation committee shall be appointed to be Chair. The evaluation committee shall convened by the Chair and shall take decisions by simple majority.

The evaluation committee may authorise the procurement if:

- the required documentation has been submitted
- that any justification, as to why less than three quotes have been obtained, is acceptable
- value for money has been ensured
- all applicable rules and possible contractual provisions have been complied with
- all required funds are available

Following authorisation, a signed contract or similar document is required.

As this is an internal approval process there is no appeals or claims can be made by external parties.

SECTION III – TENDERING

ARTICLE 10 TENDERING

For procurement with a value of more than 50,000 euro, a contract shall be issued following the procedures in article 10-26.

Candidate Tenderer shall mean an economic operator, or where applicable a consortium of economic operators, having requested to participate in the restricted procedure

Tenderer shall mean an economic operator, or where applicable a consortium of economic operators, having submitted a tender in a tender process

The term *economic operator* shall equally cover natural and legal persons.

Any reference in these rules to an *Invitation to tender* shall be deemed to also constitute a reference to an *Invitation to request participation* unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

ARTICLE 11 PROCUREMENT MANAGER

For any contract to be tendered, the Director or an EFI staff member appointed for this purpose by the Director shall appoint a Procurement manager.

Only an EFI staff member can be appointed as Procurement Manager.

When needed, the Procurement Manager may be replaced. Although the Procurement Manager is replaced, the tender process does not have to be cancelled or redone.

ARTICLE 12 NON-DISCRIMINATION

All economic operators shall always be treated equally and in a non-discriminatory way.

Information relating to a tender, or a planned tender, may not be disclosed to any economic operator in a way that would compromise or risk compromising the equal and non-discriminatory treatment of other economic operators.

Before launching a tender procedure, market consultations may be conducted with a view to preparing the tender, provided that such consultations do not have the effect of distorting competition and do not result in a violation of the principles of non-discrimination and transparency.

ARTICLE 13 ELIGIBILITY

13.1. General

The tender process shall, subject to the more specific provisions of these rules and instructions in the invitation to tender, be open equally to any economic operator authorized to perform contracts under national law.

EFI may in the Invitation to tender specify further provisions on eligibility requirements for a tender process.

EFI may for an economic operator that has been found misrepresenting information relating to eligibility requirements decide to exclude the economic operator from the tender process.

13.2. Consortiums

Consortiums of economic operators are allowed to submit tenders, subject to requirements as decided by EFI and stated in the Invitation to tender.

A consolidated assessment shall be made for all members of a consortium.

Economic operators in a consortium assume joint and several liability towards EFI for the performance of the contract as a whole.

EFI may require the economic operators to sign a consortium agreement or otherwise to assume a particular legal form.

13.3. Subcontracting

Tenderers are allowed to use resources which are not the Tenderer's own but belong to one or more other economic operators ("subcontracting") to perform the contract, subject to requirements as decided by EFI and stated in the Invitation to tender.

Where it cannot be established by EFI that the tenderer actually has available to it the resources which belong to one or more other economic operators and which are necessary for the performance of the contract, EFI may disregard these resources when evaluating the tender or request to participate.

13.4. Exclusion from participation

Any economic operator who has been subject of a conviction, of which EFI is aware, against which no appeal can be made, for one or more of the reasons listed below, shall be excluded for participation in the tender process and any subsequent contract:

- ii. participation in a criminal organization, as defined in Article 2(1) of Council Joint Action 98/733/JHA (OJ L 351, 29.12.1998, p. 1.)
- iii. corruption, as defined in Article 3 of the Council Act of 26 May 1997 (OJ C 195, 25.6.1997, p. 1.) and Article 3(1) of Council Joint Action 98/742/JHA (OJ L 358, 31.12.1998, p. 2.)
- iv. fraud within the meaning of Article 1 of the Convention relating to the protection of the financial interests of the European Communities (OJ C 316, 27.11.1995, p. 48.)
- v. 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 (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).

Any economic operator may be excluded from participation in the tender process and any subsequent contract where it:

- a. is bankrupt or being wound up; where its affairs are being administered by the court, where it has entered into an arrangement with creditors, or where it has suspended business activities, or is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure under any national law or regulation;
- 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 any national law or regulation;
- 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 EFI can demonstrate;
- e. has not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of taxes and social security contributions in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established or the country where the contract is to be performed;
- f. is guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information referred to in this article or has not supplied such information; or
- g. is subject to a conflict of interest

Any economic operator shall, to be eligible to participate in any tender process, be able to show that it meets the requirements stated above. EFI may ask the economic operator for official documents from the authorities in the country where it is established that none of the cases specified above, or otherwise specified by EFI, applies to it. In case no official documents from the authorities in the country where it is established regarding this can be obtained by the economic operator the Procurement Manager may decide on other appropriate documentation to be submitted.

ARTICLE 14 CRITERIA

14.1. Minimum criteria

For all tender procedures minimum capacity levels may be established, below which a tender or request to participate shall be rejected. These may relate to technical, financial or professional capacity needed to perform a contract.

14.2. Selection criteria

For the restricted procedure selection criteria shall be established, on the basis of which the Candidate Tenderers are selected to be invited to submit tenders.

The selection criteria shall consist of criteria that allow for scoring. The Candidate Tenderers to be invited will then be chosen based on that scoring.

14.3. Award criteria

For all procedures award criteria shall be established, that shall be used when evaluating and comparing the tenders in the evaluation procedure to decide who shall be awarded the contract.

The award of a contract shall be based on the most economically advantageous tender; this may be established through a fixed price or budget on the basis of which award of the contract is made based on quality criteria.

The relative weighting given to each of the criteria chosen to determine the most advantageous tender shall be established as part of the tender specifications. These weightings can be expressed as minimum-maximum levels.

ARTICLE 15 PROCEDURES

15.1. General

For tender processes, the Procurement Manager shall decide on one of the tender procedures below to be used.

15.2. Open procedure

Under the open procedure any interested economic operator may submit a tender.

A Contract notice shall be published. EFI may publish pre-notifications.

An Invitation to tender may be sent to economic operators from whom receiving a tender is desired.

The Invitation to tender shall be sent to any economic operator that so requests.

15.3. Restricted procedure

The restricted procedure may be used where the number of participants needs to be restricted and distinct reasons for such a restriction exists. EFI shall decide on a maximum number of economic operators to invite to tender. At least three economic operators shall be invited to tender.

For the purpose of restricting the number of potential Tenderers selection criteria shall be established to decide which Candidate Tenderers shall be invited to tender.

Any economic operator may request to participate but only those invited by EFI through an Invitation to tender may submit a tender.

A Contract notice shall be published. EFI may publish pre-notifications.

The Invitation to request participation may be sent to economic operators from whom receiving a request to participate is desired. An Invitation to request participation shall be sent to any economic operator that so requests.

15.4. Procedure for framework contract

A framework contract is an agreement between EFI and one or more economic operators, the purpose of which is to establish the terms governing how specific contracts may be awarded during a given period; a specific contract being a contract under which the economic operator performs tasks.

Awards of specific contracts may be based on the award criteria laid down in the framework contract or be done through a reopening of competition with the economic operators that are party to the framework contract.

The framework contract may establish a pricing mechanism, which means that the pricing is not fixed but that the pricing instead will be determined in a certain way during the period of the framework contract. The framework contract can also establish a mechanism for defining the scope and types of services, works and/or supplies to be further defined in specific contracts.

The term of a framework contract may not exceed four years unless there are exceptional circumstances. A specific contract, awarded subject to the rules on reopening of competition below, may be in force up to six months beyond the expiry date of the framework contract itself.

Awarding a framework contract shall be done using the open or restricted procedure.

ARTICLE 16 TENDER SPECIFICATIONS

The tender specifications shall be decided by the Procurement Manager.

The tender specifications shall be as detailed as possible and shall at least contain information on:

- The terms of reference or technical or other specification
- The criteria applicable to the different stages of the tender process and the relative weighting given to the criteria
- The model contract

The terms of reference and technical or other specification must be drawn up in writing and be sufficiently clear, in order to enable submission of commensurate and mutually comparable tenders and requests to participate.

The Procurement Manager may at any time decide to amend or modify the Tender Specifications. Such amendments and modifications shall be communicated in the same way as the tender specifications it is amending or modifying were communicated.

ARTICLE 17 INVITATIONS

17.1. Invitation to tender

The content and sending of the Invitation to tender shall be decided by the Procurement Manager.

The Invitation to tender shall include:

- The tender specifications
- Information on submission of tenders
- Terms and conditions for submission of tenders

The Invitation to tender can be separated into several documents.

If an Invitation to request participation has previously been sent, EFI may restrict the Invitation to tender to only include information on how to submit the tender and any other information regarding the tender procedure.

17.2. invitation to request participation

An Invitation to request participation is to be used only in the restricted procedure.

The content and sending of the Invitation to request participation shall be as decided by the Procurement Manager.

The Invitation to request participation shall include:

- The tender specifications
- Information regarding documentation to be included in the request to participate
- Information on submission of the request to participate

The Invitation to request participation can be separated into several documents.

17.3. Modifications and amendments to the invitation

The Procurement Manager may at any time decide to amend or modify an Invitation to tender.

Such amendments and modifications shall be communicated in the same way as the Invitation to tender it is amending or modifying was communicated.

ARTICLE 18 CONTRACT NOTICE

The content and publishing of the Contract notice shall be decided by the Procurement Manager.

The Contract notice shall contain:

- Basic information concerning the object of the tender
- Time limits for submission of tenders/requests to participate and for submission of questions
- Applicable procedure
- Information on how to receive an Invitation to tender
- A reference to the EFI procurement rules

Where publication of the Contract notice is required by these rules, it shall be published at www.efi.int. It may also be published in other appropriate media.

The Procurement Manager may at any time decide to amend or modify the Contract notice. Such amendments and modifications shall be communicated in the same way as the Contract notice it is amending or modifying were communicated.

ARTICLE 19 TIME LIMITS

The time limits for submitting tenders and requests to participate shall be as stated in the Contract notice and Invitation to tender, but as a minimum the following time limits shall apply:

PROCEDURE	TIME LIMITS
Open	30 calendar days from publishing the Contract notice for economic operators to submit a tender.
Restricted	21 calendar days from publishing the Contract notice for economic operators to request to participate. 30 calendar days from dispatch of the Invitation to tender for selected Candidate Tenderers to submit a tender.

The Procurement Manager may at any time, extend the time limits as indicated in the Contract notice and Invitation to tender.

Such extension shall be communicated in the way as the Contract notice and Invitation to tender whose time limits it is extending were communicated.

ARTICLE 20 EVALUATION

20.1. General

EFI may reject any tender not submitted in accordance with instructions given by EFI.

The Procurement Manager and the Evaluation committee may decide to:

- allow correction of a manifest written error or erroneous calculation or some other manifest error in the tender or request to participate
- request clarifications regarding a submitted tender or request to participate
- request submission of additional supporting administrative documentation.

Additional supporting documentation may not be requested, not provided, in relation to the technical or financial proposal.

20.2. The evaluation procedure

- i. Registration of tenders/requests to participate
- ii. Opening of tenders/requests to participate
- iii. Inspection of compliance with eligibility requirements, minimum criteria, and other requirements as decided in the Invitation to tender
- iv. Evaluation of the requests to participate with regard to the selection criteria, and further selection of the Candidate Tenderers to invite to tender
- v. Evaluation of the tenders with regard to the award criteria

20.3. The Evaluation committee

20.3.1. General

An Evaluation committee shall be established with the purpose of handling the evaluation procedure as stated in article 20.2., unless no tender was received before the deadline for submission of tenders. When establishing the Evaluation committee consideration shall be given to ensure that there is enough time to conduct the evaluation properly and in accordance with these rules.

The Evaluation Committee may use its discretion to decide whether or not a tender or request to participate is submitted in accordance with the instructions given by EFI, and whether or not it will still be considered during the rest of the evaluation process.

The Evaluation committee can convene although not physically present on the same location, e.g. through video or telephone conference. The Evaluation committee members shall attend all meetings.

20.3.2. Composition

The Evaluation committee shall be composed of the following members:

- The Procurement Manager, acting as non-voting chairperson, responsible for coordinating the work of the Evaluation committee.
- A non-voting secretary, appointed by the Procurement Manager, responsible for the administrative tasks related to the work of the Evaluation committee. The secretary shall be an EFI staff member.
- An uneven number of voting members, at least three, appointed by the Procurement Manager. A majority of the voting members shall be EFI staff members. All voting members must have the appropriate technical competence and language skills needed for the evaluation.

20.3.3. Voting

When voting is called for in the Evaluation committee, each voting member shall have one vote. Decisions shall be made by a majority of votes.

20.4. Tender opening and inspection committee

The Procurement Manager can decide that task under article 20.2 i-iii shall be performed by a tender opening and inspection committee, created for this sole purpose, consisting of at least two persons that shall be EFI staff members. The Tender opening and inspection committee shall be independent from the Evaluation committee.

The tender opening and inspection committee shall report in writing to the Evaluation committee on its findings.

The tender opening and inspection committee is a non-voting body. All members are allowed to state their findings in the report to the evaluation committee.

If a member of the tender opening and inspection committee considers it necessary to request clarifications or to allow a Tenderer or Candidate Tenderer to correct a manifest written error or erroneous calculation or some other manifest error in the tender or request to participate, it shall notify the Procurement Manager.

20.5. Observers

Observers may take part in the tender process. All such observers shall be bound by confidentiality and shall for this purpose sign a non-disclosure agreement and any other commitment EFI requires.

Any disputes between EFI and a person being an observer shall be handled according to the EFI dispute settlement rules,

20.6. Evaluation report

The Evaluation committee shall compile an evaluation report, which shall be a record of the tender opening and evaluation procedure.

The evaluation report shall always contain a record of the time of the meeting, an assessment of the eligibility of the tenders, information on the application of criteria, and a recommendation on decisions.

The evaluation report shall also contain information on how the Invitation to tender has been published and to which economic operators it has been sent.

Where the direct procedure has been used in the tender process the evaluation report shall contain an explanation on the use of that procedure.

The evaluation report shall be signed by the secretary and be approved by the chairperson. A record of the approval shall be kept.

20.7. Confidentiality

The meetings of the Evaluation committee shall be closed and its members bound by professional confidentiality. Members of the Evaluation committee, that are not EFI staff members, shall sign a non-disclosure agreement.

The meetings of the Tender opening and inspection committee shall be closed and its members bound by professional confidentiality.

All tenders must be kept confidential and safe to avoid unauthorised access to them.

The content of the evaluation report shall remain confidential. The Director or a person with delegated authority may decide that the contents of the evaluation report, or parts of it, can be disclosed. This obligation of confidentiality is without prejudice to the disclosure of information in the tender decision.

The Procurement Manager shall be immediately notified if there is reason to suspect that the confidentiality or safekeeping of the tenders has been compromised.

20.8. Declaration on absence of conflict of interests

The Procurement Manager, all other members of the evaluation committee, and all members of a tender opening and inspection committee sign a declaration confirming the absence of conflict of interests.

ARTICLE 21 ABNORMALLY LOW TENDERS

For tenders where the financial component appears to be abnormally low it can be presumed that EFI cannot rely upon performance of a contract, in a manner promised by the tender, for the whole duration of the contract.

EFI shall for such a tender from the Tenderer request clarifications and explanations of the tender.

The tender may be rejected if the Tenderer cannot provide clarifications and explanations to the satisfaction of EFI, or does not answer in the time period given by EFI.

ARTICLE 22 CANCELLING THE TENDER PROCESS

EFI may decide to cancel the tender process at any stage before a contract has been signed by both EFI and the successful Tenderer if the decision is substantiated. If the tender process is divided into lots, a single lot may be cancelled.

A decision to cancel the tender process is always substantiated when:

- There have been irregularities in the tender process
- No tenders have been received before the deadline for submission
- No qualitatively acceptable tender has been received
- All qualitatively acceptable tenders received exceed the financial resources available
- All tenders received are rejected
- The financial or technical conditions have been fundamentally altered
- Exceptional circumstances render normal performance of the contract impossible

After cancelling the tender process, EFI may still decide to launch a new tender process with the same tender specifications.

A decision to cancel the tender process may be taken by the Procurement Manager if no tender was received before the deadline for submission.

When an Evaluation committee has been established only the Director may decide to cancel the tender process.

The decision to cancel the tender process shall be made in writing.

EFI shall not be liable to pay damages to any economic operator on the basis of cancellation of the tender process.

An economic operator that starts activities prior to a contract entering into force cannot hold EFI liable for any consequences should EFI cancel the tender process.

ARTICLE 23 POST TENDER NEGOTIATIONS

The Procurement Manager can decide to initiate post tender negotiations when it has been established by the Evaluation committee which Tenderer has submitted the most economically advantageous tender. Post tender negotiations can be conducted to identify whether any improvements in this tender are possible.

If improvements in the submitted tender can be achieved, they shall be confirmed by the Tenderer in a revised tender to be submitted, incorporating the negotiated changes, within a deadline set by EFI.

The revised tender shall be accepted by the Evaluation Committee. If the revised tender cannot be accepted, or if a revised tender is not submitted within the deadline, a decision to award in accordance with original tender shall be made.

The post tender negotiations and the outcome thereof shall be documented in the evaluation report, and must show:

- the justification for initiating the negotiations
- the aim of the negotiations
- the record of all exchanges, written and verbal, between EFI and the Tenderer

ARTICLE 24 DECISION

After the Evaluation committee has evaluated all tenders and finalized the evaluation report a tender decision, in writing, shall promptly be made by the Director or a person with delegated authority. The tender decision may not be made by a person having taken part in the evaluation.

The tender decision shall be either to award the contract or to cancel the tender process, as well as other matters as applicable.

A decision to award the contract shall, as applicable, at least contain:

- Name of Tenderer awarded the contract
- Value of tender submitted by Tenderer awarded the contract
- Details on the application of the award criteria, including sub-criteria
- Decisions and grounds on rejections of tenders and requests to participate, as well as selection of Candidate Tenderers
- The procedure regarding a claim for damages, if claiming damages is possible under these rules

A decision to cancel the tender decision shall contain the reasons for the decision.

The Director or a person with delegated authority may until the contract has been signed by both EFI and the successful Tenderer, and when substantiated, change the decision to award the contract.

If the awarded contract is not signed by the successful tenderer within a time limit set by EFI, EFI may in a new decision reject that tender and award the contract to the Tenderer having submitted submitted the most economically advantageous tender.

EFI shall not be liable to pay compensation to any economic operator on the basis of a decision to change the award of a contract, or on the basis of rejection due to a failure of the Tenderer to sign the awarded contract.

ARTICLE 25 NOTIFICATION, PUBLICATION AND REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

25.1. Notification of the tender decision

The tender decision shall, within 30 calendar days of being signed, be sent to all Tenderers and Candidate Tenderers.

EFI may choose to send a notification containing only part of the information in the tender decision if disclosing the tender decision would be contrary to the interests of EFI, or would harm legitimate business interests of economic operators or would distort fair competition between economic operators. Such a notification shall however always contain information on name of Tenderer awarded the contract, value of tender submitted by Tenderer awarded the contract, details on the application of the award criteria, including sub-criteria, and the procedure regarding a claim for damages, if claiming damages is possible under these rules.

25.2. Publication of notice

EFI shall in those tender processes where a Contract notice has been published:

- when a contract has been awarded: within 48 calendar days of the award, publish an official notice regarding the award
- when the tender process has been cancelled: publish an official notice regarding the cancellation

The official notice shall be published in the same way as the Contract notice for the tender process in question.

25.3. Request for information

If requested by a Tenderer or Candidate Tenderer, within 30 calendar days of EFI sending the tender decision awarding a contract, EFI shall provide the requesting Tenderer or Candidate Tenderer with information on the application of the criteria for that Tenderer's or Candidate Tenderer's tender as well as information on the characteristics and relative advantages of the tender awarded the contract.

EFI shall provide the information with 30 calendar days of receiving the request.

ARTICLE 26 CLAIMS FOR DAMAGES

26.1. Claims

No appeals are available against any decision made by EFI under these rules.

Unsuccessful Tenderers and Candidate Tenderers not being invited to tender may, within 21 calendar days of EFI publishing the award of the contract according to article 25.2., initiate proceedings for claiming damages in accordance with article 26.3.

For contracts awarded following reopening of competition under a procedure for framework contract, unsuccessful Tenderers may within 21 calendar days of EFI notifying the award of the contract according to article 25.1., claim damages in accordance with article 26.3.

Where the Tenderer or Candidate Tenderer is comprised of a consortium of economic operators, the consortium members may only make a joint claim under these rules.

All claims shall be initiated and handled in accordance with the EFI Dispute settlement rules.

26.2. Inadmissible claims

Economic operators who would have been acting as subcontractors in a resulting contract may not claim damages.

Damages cannot be claimed when EFI has cancelled a tender process.

A claim for damages cannot be based on EFI's choice of tender procedure.

26.3. Damages

EFI shall compensate damages caused through procedural irregularities having substantially negatively affected the complaining party's possibility to be awarded the contract.

When determining the amount of the damages the nature of the procedural irregularities, whether the complaining party has contributed to the damage, and other circumstances shall be taken into account.

Damages shall in any event only cover a complaining party's direct losses due to costs reasonably incurred for preparation and submission of the tender and shall not cover a complaining party's potential profit that could have resulted from implementation of the contract. In no event shall EFI be liable for payments exceeding EUR 30,000 for damages granted under these rules.

SECTION IV – MODIFICATIONS OF CONTRACTS

ARTICLE 27 MODIFICATIONS OF CONTRACTS

Modification means any change to the agreed terms of a contract.

Modifications of contracts procured under these rules are allowed under the following conditions:

- a) where the modifications, irrespective of their monetary value, have been provided for in the initial contract. Such provisions shall state the scope and nature of possible modifications or options as well as the conditions under which they may be used.
- b) for additional procurement that are not provided for in the contract, and where a change of contractor is not possible or would not provide value for money. However, any increase in price shall not exceed half of the principal contract value. Where several successive modifications are made, that limitation shall apply to the value of each modification.
- c) where a new contractor – as a consequence of universal or partial succession, following corporate restructuring, including takeover, merger, acquisition or insolvency – replaces the existing contractor, provided that value for money is ensured, and that for tendering, the new contractor fulfils any minimum and selection criteria established as part of the tender process.
- d) where the modifications, irrespective of their value, are not substantial. For this purpose a substantial modification is at least when
 - the modification introduces conditions rendering the contract materially different in character;
 - the modification changes the economic balance of the contract agreement in favour of the contractor; or
 - a new contractor replaces the existing contractor in other cases than those provided for under point (c).

Modification of a contract is never allowed where the modification alters the overall nature of the contract or is aimed at circumventing the application of these rules.

The rules in section II are not applicable to modifications of contracts, with the following exception: for modification of a contract resulting in exceeding the maximum threshold value allowed by the article under which the contract was approved, the applicable procedure in section II has to be followed. A contract concluded under article 5-8 can in no case be amended to provide for a value exceeding 50,000 euro.

The rules in section III are not applicable to modifications of contracts.

All decisions, and grounds for the decisions, regarding modifications of contracts must be documented.

SECTION V – FINAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 28 CHANGES TO THE PROCUREMENT RULES

The Director decides on changes to these rules.