



Administrational Manual

This document is as approved by the REC Caucasus executive Body (Collegial Trio) and is set out at the end of the document.



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1. Introduction To The Administration Manual

1.1 The Purpose of the Administration Manual

The Administration Manual (AM) is a policy of the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (REC Caucasus) in the form of a handbook. It provides all REC Caucasus staff with the general rules and regulations based on which the REC Caucasus implements its activities. It regulates the day-to-day activities of the REC Caucasus. It is also issued as a guide and to assist all REC Caucasus staff in carrying out their duties.

The Administration Manual is binding for all REC Caucasus staff from the date the Manual is officially issued by the REC Caucasus and accepted by the Board of Directors. It applies to everyone employed at the REC Caucasus and staff are expected to be familiar with it.

The Executive Body reserves the right to change any details depicted in this manual, as and when required (see also 1.2.1.). The Administrative Manual is not a collective agreement between the REC Caucasus and staff.

1.2 Maintenance Of The Administration Manual

The Administration Manual is a “living document.” It is the responsibility of the Financial and Administrative Officers in cooperation with the Executive Body (EB) to keep the contents of this manual up-to-date and to manage the review of the manual at least once a year. Any suggested amendments or additions to the manual must be authorized by the Executive Director. The Administration Manual must always be in line with the Charter of the REC Caucasus and the By-laws.

1.2.1 Issuing of New Policies or Amendments to the Administration Manual

REC Caucasus Staff will be informed by the Executive Body about new policies and amendments to the Administration Manual. These constitute a part of the Administration Manual. For issuing new policies or amending the Manual the following applies:

Definition

The policy is a general rule introduced by the Executive Body that regulates one or more aspects of work at the REC Caucasus.

Compliance

A policy may be obligatory for a part or the whole of the workforce. A policy is obligatory for all employees unless it defines a subset of employees to whom it applies.

Enforcement

Policies shall be enforced by all managers of programmes and projects. Lack of enforcement may result in disciplinary action against the supervisor of the transgressing employee.

Issuance

Policies approved by the Executive Body are to be issued within two to five working days after the approval. Policies are issued via electronic mail by the Executive Director. Managers shall be informed by the EB about new policies immediately upon issuance. The policies are available in the standard electronic format in the database of the REC Caucasus.

Preparation

Draft policies shall contain:

- a clear explanation of the rules or regulations in question.
- which previous policy it modifies (if any) with reference to the chapter of this manual.
- date of entering into force (no retrospective issuance is permissible).
- who are affected (only if non-general policy).
- date of expiration (if any).

Records

Updated, complete records of policies in force in the REC Caucasus shall be kept in the office of Executive Body.

Reference

Policies shall be referred to by their title, date of issuance and the chapter of this manual to which they refer.

Suggested amendments or suggestions for new policies should be submitted to the Financial and Administrative Officers who decide whether the amendment is to be brought forward to the Staff Meeting (see below) or whether a decision can be made without involvement with the Staff Meeting. The latter will be done only in cases where there is no room for discussion. Any REC Caucasus employee may suggest amendments or additions.

1.3 Availability of the Administration Manual

The copies of the manual will be available for all REC Caucasus staff at:

- EB Office
- Finance and Administration Department
- REC Caucasus Library

It is the task of the Financial and Administrative Officers to ensure that the latest updated version of the manual is always available at the places mentioned above.

If there are any questions regarding the manual, employees should contact the Financial and Administrative Officers, which will arrange for a more detailed explanation. In case the provisions of this manual are unclear or lead to misinterpretations, it is the task of the Financial and Administrative Officers to initiate an amendment of the manual.

1.4 General Underlying Principles of the Manual

The operations of the REC Caucasus regulated by this manual are set up according to the following general principles, which should be considered in all activities of the Centre. These principles derive from the REC Caucasus's mission so as to enable it to be implemented internally:

1.4.1 Environmental Protection

All activities of the Centre shall be implemented so that the integration of environmental considerations has a high priority. In its daily operations, the REC Caucasus shall as much as possible, act as a model office for good environmental practice and environmental protection in the working place.

1.4.2 Professional Conduct

All activities of the REC Caucasus shall be carried out following the highest possible professional standards.

1.4.3 Transparency and Free Access to Information

The REC Caucasus is committed to having all its operations and activities as transparent as possible to all staff as well as to its constituents. All staff have the right to access all information relevant to the operation of the Centre, unless internally rated as confidential, including its strategies and future plans.

1.4.4 Participatory Approach

In its operations the Centre shall, wherever possible, encourage the participation of staff in all decisions that are relevant to their daily work or are of strategic importance for the future of the REC Caucasus.

1.4.5 Gender Equality and Inclusion

The REC Caucasus is committed to ensuring gender equality and inclusion in all aspects of employment for all employees, regardless of sex, nationality, race or color, ethnic origin, marital status, political affiliation, religious background and affiliation, sexual orientation, age, disability, professional affiliation or any other circumstances having no direct connection with the employment with REC Caucasus.

This updated terminology reflects contemporary standards, emphasizing

- **Gender Equality** – the state in which women, men, and gender-diverse individuals have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities to participate in, influence, and benefit from programs and decision-making processes.
- **Equity as a Pathway** – recognizing that different groups may require differentiated support to achieve fair outcomes, considering structural barriers, historical disadvantages, and social norms.
- **Intersectionality** – understanding how gender interacts with other identity factors (e.g., age, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status) to affect access, participation, and outcomes.
- **Gender-Transformative Approaches** – interventions that actively challenge and change unequal power relations, norms, and practices, rather than solely addressing symptoms of inequality.
- **Gender-Responsive Operations** - REC Caucasus commits to embedding gender equality and inclusion throughout all operational functions, including procurement, recruitment, and leadership development.

In doing so:

Procurement procedures shall integrate **gender-responsive procurement requirements**, such as inclusive tendering, equitable evaluation criteria, and supplier diversity to promote

opportunities for women-led and minority-owned enterprises. RECC shall strengthen the integration of gender considerations across administrative and procurement processes by applying gender-responsive criteria in procurement and service provider selection, and by ensuring gender-sensitive communication and reporting practices. These measures shall be implemented in alignment with RECC's Gender Policy Manual, which provides the guiding framework for mainstreaming gender equality across operations, where such considerations are not otherwise explicitly addressed in existing administrative or procurement procedures.

Recruitment, promotions, and leadership development pipelines shall apply **gender considerations** to ensure equitable representation and progression.

The **Gender Policy of REC Caucasus** shall be formally referenced in this Manual and linked as an annex or accompanying policy, serving as the guiding framework for implementation, monitoring, and periodic review.

1.4.6 Capacity Building and Tools

All staff, including project teams and governance bodies, is encouraged to participate in periodic gender-sensitivity and gender-mainstream training. Projects shall undergo gender and social risk screening during design and implementation phases. When applicable standardized tools, (e.g., gender analysis templates, sex-disaggregated data collection forms, and gender-responsive budgeting worksheets) shall be deployed to ensure systematic integration of gender considerations across all interventions.

1.4.7 Gender-Sensitive Grievance Mechanism

REC Caucasus' grievance redress mechanism shall meet the highest standards for confidentiality, survivor-centered handling, and accessibility. Multiple entry points shall be available to ensure inclusivity, and all grievance committees shall have gender-balanced representation. Grievances related to sexual harassment, gender-based violence, or exclusion shall be processed according to ESMS and GP protocols of RECC, ensuring timely, safe, and documented resolution.

1.4.8 Monitoring, Reporting, and Accountability

Gender integration shall be embedded within the M&E framework and linked to the Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) and ESP standards. Projects shall track sex-disaggregated outputs and outcomes, including participation, access to resources, and leadership metrics. Progress shall be reported and incorporated into the Annual Project Performance Report (PPR), ensuring adaptive management and auditability. Gender-related findings, lessons learned, and corrective actions shall be systematically reviewed by the M&E Officer and reported to the Executive Director and donor agencies. All REC Caucasus projects, policies, and M&E activities shall integrate these principles throughout project design, implementation, stakeholder engagement, and results measurement. Gender-responsive indicators, sex- data, and inclusive participation shall be standard requirements, ensuring alignment with donor expectations for gender mainstreaming and socially inclusive program delivery.

1.4.9 Financial Sustainability

All activities of the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus are implemented in a way to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the Centre.

Additionally, the REC Caucasus shall perform regular, ongoing financial reconciliations, including reconciliation of bank statements, accounting records, and project expenditures, on a periodic basis throughout the project lifecycle.

Financial management and oversight processes shall be aligned with RECC's risk management framework and implemented in coordination with Internal Audit, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Internal Audit Policy and Procedures Manual.

2. Office Administration

2.1 Hours of Work

An official working week consists of forty working hours. Official working hours are:

Monday – Friday: 09:00 – 18:00

Staff are eligible for 1 hour lunch break: 13.00 – 14.00 or at another time as agreed with the supervisor.

Individual employment contracts may specify other working hours.

Contracts for non-permanent staff may define other conditions.

2.1.1 Procedures For Working After Office Hours

REC Caucasus staff are expected to perform their duties within office hours at the premises of REC Caucasus. It is the responsibility of both the supervisor and the supervised person to try to organize an even distribution of the supervised person's work.

Each REC Caucasus employee (and temporary staff) is registered electronically in a registration tool installed on the entrance door. The registration is controlled by the special software installed on the PC of Financial and Administrative Officers. The data is updated daily.

The staff members are authorized to work after office hours any time without prior notice before 19.30 (in case of weekend or evenings work or in case of entering the office after office hours).

Non-REC Caucasus staff are not allowed to work after official working hours without supervisor's confirmation.

2.2 Language Of The Centre

Official languages of the Centre are English and Russian. These are languages of most meetings, correspondence, and publications. In the REC Caucasus office Relevant national language might be used with respect to national institutions and organizations. All legally binding documents that concern REC Caucasus must be translated into English /respective national languages.

2.3 Environmental Protection At The Rec Caucasus

In all its activities, including purchasing equipment, food, supplies, etc., REC Caucasus follows the highest environmental standards.

Preference is given to:

- purchase and use of environmentally friendly products (e.g. cleaning substances, eco-friendly cleaning materials, recyclable products such as paper, non-plastic utensils, etc, office equipment, energy-efficient bulbs).
- energy efficient technologies and methods.
- minimizing waste and recycling.
- the use of recycled paper.
- the use of electronic communication vs. paper.
- the use of multiple use, non plastic bottles etc.

- the use of reusable dishes vs. plastic or paper ones.
- the use of environmentally friendly means of transport, i.e. trains, and car- pooling.

It is the responsibility of the Financial and Administrative Officers and Technical Assistant to Administration, but also of all other staff members, to ensure that all these standards are met. Violation of these standards should be reported to the Executive Body.

2.4 Health And Safety

The REC Caucasus recognizes and accepts its responsibility for providing a safe and healthy workplace and working environment for the staff.

The REC Caucasus expects staff to take care of their own and others' safety. Should any staff member endanger another's safety or the REC Caucasus's property with grievous negligence, this will be treated as misconduct, and disciplinary action may result in a consequence.

For more information, please refer to REC Caucasus's Health and Safety Policy.

2.5 Responsibilities

The REC Caucasus will attempt to achieve a high standard of compliance with health and safety requirements for the premises and work activities it controls, and for the safety of people who may be affected by such activities. All staff should be actively involved in accident prevention.

The REC Caucasus and the management will take all reasonably practicable steps to meet these responsibilities, with special focus on the following:

- the provision and maintenance of the plant and systems of work that are, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risk to health.
- health and safety arrangements for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the absence of risk to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances.
- the provision of such information, training and instruction and supervision as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of staff.
- the provision and maintenance of a working environment, that, so far as it is reasonably practicable, is safe and without risk to health as regards facilities and arrangements for welfare at work. Preferences are given to ergonomic workstations.
- the provision and maintenance, so far as is reasonably practicable, of a safe place of work and proper access to that place of work and proper means of escape in an emergency,
- ensuring the employment of persons competent for the work they engaged for.
- ensuring compliance with statutory requirements and relevant codes of conduct in force for the safety, health and welfare of staff at work.
- provisions for the health of staff (doctor's services).
- It is the duty of staff while at work, or otherwise on duty:
 - to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of others who may be affected by their acts at work.
 - not to intentionally or recklessly interfere with, or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare.

Accidents While Carrying out Duties and Responsibilities as a REC Caucasus Employee

Should an accident happen at work, it is the duty of those attending to ensure that the of is aware of the incident as soon as possible after its occurrence, and that the appropriate emergency services are called.

It is the duty of the Financial and Administrative Officers and all staff to take remedial steps to ensure that possibilities of similar accidents happening are reduced or removed.

2.6 Emergencies

The telephone number to be called in case of emergencies is available by the HR Officer and will be announced to all REC Caucasus staff.

The staff on the premises will call in the following order:

1. Financial and Administrative Officers
2. Deputy Directors
3. Executive Director

The applicable phone numbers are available by the HR. Staff should call any of the above-mentioned managers until one responsible person takes the call, explain the nature of the emergency and ask for action. If time is of the essence, the staff noticing the emergency is authorized to act.

2.7 Use of REC Caucasus Facilities

It is expected that all staff will handle the facilities and equipment (workstations, photocopiers etc.) of the REC Caucasus with maximum care. The repair costs of the damage resulting from careless handling are the liability of the employee.

Office

The main office consists of one floor. It is centrally heated and cooled. All workstations are connected to the REC Caucasus's main server, internet and electronic mail system. The IT Officer is responsible for the above-mentioned systems.

The Office is secured by the alarm system. There are four keys for the office. There are only four people responsible for keys:

- ED
- HR Officer
- Cleaning Staff
- Representative of the Finance and Administration Department.

2.7.1 Other Communication Facilities

Internal Communication

Besides direct and personal contact, which is the preferred means of communication, the following main communication possibilities exist in the Centre:

- use of telephone
- use of e-mail
- use of mailboxes/by written communication

E-mail

Once introduced into the REC Caucasus computer network (LAN), staff can communicate through electronic messages internally. This network is called E- mail. This is a paper and time saving way of consultation, although it does not aim to replace personal dialogue.

External communication

Besides, through direct contacts (e.g. by travel) REC Caucasus has the following external communication possibilities:

- by mail,
- by telephone,
- by e-mail.

Mail

All outgoing correspondence must have a unified appearance complying with REC Caucasus branding standards. All letters should be written on REC Caucasus letterhead paper.

All incoming and outgoing mail is channeled through the Finance and Administration department. Outgoing mail must be coded to a person by the sender and will be charged to him/her.

Incoming mail is opened and registered unless labelled “private”, “personal”, “confidential” etc. or addressed to a person without mentioning the name of REC Caucasus. Bank statements of REC Caucasus are forwarded to the Financial and Administrative Officers.

When sending letters, packages or brochures from the REC Caucasus staff will use the most cost and time effective way of sending mail. The first-class express mail services, such as DHL, UPS, TNT, FedEx, etc. are costly, therefore staff will only use these if justified.

REC Caucasus mail is taken to the post office upon request in the early afternoon hours.

Staff is requested not to send their private mail through the REC Caucasus but if they do so, they are obliged to pay the postage fee.

Each letter with the signature of the ED must be registered by the Finance and Administration Department.

Telephones

All REC Caucasus staff are assigned corporate telephone numbers for official communication. Staff can receive direct calls on these numbers. .

Mobile phones

In exceptional and justified cases, the REC Caucasus may provide mobile phones to certain staff members. For the use of these phones, the same rules apply as above.

Calling from the REC Caucasus

E-mail

E-mail is the fastest, most accurate and cost-efficient way to communicate and uses the many technological advantages offered by computers. It is the preferred mode of communication at the REC Caucasus. There is a central registration of general incoming and outgoing e-mails. Staff members are requested to save the important e-mail messages themselves.

2.7.2 REC Caucasus Electronic Communications - Appropriate Use Policy

REC Caucasus Electronic Communications services (e-mail, mailing lists and World Wide Web access) are provided by the REC Caucasus solely and strictly for professional and work-related needs and activities.

REC Caucasus's actions are governed partially by the fact that REC Caucasus is a not-for-profit organization and uses the domain name type '.org' assigned to such organizations.

Prohibited Uses

- offering work, services or products for sale unless they fall within normal REC Caucasus activities.
- any use for which REC Caucasus incurs fees, user charges, or other costs which have not been previously approved in writing by the authorized person.
- engaging in excessive political advocacy or lobbying of any nature distributing hate-mail, hate speech or any other unethical behavior discriminating against other persons and violating their rights (i.e. mail which insults, offends or demeans other people or groups).
- unauthorized attempts to break into any private computer or site, whether at the REC Caucasus or another organization
- propagation of computer viruses
- duplicating copyrighted materials without permission or quoting the authors, or failure to abide by copyright laws in general.
- any use which would be considered academic misconduct (research fraud, plagiarism, etc.)
- unauthorized use of an ID not assigned to you, or any access which is not authorized.
- attempting to monitor another's communications or read, copy, change or delete other persons' files or software without the permission of the owner.
- excessive mailing
- any access to Internet sites or resources with pornographic content and the use of Internet radio. These sites or functions are usually very expensive. The use of Internet with respect to this is regularly monitored.

Privacy

For technical reasons (need for network maintenance, addressing technical problems) REC Caucasus cannot guarantee full privacy in relation to any of these services. REC Caucasus employees are advised to use other forms of communication for strictly private matters.

E-mail Accounts

A general REC Caucasus email account is available for institutional use. Permanent email accounts will be assigned only to REC Caucasus staff members. Temporary employees may use the general REC Caucasus email account for communication purposes.

2.7.3 Workstations

Each employee is provided by the REC Caucasus with a workstation consisting of desk, chair, lamp, telephone, PC/laptop, basic stationery etc. The Financial and Administrative Officers must ensure that there is a workstation set up before a new employee arrives and that all necessary arrangements are complete.

2.7.4 Photocopying Facilities

At the REC Caucasus there is one photocopying machine for the use of employees. Private photocopying is only allowed for small quantities. Staff is expected to reimburse for any costs for private photocopying. Large amounts of photocopying (e.g. 1000 pages or more) can be contracted out, e.g., to photocopying shops. Information about outside photocopying facilities can be obtained from the Technical Assistant to Administration.

2.7.5 Use of REC Caucasus Facility by Non-Staff

Unauthorized use of REC Caucasus facilities by non-staff is prohibited. Non-staff may only use REC Caucasus facilities with special authorization of the hosting Manager, who in turn will designate a supervising staff member who must be present together with non-staff.

2.7.6 Smoking

All REC Caucasus facilities are non-smoking facilities. Smoking is allowed in specially designated areas outside the office.

3. Procurement Policy And Procedures

3.1 Procurement Objectives And Governance

The policies and principles set out herein will ensure that REC Caucasus will comply with the very best EU and international practices. Implementation of these policies and principles will ensure Financial and Administrative Department that in general, a competitive process is carried out in an open, objective and transparent manner. It is very important that the procurement function is discharged honestly, fairly and in a manner that secures best value for the money. This Department must be cost effective and efficient in the use of resources while upholding the highest standards of probity and integrity.

REC Caucasus shall uphold transparency and zero tolerance for fraud, corruption, and misconduct through established whistleblower protection mechanisms and formal escalation pathways that enable confidential reporting. REC Caucasus retains the authority to investigate suspected violations of internal policies, including administrative misconduct, misuse of funds, or other integrity breaches. Where misconduct is substantiated, corrective actions shall be applied in accordance with REC Caucasus procedures. These provisions are governed by, and implemented in coordination with, the REC Caucasus Prohibited Practices Policy, Anti-Fraud Manual and the Internal Audit Policy and Procedures Manual.

REC Caucasus shall maintain and apply a formal supplier debarment and exclusion list across all procurement activities in accordance with established procurement procedures. Procurement splitting to circumvent applicable approval or tender thresholds is strictly prohibited. All procurement-related complaints (procurement protests) shall be submitted to the Financial Department responsible for the procurement action. The Financial Department shall review and address such complaints in a timely manner. In cases where the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, the complaint may be escalated to higher management for further consideration.

REC Caucasus shall strengthen the integration of environmental and social safeguards in procurement by requiring suppliers and contractors to comply with applicable Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) and associated mitigation measures. Procurement processes shall explicitly consider environmental and social risks when evaluating bids and selecting service providers. These requirements shall be implemented in alignment with, and with explicit reference to, REC Caucasus’s Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) Manual, which provides the overarching framework for managing environmental and social risks and impacts.

For donor projects, REC Caucasus acknowledges that the donor Board may suspend or cancel financing if procurement is found non-compliant.

All donor-project budgets shall separate the Implementing Entity management fee from execution costs, observing the Board-approved caps. Note that such caps may vary by donor and do not apply universally; project budgets must comply with the requirements of the selected donor.”

Budget Category	Description	Type	Percentage of Total Budget	Donor Reference
A. Project Execution Costs	Direct implementation, technical delivery, procurement, logistics	Execution	XX%	As relevant

Budget Category	Description	Type	Percentage of Total Budget	Donor Reference
B. Project Management & Administration	Project coordination, field oversight, operational support	Management	8.5-9.5%	As relevant
Total			100%	

3.1.1 Important General Issues

Expertise and Probity

Board of Directors within the REC Caucasus should ensure that staff involved in purchasing or placing contracts are familiar with the National, EU and International procurement rules and donors' regulations that may apply. It is also incumbent on this Board to take measures to separate functions within the procurement cycle, by ensuring that, for example, ordering and receiving goods and services are distinct from payment for goods and services.

Casual Purchases

Financial and Administrative Department should examine purchasing profiles to minimize casual purchases. An appropriate contracting arrangement should be put in place for efficient and cost-effective delivery of recurring supplies and services.

Pilot Projects

Where a procurement process involves a pilot stage, the pilot should be conducted in a manner that allows and encourages the identification of a range of acceptable options.

Sole Suppliers

Where it is necessary to deal with a sole supplier, service provider or contractor, arrangements, which provide best value for money, should be negotiated. Department should take care when they face such a scenario. Open-ended arrangements with these distributors should be avoided where possible.

Conflict of Interest

Department should be aware of potential conflicts of interest in the tendering process and should take appropriate steps to avoid them.

Statutory Provisions

Before awarding a contract, Department should ensure that tenderers have regard to statutory provisions relating to minimum pay, legally binding industrial or sectoral agreements and relevant health and safety issues, when preparing tenders.

Collusive Tendering

Department should watch for anti-competitive practices such as collusive tendering.

Criminal Convictions

Candidates or tenderers who have been convicted of involvement in organized crime, fraud or corruption must be excluded from performing a public contract.

3.2 Procurement Process

It is a basic principle of procurement that a competitive process should be used unless there are justifiably exceptional circumstances. The type of procurement process can vary depending on the size and characteristic of the contract to be awarded.

For the donor-funded projects, the contract award and payment schedules must match the disbursement plan approved by the donor Board; subsequent tranches will not be released until the Annual Project Performance Report (PPR) is cleared.

3.2.1 Open Procedure

Department may use the open procedure for below threshold contracts whereby tender documents are made available to all. Tender documents should test the financial and technical capacity of supplier in addition to assessing their responsiveness to any specific requirements.

Timescales for the receipt of tenders/quotes for open procedure according to the policy of REC Caucasus is a minimum of 10 and maximum 21 calendar days. The deadline for submissions must fall on a working day in the country of the contracting authority.

If the contracting authority receives only one tender that is administratively and technically valid, the contract may be awarded provided that the award criteria are met.

Evaluation committee is mandatory.

3.2.2 Restricted Procedure

This is a two-phase procedure. Phase 1 being the request for expressions of interest (EOI) based on financial and technical capacity. As an alternative issue, a questionnaire as a means of standardizing responses. Phase 2 being the invitation to tender phase.

In this case it is the policy of the REC Caucasus that a minimum of 21 calendar days will be given to tenderers to respond to both phases i.e. 21 calendar days to respond to requests for expressions of interest and 21 calendar days for suppliers to submit tenders. It should be the practice where at all possible to invite at least 3 competent entities to tender.

Evaluation committee is mandatory.

3.2.3 Simplified Procedure

Department may use the simplified procedure for below threshold contracts whereby tender documents are made available to at least three known suppliers. Tender documents should test the financial and technical capacity of supplier in addition to assessing their responsiveness to any specific requirements.

Timescales for the receipt of tenders/quotes for simplified procedure according to the policy of the REC Caucasus is minimum of 10 and maximum 21 calendar days. The deadline for submissions must fall on a working day in the country of the contracting authority.

If the contracting authority receives only one tender that is administratively and technically valid, the contract may be awarded provided that the award criteria are met.

Evaluation committee is mandatory.

3.2.4 Direct Award

Purpose and Scope

This chapter defines the procedure for selecting and contracting individual experts or specialized consultants directly from the Organization’s Pre-Approved Roster. The goal is to reduce lead times while ensuring that candidates have already undergone a rigorous technical vetting process.

Justification for Direct Award

A **Direct Award** from a Organisations’s pre-approved roster or for donor-approved personnel may be utilized under the following circumstances:

- **Donor-Approved Personnel:**
 - **Named Experts:** The expert’s CV was explicitly included in the technical proposal submitted to and approved by the donor.
 - **Named Staff:** The specific organization staff members were identified as "Key Personnel" in the approved application/budget.
- **Highly Specialized Skills:** When the roster contains an expert with unique, proven experience in a specific niche required for the project.
- **Small Assignments:** For short-term tasks
- **Continuity:** To re-engage an expert who successfully completed a previous phase of the same project.

Selection Procedure

The following steps must be followed and documented:

1. **Search & Longlist:** Filter the Roster based on the Terms of Reference (ToR) and required competencies.
2. **Shortlist/Selection:** If only one expert meets the exact criteria, a Direct Selection Justification must be signed. If multiple experts qualify, a mini-competition (interview or desk review of CVs) is preferred.
3. **Financial Validation:** Fees must be based on the Organization's Standard Fee Scale or the expert's previous verified rates to ensure "Value for Money."
4. **Due Diligence:** Perform a final check to ensure the expert is available and has no new Conflicts of Interest.

Thresholds for Direct Award

Thresholds may vary by the donor requirements. The standard limits to be used:

Procurement Method	Threshold (Contract Value)	Documentation Required
Micro-Purchase (Direct)	< \$5,000 – \$7,000	Simple Purchase Requisition; no formal ToR comparison needed.
Direct Award from Roster	\$7,001 – \$15,000	Full ToR + Justification Memo + Fee Benchmarking.

Procurement Method	Threshold (Contract Value)	Documentation Required
Limited Competition	\$15,001 – \$50,000	Invitation to 3+ experts from the Roster; Comparative Table.
Full Open Tender	> \$50,000	International advertisement (unless waived by HQ).

Note on Donors: Procurement thresholds are subject to change based on specific donor requirements. The provisions of the specific Grant Agreement must be verified before finalizing any procurement action. In all instances of conflict, donor rules take precedence over internal organizational policy.

3.2.5 Single Tender Procedure

Department may use the single tender procedure for below threshold contracts whereby tender documents are made available to at least one known supplier(s).

Timescales for the receipt of tenders/quotes for single tender it is the policy of the REC Caucasus tenderers should be given reasonable time to prepare good tenders, especially taking particular account of the complexity of the contract. The deadline for submissions must fall on a working day in the country of the contracting authority.

For single tender, an evaluation report must be produced, explaining how participants were chosen, how they met the selection criteria, how the price was set, and the grounds for the award decision.

Evaluation committee for single tender procedure is not mandatory.

3.2.6 Negotiated procedure

Departments may use negotiated procedures in the following exceptional and duly justified cases:

- Where only a proprietary product will meet requirements, such as parts or components for equipment.
- Where an agent, licensee or franchise holder has sole rights to supply a service or product.
- Where there is only one suitable qualified specialist in the relevant field.
- Where a particular service provider possesses a special advantage due, for example, to earlier research exclusively carried out in a particular area, or has exclusive data or information required performing a particular task. In such circumstances, it must be demonstrably clear that another service provider could not perform a contract more economically.
- Where due to the urgency a competitive process cannot be undertaken in the time available. What constitutes urgency cannot be specified definitively. Factors giving rise to urgency must be serious, unforeseeable and, except in the most exceptional circumstances (for instance a matter of urgent public safety or the like) not due to the action or inaction on the part of this Department. Occasions when it is necessary to award a contract without a competitive process due to urgency should be very rare because an appropriate competitive process can be completed relatively quickly below thresholds, by direct invitation to tender to a number of suitably qualified suppliers or service providers.

No specific threshold applies in such cases.

In the case of negotiated procedures, an evaluation committee must be nominated prior to proceeding with the negotiation. However, depending on a risk analysis by the contracting organization, appointing an evaluation committee might not be deemed necessary in the following cases: extreme urgency not attributable to the contracting organization; crisis situation; extension of service contracts with the repetition of similar activities as in the original contracts; and provision of additional services.

For all procedures, a negotiation report must be produced, explaining how participant(s) in the negotiation were chosen, how they met the selection criteria, how the price was set, and the grounds for the award decision.

Invitation to tender to be drafted and approved by the contracting organization for negotiated procedure before starting negotiation, shall include at least the Terms of Reference, Application Submission Form and Evaluation Grid.

Whenever appointed, the evaluation committee may organize negotiation round(s) and possibly invite the tenderer(s) to discuss the technical and financial offer(s), which can be disclosed at any time during the process. In such cases, recommendations on the award decision will be made by the evaluation committee based on the outcome of discussions and/or evaluation of negotiated application held during the negotiation(s) round(s) and will be documented in the negotiation report.

The negotiation report must be signed/approved by the Evaluation Committee members involved in negotiation and evaluation.

3.2.7 A payment made against invoice

Departments may use a payment against invoice without prior acceptance of a tender, within a certain threshold amount. In such case at least three quotations should be provided from competitive suppliers.

Appointing an evaluation committee for payment made against invoice is not mandatory.

3.3 Quotation / Tendering Procedures

3.3.1 Service contracts

Procurement with a value of less than or equal to EUR 5 000

For services with a value of less than or equal to EUR 5 000 the department may use:

- A payment made against invoice
- Single tender procedure
- Simplified procedure
- Open procedure

Contracts with a value of less than or equal to EUR 20 000

For services with a value of less than or equal to EUR 20 000 the department may use:

- Single tender procedure
- Simplified procedure
- Open procedure

Contracts with a value of less than EUR 300 000

For services with a value of less than EUR 300 000 the department may use:

- Simplified procedure
- Open procedure

Contracts with a value of EUR 300 000 or more

For services with a value EUR 300 000 or more the department may use:

- Open procedure (international)
- Restricted procedure (international)

3.3.2 Supply Contracts

Procurement with a value of less than or equal to EUR 5 000

For supplies with a value of less than or equal to EUR 5 000 the department may use:

- A payment made against invoice
- Single tender procedure
- Simplified procedure
- Open procedure

Contracts with a value of less than or equal to EUR 20 000

For supplies with a value of less than or equal to EUR 20 000 the department may use:

- Single tender procedure
- Simplified procedure
- Open procedure

Contracts with a value of less than EUR 100 000

For supplies with a value of less than EUR 100 000 the department may use:

- Simplified procedure
- Open procedure

Contracts with a value of less than EUR 300 000

For supplies with a value of less than EUR 300 000 the department may use:

- Open procedure

Contracts with a value of EUR 300 000 or more

For supplies with a value of EUR 300 000 or more the department may use:

- Open procedure (international)
- Restricted procedure (international)

3.4 Works Contracts

Procurement with a value of less than or equal to EUR 5 000

For works with a value of less than or equal to EUR 5 000 the department may use:

- A payment made against invoice
- Single tender procedure
- Simplified procedure
- Open procedure

Contracts with a value of less than or equal to EUR 20 000

For works with a value of less than or equal to EUR 20 000 the department may use:

- Single tender procedure
- Simplified procedure
- Open procedure

Contracts with a value of less than EUR 300 000

For works with a value of less than EUR 300 000 the department may use:

- Simplified procedure
- Open procedure

Contracts with a value of EUR 300 000 or more but less than EUR 5 000 000

For works with a value of EUR 300 000 or more but less than EUR 5 000 000 the department may use:

- Open procedure

Contracts with a value of EUR 5 000 000 or more

For works with a value of EUR 5 000 000 or more the department may use:

- Open procedure (international)
- Restricted procedure (international)

3.5 Formal Tendering Process

3.5.1 Specification of requirements

A specification should be as open and generic as possible to avoid favoring one bidder or particular solution. The performance and or functional characteristics of the product or service sought should be set out in language that is clear, concise, logical and unambiguous. The specification must be comprehensive with sufficient information for potential bidders to decide and put a cost on the supplies and/or services required and must set out the criteria for the selection of the successful tenderer.

It is very important that the specification does not refer to trade names/patents or individual companies. In exceptional circumstances where there is no alternative it is essential that the words "or equivalent" are included.

3.5.2 Terms of Reference

Terms of reference are essentially the specification for consultancy services. Standard terms of reference include:

- Brief background on the Department including scale and number of staff etc.
- Details and background of the proposed assignment.
- Required deliverables from consultant.
- Timeline, including proposed starting date.
- Outline resources to be provided by the Department/Division if relevant.
- Reporting & contact details.
- Selection details including contract award criteria.
- If required, notification that presentation to selection panel must be made.
- Request for reference details and CV's of proposed project team.

3.5.3 Selection of potential suppliers

It is important to put serious thought and consideration into the selection of potential suppliers. One established way is to establish a list of firms from which tenders for different requirements can be sought. The existence of such list(s) should be advertised annually and admission to the list must always be open to suitably qualified entrants. It is very important that the use of lists is done in an open, transparent and non-discriminatory way.

In general terms it is always prudent to take a proactive approach in investigating the market with a view to sourcing new suppliers. This is particularly so when the tenderers on existing list have not changed in some years.

3.5.4 Pre-tender clarification requests

Following the issue of tender documents, any further correspondence with the tenderers prior to the closing date of the competition must be verifiable, e.g. email or registered post. It is recommended that any bidders seeking clarification or additional information do so to a specified email address rather than by phone. Any response to verbal queries should be confirmed in writing /email.

Responses to requests for information or for tender documentation in an open procedure and any other supporting documentation must be issued without delay and within a maximum of 6 calendar days of the request. Requests for additional information received in good time must be replied to at least 6 calendar days before the latest date for receipt of tenders. In order, to avoid giving any unfair advantage, additional information supplied to one party in response to a request for additional information should be supplied to every interested party if it could be deemed significant in the context of preparing a tender.

It may arise where tenderers do not have sufficient time to prepare a complete tender, and they request an extension to the bidding period. Only in very exceptional circumstances should a request for an extension be granted and normally this will only occur if a substantial number of interested parties submit similar requests. Under no circumstances should an extension be given if the request is received within 7 calendar days of the closing date.

If bidders are invited to visit a site/office to fully assess a proposed contract before submitting a formal tender, all companies/individuals on the tender list must be invited so that each has the same opportunity to tender effectively. Site visits must be carefully arranged and supervised by a nominated person and due care must be taken to ensure that all bidders are given the same information and access.

3.5.5 Developing evaluation selection/award criteria

All tendering procedures can be divided into two separate assessment operations:

1. Selection Criteria – These criteria are concerned with the qualities of the supplier as such in terms of their financial, economic and technical resources at their disposal.
2. Contract Award Criteria – The award criteria relate to the qualities and cost of the products or services which the supplier proposes to provide if successful in winning the contract.

In short, contracts are awarded after applying the award criteria, but only after the suitability of those excluded have been checked under the suitability criteria (ANNEX 1).

3.5.6 Delivery and opening tenders

All tenders should be opened together and as soon as possible after the designated time and date of receipt. They must be opened in the presence of two officials to ensure in the case of a dispute there is a clear and formal vouched report of the tenders received. They should be signed and date stamped as should the Form of Tender and other tender pages, which contain prices, rates etc. Tenders received after prescribed deadline should be returned unopened.

Tender details should be recorded on “Certificate of Tenders Received” (See templates). The two officials involved in the opening process should sign this form.

After tenders have been opened, information relating to tenders should not be disclosed to any of the tenderers or to any staff not officially concerned in the tendering process.

3.5.7 Evaluation of tenders and contract award

Tenders are evaluated on a technical/commercial basis (ANNEX 2).

- Only tenders that comply with the specifications and general requirements of the tender documentation will be considered
- A tender that does not meet these needs cannot be accepted and must be treated as invalid
- The pre-published award criteria may not be altered in carrying out the evaluation process
- Tenders which fall into the following categories may be rejected:
 - Irregular tenders which fail to meet the specification.
 - Unacceptable tenders which fail to meet the suitability criteria, or late.
 - “Unsuitable” tenders which fail properly to address the requirements to any reasonable degree.

Tender Cancellation

Tender Cancellation may occur when:

- The tender procedure has been unsuccessful, namely where no qualitative or financially worthwhile tender has been received or there has been no valid response at all.
- The economic or technical parameters of the Project have been fundamentally altered.
- Exceptional circumstances or force majeure render normal implementation of the Project impossible.
- All technically compliant tenders exceed the financial resources available.
- There have been irregularities in the procedure, in particular where these have

prevented fair competition.

- The award is not in compliance with sound financial management,
- i.e. does not respect the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness (e.g. the price proposed by the tenderer to whom the contract is to be awarded is objectively disproportionate regarding the price of the market).

Request for clarification

Any request for clarification requiring communication with the tenderers or applicants during the evaluation process must be conducted in writing. Copies of any such communication must be annexed to the evaluation report.

Where a participant fails to submit evidence or to make statements, the evaluation committee or, where appropriate, the authorizing officer responsible shall, except in duly justified cases, ask the participant to provide the missing information or to clarify supporting documents, within a reasonable period of time. Such information, clarification or confirmation shall not substantially change application documents.

If an applicant, who was short-listed solely by relying on capacity providing entities, submits an offer where the organisation and methodology does not include a written commitment proving that these entities will, depending on the case, perform the work or services for which their capacities are required, and/or will be jointly liable for the performance of the contract, the evaluation committee shall ask the applicant to submit the requested evidence within a reasonable period of time. In case the applicant fails to do so, the evaluation committee shall not evaluate further the technical offer and shall reject it on those grounds.

If a tender or proposal infringes the formal requirements, the evaluation committee may use its discretion to decide whether it will still be considered during the rest of the evaluation process, while ensuring equal treatment of tenderers and applicants and upholding the principle of proportionality. Whatever the evaluation committee decides, this must be fully recorded and reasons given in the evaluation report.

Tenders or proposals should not be rejected in the following cases:

- If they are submitted in fewer than the number of copies required.
- If they are submitted in the correct format and provide the requisite information, but the document is organised incorrectly, e.g. information is provided in Section X of the form when it should have been provided in Section Y.
- If they have not been signed or contain a scanned signature (the signature can be requested later — but if it is not obtained or if the original document provided later is not exactly the same as the one received earlier, the tender must be rejected). If a tender guarantee is required, the tender must always contain an original of the tender guarantee. If only a copy of the tender guarantee is provided, the offer must be rejected.
- If candidates, applicants or tenderers can demonstrate that a required document is not available (e.g. under national law, duplicates of a given lost document cannot be obtained from the issuing administration), provided that an acceptable alternative is obtained (e.g. a declaration by the said administration that the document for the candidate, applicant or tenderer is still valid but no duplicate can be issued).
- In a service contract award procedure, tenderers who have not submitted all the documentary evidence regarding the exclusion or the selection criteria together with the tender. The necessary supporting documentation may be requested from the successful tenderer giving a reasonable time-limit.
- If information is made available to the evaluation committee that a key expert in a service tender procedure is no longer available. Instead, the evaluation committee should proceed with the evaluation of the original tender, and the awarded tenderer will

be given a chance to replace the key expert.

- The tender was sent in a single envelope rather than the two envelopes required, provided the envelope is sealed (the confidentiality of the tender has been preserved).
- The tender combines the technical part and the financial part or has not used the requested standard presentation.

De-briefing unsuccessful suppliers

In the case of contracts under €25,000 unsuccessful candidates should at minimum be informed of the outcome of their tender by reference to their performance under the relevant evaluation criteria used in the competition. Feedback by telephone should normally be sufficient in these cases subject to being satisfied as to the identity of the tenderer.

In the case of larger contracts above €25,000 unsuccessful tenderers should be afforded an opportunity of a debriefing meeting. While many requests may be satisfied by telephone feedback, where a more formal or personal debriefing is required, it would be normal practice to have two officials in attendance and a note of the proceedings be kept for the records. Tenderers should be made aware that the decision was not just the opinion of one individual but was made by an evaluation team. The discussions should address the tenderers' offer against the evaluation criteria focusing on the relevant strengths and weaknesses of the tender. It is imperative that information such as the identity or the prices of other tenderers or information that could compromise the competitive situation should not be disclosed.

Contract Management.

Once a contract has been signed or purchase order has been raised, it is incumbent on the REC Caucasus that the supplies, works or services are delivered in accordance with the terms of the tender and the prices quoted. If companies fail to meet these requirements they should be contacted immediately and a management process of improvement put in place. A full written record of all correspondence with/from the supplier should be maintained.

For the donor-funded projects, misuse-of-Funds Notification and Investigation Procedures are carried out in accordance with the donor organization's Operational Policies and Guidelines. REC Caucasus shall maintain a zero-tolerance policy toward fraud, corruption, or misuse of project funds. Any staff member, implementing partner, or contractor who becomes aware of suspected misuse or irregularity involving Donor Fund resources shall immediately notify the Executive Director and the Donor Secretariat through a formal written report. Upon notification, REC Caucasus shall initiate an internal preliminary review within 30 days to verify the facts and assess the nature of the allegation. A status update shall be submitted to the respective donor every 30 days thereafter until the issue is fully resolved. All related documentation — including incident reports, correspondence, and evidence — shall be retained in a secure, access-controlled file for a minimum of five (5) years after project closure, in line with the Fund's fiduciary standards and audit requirements. Contractual agreements with implementing partners and suppliers shall include a clause obliging full cooperation with any investigation initiated by REC Caucasus, donor or their designated auditors. Non-compliance or obstruction of investigative processes shall be grounds for contract suspension or termination.

Filing and storage of tender documentation

The Financial and Administration Department must maintain complete records of each stage of the procurement process. The records must detail all decisions made in relation to the contract and must be kept for a period of at least five (5) years. All donor procurement records shall be retained for at least five (5) years after project closure, in line with donor Fiduciary Standard.

The file should be clearly labelled, with contract description and reference number and should be divided into the following sub-sections:

- Post award correspondence,
- Regret letters,
- Approval letter/Purchase Order/ Award Notice,
- Tender evaluation,
- Post tender correspondence,
- Copies of tenders,
- Certificate of tender,
- Pre-tender correspondence,
- RFT documents & tender list,
- Specification,
- Approved business case.

A copy of every contract entered should be forwarded to the Finance and Administration Department.

Risk Management

The process of risk management involves a cycle of identifying risks, evaluating their potential consequences and determining the most effective methods of responding to them. This means reducing the chances of their occurrence and reducing their impact if they do occur.

Departments should ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to identify and assess all relevant risks throughout the procurement cycle. As a general principle, risks should be borne by the party best placed to manage them and a body should not accept risks, which another party is better placed to manage.

For the donor-funded projects, any suspicion of fraud, corruption or misuse of donor resources must be reported to the Executive Director and the AF Secretariat within 30 days, with follow-up updates every 30 days until resolution.”

While a detailed exposition of risk assessment and management is beyond the scope of these guidelines, Departments should note that, typically, risk will impact the project at different stages, and it should be addressed appropriately as follows:

- **Project risk.** This encompasses risk to the project from the inadequate definition or assessment of the need, scope, scale and financing of the project. These should be addressed in business cases.
- **Process risk.** This is risk resulting from an inadequate knowledge of national and EU procurement policy and law and from incorrectly or inadequately carrying out a public procurement procedure. Process risk is addressed by adhering to these guidelines and to the other documents referenced herein.
- **Relationship risk.** This is risk resulting from inadequate relationships with the contract holder and the implementation of the project. It is addressed by the contract, the project management plan, project management procedures and by review procedures (e.g. mid-term review, independent peer review, etc.).
- **Termination risk.** This is risk resulting from inadequate definition of project boundaries, of ‘project creep’, incrementalism, etc. It is addressed by having a business case that specifies the scope of the project; a contract that states how and when project change can occur; change management procedures; and the final report.

For the donor-funded projects, project and termination risks will be revisited during the mid-term review (if applicable) and terminal evaluation, and REC Caucasus recognizes the donor Board's right to commission independent reviews at any stage.

3.5.8 Simple Purchase

Stationery

Stationery is purchased for the whole REC Caucasus. Technical Assistant to Administration collects the Supply Request Forms from the staff by the 25th of each month. Supplies are delivered in bulk and packed in separate boxes by staff members. The stationery is distributed to the staff around the 5th of next month. A small set of basic stationery is kept by the Secretary for newly hired staff or for urgent requests.

Paper

Paper for the printing and photocopying facilities in REC Caucasus is also bought together with the monthly stationery purchase or by special exceptions - as per needs.

Whenever possible, recycled paper is preferred. Special papers for publications are purchased by the Technical Assistant to Administration directly.

Office Supplies and Cleaning Materials

Office supplies and cleaning materials are purchased and stored by the regularly without any special requests. Food and drink for meetings are treated separately and coordinated by the Technical Assistant to Administration.

Other requests

Any other items (e.g. kitchenware, etc.) can be requested from the Financial and Administrative Officers. If the request is justified, a special purchase will be arranged. If there is a common use of a missing supply item (e.g., a coffee maker) then an e-mail about the need/problem to Financial and Administrative Officers is acceptable as initiating the purchase or repair.

3.5.9 Maintenance and other types of Service Request

Services should also be requested in written form (e.g. e-mail) from the staff to the Technical Assistant to Administration. The request will be checked and handled according to the urgency of the need and the capacity of the staff to comply.

Regular services are:

- maintenance of personal computers (or certain parts).
- maintenance of photocopiers or printers.
- maintenance in the buildings.

3.5.10 Project Reporting:

An Annual Project Performance Report (PPR), using the donor template, is due within 60 days of each anniversary of first disbursement. Clearance of the PPR is a condition for the next tranche.

In accordance with the donor Operational Policies and Guidelines, REC Caucasus shall ensure that each donor-financed project submits, apart from PPR, where applicable, a bi-annual Readiness Progress Report. The PPR shall be completed using the official donor template, capturing quantitative and qualitative progress against approved outcomes, outputs, and indicators.

3.5.11 Terminal Evaluation:

An independent Terminal Evaluation shall be submitted to a donor within nine (9) months of project completion.

3.5.12 Safeguards, Gender & Disclosure:

Where required by the donor, each PPR shall annex (i) an Environmental & Social Management Plan (ESMP) implementation log, (ii) progress on sex-disaggregated indicators and Gender Action Plan actions, and (iii) a grievance summary. The inclusion of these annexes may vary depending on donor requirements and is not mandatory for all projects.

Approved proposals, PPRs and evaluations will be posted on the REC Caucasus website within two weeks of submission to the donor. Persistent supplier non-performance that jeopardises outputs will be flagged in the PPR and may trigger suspension.”

Implementing teams shall maintain a quarterly ESMP monitoring log, recording progress on mitigation actions, stakeholder engagement activities, and any incidents or non-compliance events. A summary of ESMP implementation and grievance resolution outcomes shall be annexed to each Annual Project Performance Report (PPR) submitted to the donor. All grievances received through the mechanism — including complaints related to environmental harm, social exclusion, gender-based violence, or sexual exploitation and abuse (GBV/SEA) — shall be documented in a grievance log. This log shall include the date of receipt, nature of the issue, actions taken, and resolution status. Records of grievances and associated correspondence shall be retained for a minimum of five (7) years after project closure, in line with the donor’s transparency and accountability requirements.

3.5.13 Inventory Of Fixed Assets

According to REC Caucasus procedures, fixed assets are those assets, which have a purchase price value above EUR 100.

Fixed assets (e.g. computers, office machinery, furniture) are supplied by the Financial and Administrative Officers based on Purchase Request form (see above). Each and every staff member is responsible for the equipment she/he uses. Fixed Assets are labelled with inventory numbers at the time of purchasing. Inventory numbers are assigned by the Technical Assistant to Administration.

The inventory items are recorded on the room inventory list and the staff located in that room are responsible for them. Inventory lists are updated by the accountant.

Applications for changing the location of an inventory item should be submitted to the Financial and Administrative Officers. Any damage or loss should be reported to the Financial and Administrative Officers by the staff members responsible for the inventory item or anyone else who takes note of it. At least once a year the inventory is updated by the accountant and submitted to the Staff Meeting.

In case of loss or damage discovered during the annual inventory findings, they will be recorded by the accountant and the staff responsible for the inventory item. Minutes will be the basis for further action, if needed (e.g., police report). More detailed information on inventory is available in the Financial Manual.

4. Other Regulations

4.1 Correspondence Format

All official REC Caucasus correspondence will bear a unified format in accordance with the REC Caucasus graphic design. All letters will be written on REC Caucasus company paper with REC Caucasus letterheads, and mailed in REC Caucasus company envelopes.

4.2 Writing And Design Standards For Outgoing Rec Caucasus Documents

All outgoing official REC Caucasus information that is targeted to REC Caucasus stakeholders and the public shall comply with REC Caucasus writing and design standards.

Information falling under this category includes all:

- REC Caucasus publications
- information presented on the REC Caucasus's World Wide Web site
- press releases
- REC Caucasus organisational and project-related communications materials (i.e. annual reports, brochures, pamphlets, REC Caucasus folders, project and department fact sheets)

REC Caucasus writing and design standards are continuously updated and maintained by the Information Programme Manager. Furthermore, all above information must undergo quality control checks by staff to ensure compliance with these standards. These quality control checks do not refer to the content and correctness of the information. To control the quality with respect to this is the task of the author of the information or the responsible project committee. If financial information is included, the Financial and Administrative Officers should check the outgoing information.

4.3 Communication with the Governments

Assisting governments in its constituency area is one of the tasks of the REC Caucasus laid down in its Charter, and other documents.

The REC Caucasus Office must develop its activities in the REC Caucasus beneficiary countries so that within the 3 countries in which REC Caucasus is operating no geographic area or constituency group receives either in duly favored or neglected.

This chapter outlines the policy on the establishment and maintenance of government contacts at the level of national government (for the rest of this section: government), European Commission (EC) and intergovernmental organizations.

4.4 Definitions

Government

For the purposes of this policy, “government” includes all those institutions in the public domain that share the executive duties of the government (ministries or equivalent bodies) except the Local Authorities.

Formal contacts

Formal contacts are correspondence and meetings connected to REC Caucasus projects and/or REC Caucasus operations in general, fund-raising, or protocol events.

Informal contacts

Informal contacts are correspondence and meetings aimed at the maintenance of the regular flow of information between the REC Caucasus and its partner governments / intergovernmental organizations.

4.5 General Rules for Governmental Contacts

Formal contacts

These are contacts at the level of:

- Head of state, prime minister, minister/head of governmental institution and their deputies, state secretary, as well as members of their cabinets/secretariats.
- Commissioner of the EC, head of EU institution, director general of the EC and his/her deputies, as well as members of their cabinets/secretariats
- Ambassadors
- Equivalent positions in the other intergovernmental organizations.

For REC Caucasus staff, formal contacts require coordination with the Executive Body and subsequent recording. Records (minutes, reports, drafts etc.) of contacts shall be submitted within 5 working days to the EB and a copy to the Secretary.

The Secretary enters relevant information into the REC Caucasus database, and files the records.

4.6 Copyright And Trademark

The REC Caucasus maintains copyright on all its publications and other products of work prepared by an employee within the scope of his or her employment (work-for-hire) if not specified differently in contracts with donors.

4.7 Policy On Rec Caucasus Business Cards

Business Cards for Employees

All REC Caucasus employees are eligible for business cards printed with their name and title. Business cards can only be ordered after the trial period is completed, except in well-justified cases. Newly hired employees will be provided with blank business cards.

Procedure

Business cards are to be requested from the Financial and Administrative Officers, which manages the appropriate budget. Based on the request received, Financial and Administrative Officers will check the eligibility of employee and provide the necessary data (the employee's exact title and other identification data) to the IT Officer.

The IT Officer collects approved requests from Financial and Administrative Officers, prepares the business cards according to the request, and submits them to the printer. For cost-efficiency purposes requests will be forwarded to the print shop upon request.

Quantity

A minimum of 50 and maximum of 100 business cards can be ordered at one time for one employee.

Layout

The standard layout for business cards is available from the IT Officer.

Language

Two-language (English and respective national) language business cards will be given to all REC Caucasus staff.

4.8 Transparency & Disclosure

Public disclosure of key project documents, reports, and evaluations should be ensured in a timely manner, in line with organization's transparency policy and donor requirements. For donor-funded projects - public disclosure of proposals, PPRs & evaluations on donor website - approved docs and annual reports are posted within two weeks of submission to the donor. Please refer to the organizational Transparency Policy (2026).

Annexes

ANNEX 1

Sample of Award Criteria for a Service Contract				For donor-funded Projects
	Criterion	Weighting	Minimum score required	<i>Donor Core Outcome Indicator (baseline / target)</i>
1	Ultimate Cost	35%	N/a	
2	Methodology for delivery of the service	20%	1200	at least one donor's core outcome indicator.
3	Quality, quantity and balance of resources offered	30%	1800	at least one donor core outcome indicator.
4	Project plan	10%	600	at least one donor core outcome indicator.
5	Reliability and continuity of supply	5%	300	at least one donor core outcome indicator.
Sample of Award Criteria for a Supply Contract				
	Criterion	Weighting	Minimum score required	<i>Donor Core Outcome Indicator (baseline / target)</i>
1	Ultimate Cost	40%	N/a	at least one donor core outcome indicator .
2	Quality of Product Offered	25%	1500	at least one donor core outcome indicator .
3	Contract Management	15%	900	at least one donor core outcome indicator (OPG ¶67).
4	Delivery Schedules proposed	15%	90	at least one donor core outcome indicator .

5	Reliability and Continuity of Supply	5%	300	at least one donor core outcome indicator .
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Evaluating Selection Criteria

When information is sought from suppliers to test their financial and technical competence as part of the expression of interest under the restricted procedure or as part of the tender under the open procedure, all the information received must be assessed

In the open procedure it is a process of verifying that tenderers meet the minimum levels set (a yes/no process, whereby they must meet the minimum levels). In the open procedure a large number of tenders may be received. The evaluation process involves firstly confirming that the tenderers meet the minimum levels of financial/technical competence; secondly confirming that they comply with the specification and lastly they are evaluated against the award criteria.

When a notice is published using the restricted procedure it requests candidates to supply information concerning their financial and technical competence – a questionnaire can be used to ensure standardised responses. The information needs to be evaluated using a scoring matrix. Weightings must be applied to each criterion prior to opening/assessing the expression of interest.

Evaluating Award Criteria

When tenders have been received they should be evaluated on the basis of the specification issued and the award criteria and weightings indicated and by the same team appointed before the invitation to tender has issued. In relation to award criteria it is a requirement to include the weightings for each criterion in the tender documents (for EU procurements). Tenders must be evaluated against the stated criteria. No new criteria can be introduced once the tenders have been received. The tenderer with the highest score, meeting all the criteria is the winning tender.

ANNEX 2

Sample of Tender Evaluation Spreadsheet

	Quality of Product	Delivery Schedule	Contract Management	Cost	For - funded Projects - Core Outcome Indicator (baseline / target)	Total Score
Weighting	45%	10%	10%	35%		
Minimum Score	27%	6%	6%	N/a		
Tender A €150,000	2700	800	800	3,500		7600
Tender B €200,000	3600	800	800	2,625		7,825
Tender C €250,000	3600	1000	1000	2,100		7,700

The result shows that Tender B is the winner even though priced at 33% higher than the lowest cost.

Scoring Cost

Cost scoring may be carried out using a variety of different formulae. The two most commonly used methods include: Graduated Scale is calculated as follows: number of points scored = the cost of the lowest valid tender divided by the cost of the tender being assessed and multiplied by the maximum score achievable. Sudden Death is calculated as follows: Number of points is calculated by deducting the same percentage from the maximum score achievable as the percentage by which the tender in question exceeds the cost of lowest tender.

Maximum Score	Tender A	Tender B	Tender C
3500 points (Representing cost at 35% weighting)	€150,000 (lowest cost)	€200,000 (33% higher)	€250,000 (66% higher)
Formula using Graduated Scale	$\frac{150,000 \times 3500}{150,000}$	$\frac{150,000 \times 3500}{200,000}$	$\frac{150,000 \times 3500}{250,000}$
Score using Graduated Scale	3,500	2,625	2,100
Score using Sudden Death	3,500	2,333 (33% lower)	1,166 (66% lower)

Tenderers should be informed as to which methodology has been chosen for the evaluation and scoring of cost.

Evaluation Report

To support final approval of the contract the tender evaluation committee/group should complete a signed tender evaluation report, which should be retained on file.

Template 1 - Certificate of Tender Received

Name of Tenderer	Tender Refere nce	Date of Tender	Price Details	Commen ts

Contract Description...

Ref No.....

Opening Date & Time.....

Official Signature 1
Date.....

Official Signature 2
Date.....

Template 2 - Open Procedure Tender Evaluation

First Stage – Examine if tenderers meet the minimum standards specified in the tender documents/notice, in terms of technical and financial capacity and expertise

Company	Similar Contracts	Design Experience	Staff Qualifications	Turnover/Size	Quality Assurance	Financial Capacity	Safety & Environmental
Company 'A'	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Company 'B'	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES
Company 'C'	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Company 'D'	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES
Company 'E'	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Company 'F'	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
Company 'G'	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Company 'H'	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES

Outcome of Assessment:

- Companies A, C, E and G meet the minimum standard and are therefore eligible to have their tenders evaluated.
- The remaining companies do not meet the minimum standard and are ruled out of further consideration (i.e. their tenders will not be evaluated).

Template 3 - Score sheet for Evaluation of Tenders

Example: - Consultancy for Value for Money and Policy Review

Award Criteria	Quality of proposal in addressing requirements of project	Relevant knowledge, skills and expertise of personnel assigned to project	Ultimate Cost (inc expenses)	Company access to relevant international information	Proposed methodology	Timeframe of delivery	Total marks awarded
Total Points available	25	25	25	10	10	5	100
Company A	20	20	22	8	5	5	80
Company B	22	18	15	6	5	5	71
Company C	20	15	10	5	8	5	63

Outcome: - Company 'A' received the highest number of points and is recommended for the contract

Signed: - Evaluation team Date:.....

Template 4 - Score Sheet for Evaluation of Tenders – (Multiplier Method)

Example: Purchase of a Van

Award Criteria →	Technical Characteristics	After Sales Services	Accommodation Capacity	Ultimate Cost	Emissions	Total Score
Percentage Weighting	20%	10%	15%	50%	5%	100%
Max Score	2000	1000	1500	5000	500	10,000
Base Score	400	200	300		100	
Multipliers	0,1,2,3,4,5	0,1,2,3,4,5	0,1,2,3,4,5	0,1,2,3,4,5	0,1,2,3,4,5	0,1,2,3,4,5
Rule	Must score 1,200	Must score 600	Must score 900	No rule	Must score 300	
Company 'A' (€50k)	1950	750	1500	4500	500	9200
Company 'B' (€45k)	1750	750	1200	5000	400	9100
Company 'C' (€42k)	1200	650	750	Eliminated	350	Eliminated

The scores for 'ultimate cost' (UC) of each tender were calculated as follows:

Multipliers

UC of tender 'n'

UC Maximum Points x Lowest UC responsive valid tender = Tender 'n' score under 'UC'

Rating	Multiplier
Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Good	3
Fair	2
Poor	1
No evidence	0

Outcome:

- Company 'A' who submitted a responsive valid tender and received the highest points is declared the winner.
- Company 'C' was eliminated because they failed to meet the minimum score required under "Accommodation Capacity"(900 points)

Template 5 - Tender Evaluation – Checklist

Contract title:..... RFT Ref no:.....

No.	Description	Resp	Yes	No
1	Examine all tenders to see if they are responsive and seek tender clarifications if necessary			
2	Reject all non-responsive tenders and note reason for rejection			
3	Prepare spreadsheet showing all commercial details and update it if and when technical evaluation report is received			
4	Conduct commercial evaluation of tenders that are technically acceptable, solely on the basis of published award criteria			
6	Where necessary, check standing of company with referees nominated by tenderer			
7	Complete tender evaluation scoring sheet			
8	Prepare evaluation report and submit recommendation for approval			
9	Advise all individuals/Units concerned when contract is approved and issue regret and award letters (note standstill period to be applied to award process for EU contracts)			
10	Seek tax clearance certificate from successful tenderer			
11	Finalise contract details with successful tenderer and issue purchase order			
12	Publish award notice in OJEU (for EU contracts only)			
13	Bring contract file up to date and send details of contract to the Procurement Section of Finance Division			

Template 6 - Request for Tender (RFT) Letter

< Company/individual name>

For attention of: < name>

<Date>

<reference no>

Re: < contract title>

<OJEU ref No>

Dear Sir/Madam

You are invited to submit a tender for the above contract/competition in accordance with the enclosed tender documents, which comprise the following:

- Technical Specifications
- Conditions of Contract
- Schedule of requirements
- Instructions to tenderers
- Drawings & Tables (if appropriate)
- Certificate of bona fide tender

This letter of invitation takes precedence over the above documentation. Please ensure the enclosed Form of Tender is completed correctly and signed.

Your completed tender should be submitted in a sealed envelope before the closing date for tenders at 12' noon on <date>.

A tender validity period of six (6) months is required.

Three (3) hard copies (will vary depending on nature of contract) of completed tender are required.

Please return the attached acknowledgement slip to the fax number provided, within 7 calendar days of the date of this letter.

All queries in relation to this tender should be emailed to at email addressbefore.....day....2009.

Tenderers may follow up on previous emailed queries by telephone (phone numbers:)

Please read all tender documentation carefully.

Yours faithfully

<name>

<Division>

Department of Transport

Template 7 - Acknowledgement Slip

Please return by fax to: < fax No>

For attention of: < Divisional Contact >

< Contract Title & Reference>

Dear Sir/Madam

We hereby acknowledge receipt of the tender documents for the above contract. We confirm that we will/will not* submit a completed tender by the closing date.

*(Delete as appropriate)

Signed.....

Company/Individual name

N.B. This acknowledgement slip must be returned by Fax, within 7 calendar days of the date of issue of the tender documents.

Template 8 - Tender Documents – Checklist

Contract Title:..... RFT Reference No:.....

No	Description	Response	Yes	No
1	RFT letter and acknowledgement slip			
2	Pre-addressed tender return label			
3	Instructions to Tenderers			
4	Technical Specification/ Terms of Reference			
5	Schedule of requirements			
6	Award Criteria			
7	Conditions of Contract			
8	Insurance Requirements			
9	Form of Tender/Schedule of prices			
10	Certificate of Bone Fide Tender			

Comments

Signed:.....

Date.....

Template 9: Sample RFT for Request for Tenders

[Design, Development and Management of a Service]

Open Procedure

[Contracting Authority]

[Date]

This sample document is intended for general guidance. It is not definitive or exhaustive on all the considerations that arise in preparing a Request for Tenders [RFT]. The sample is based on an open tendering procedure under EU procurement rules but the same principles should apply to a non-EU procedure. It follows a format and structure commonly used and may be of assistance in assembling tender documentation.

Contents

Introduction

Generally contains background and summary overview of requirement.

Specification of Requirements

Gives comprehensive description of requirements, specification and criteria to be met.

Format of Tender

Sets out how tenders are to be structured and how a proposal is to be presented.

Examination and Evaluation of tender

Generally sets out conditions relating to such matters as need for tax compliance, freedom of information and data protection provisions, conflict of interest, intellectual property, latest time for submission of tenders etc.

Appendices



This document was reviewed, adopted, and approved on [date] by the REC Caucasus Executive Body (Collegial Trio) in accordance with the organization's internal governance procedures, and shall enter into force as of the date of approval.

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